



River Currents



Happy Holidays

A PUBLICATION OF THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 4 WINTER 2011



Well another reunion is behind us and it seemed to be a success by all the below e-mails, but I apologize to each and every one of you that had problems with the hotel and its staff. The MRFA and its Officers and Board Members and volunteers did their job but the hotel was lacking in all respect. I received a number of complaints while at the reunion and after I returned home. I won't go into all the complaints I received but will again apologize for the way the hotel handled our reunion needs. As for the Wyndham, we will not and I mean not be going back there.

We are in the process of finding another hotel in the area that can handle all our needs and be closer to downtown.

I like to thank all the Officers

From the Galley 2011 REUNION

and Board Members and volunteers who helped make this a great reunion even with the hotel's downfalls they made it work out for you the members whom attended.

We had a number of new members this reunion and it was nice meeting them I didn't or wasn't able to meet with everyone with the problems with the hotel; it kept me fairly busy. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves as always the speakers were excellent; the memorial service and the

calling of names of our departed brothers and sisters; the great job Dave Schoenian does with the Missing Man Ceremony; and the bag piper. It was a solemn but very well put together memorial service. Jim Johnson and Richard MacCullagh always do a great job. Gunner Stanley did his usual outstanding job with the flag presentations and where would we be without our Don Blankenship.

Had a few problems with the golf tournament, so the Board has decided if some of the members

want to play golf they can go on their own and find other members to go out with them. The Association will list a number of golf courses in the area but the golf tournament will no longer be under the MRFA banner. A lot of you have asked about a trip to the local casino again; the last casino trip went over like a Chinese fire drill, but we are willing to attempt it again.

Some asked why we didn't have the pig out or pig roast again. In 2009, the pig roast cost \$8,800. This year the price had doubled and that cost was something we just could not afford. We used to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Doc Baldwin Speaks at 2011 MRFA Reunion

John N. Baldwin, MD FACS Major USA, MC, Former Chief of Surgery, 24th Evac RVN 1968-69

Admiral Lopez, President Moore, distinguished veteran brothers, families, and friends. It is an unbounded joy to be here with you today, and it is my distinct pleasure and honor as I stand here, in humility before your Riverine accomplishments and service to our country. What a pleasure it has

been over the last four days to meet you: Larry, Richard, six Johns, Gunner, Albert, Andy, Barry, Blackie, Paul, and all the others. If I had not met you and become friends, I would stand here frozen in the moment.

Your force sustained 2,558 Navy men Killed in Action, 7 Coast-guardsmen,

and 2,624 brave soldiers of the famous 9th Division "Old Reliables." You gave us Tom Kelly, Navy Medal of Honor, and the Army produced Davis, DeVore, Tous, Jenkins, Keller, Kinsman, Lang, Nash, Sasser, and Wright as Medal of Honor recipients,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Doc Baldwin

DOC BALDWIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and so many Navy Crosses, Distinguished Service Crosses, and Purple Hearts that it would take me the afternoon to read all of your names. You have produced the Mobile Riverine Museum to let folks today know what your service is all about and you have the most fabulous web site of almost any other military organization. Your Navy Memorial at Coronado, California, is beautiful and moving beyond description. "River Currents" is a remarkable publication binding us together. You have so much to be proud of, and thankful for. I salute you on behalf of all Americans for your service and your continuing loyalty. Welcome home!

This August, the last of the great Doolittle Raiders, 93-year-old Bill Bower, passed away in Colorado. He was an 18-year-old crewman on one of the 16 Mitchell B25s that followed 42-year-old Doolittle off the pitching deck of the Hornet on April 18, 1942. Those were the dark days for America after Pearl Harbor. And this year, the last World War I veteran...the last of the 70 million worldwide who served...died at the age of 110 in West Virginia, Frank Buckles. When asked how he had lived so long he said, "Somebody had to do it and it turned out to be me." I mention this to you to emphasize the humility and grace that most all veterans have about their service. "I was not a hero" is what we all say.

First, a few facts: 2,709,000 Americans served in Vietnam. Vietnam veterans represented 10% of their generation. Richard Fitzgibbon was the first American to die in 'Nam in 1956. The following presidents presided over this situation: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Gerald Ford. 58,272 were killed in this war, which Congress never had the courage, under their Constitutional duty to declare. Over 150,000 GIs were severely wounded and over 5,000 lost arms or legs. Eleven thousand of those killed were under the age of 20. 91% of us are proud we served. Our income exceeds the non-veteran group by 20%. The war took 17 years...and ended in a giant question mark.

Every one of you deserves the highest praise for what you have done and how you have persevered since. It has not been easy for any of us. Memories, wounds, illnesses, PTSD, Agent Orange, and divorce... among other after effects.

I have met men here with one eye, brain shots, one leg, a double amputee, and others who bear the physical and mental scars that only warriors can comprehend.

This meeting brings back names and memories from the past that echo in our minds: "Bear Cat, Dong Tam, 3rd Surg, Cu Chi, 24th Evac, Chu Lai, 29th Evac, Can Tho, Ab Bac, and on and on." Strange names from a time long ago that only we remember.

And names like your own: 2nd Lt David Williams, 9th Division platoon leader, Killed in Action on September 21, 1967, with Alpha Company after having survived the earlier June ambush at Ap Bac, which resulted in 32 KIAs and a flood of casualties to the 24th Evac surgeons.

It was my honor and privilege to be Chief of Chest and Heart Surgery at the great 24th from May '68 to '69 and my wife Jeannie, 1st

Lt Army Nurse Corps, was one of the operating room nurses that served the kids who came in wounded. I was drafted at age 34 and she, as were all the nurses, had volunteered. The 24th was the finest trauma hospital in the world at the time, even better than my training ground in knives and guns and bridge jumpers, the San Francisco General Hospital! The 24th had 7 neurosurgeons, 5 general surgeons, 5 orthopedic surgeons, a world-class plastic and maxillofacial team, 6 anesthesiologists, a chest/heart surgeon and many more, supported by the finest corpsmen and nurses with equipment and technology, which was not duplicated in even the greatest hospitals back stateside.



24th Med Evac Long Binh 1967 by Susan Dunn

We had 200 beds and were just ONE of SEVEN big EVAC hospitals, stretching from the 95th Evac in Da Nang to the 29th Evac at Can Tho. In between, located just 30 minutes by chopper and radio from each other, were about 25 smaller Surgical Hospitals...MASH like... such as the great 3rd Surg down at Dong Tam. Staffed by experts, they were our first line. They gave the wounded soldier a HUGE opportunity to be seen early in the Golden Hour...those first 60-minute ticks from wounding, in which expert care can save almost anyone if given the chance. That resulted in an overall amputation rate of 1% or less, and with unlimited blood supplies, a full staff of dedicated doctors, nurses, and corpsmen...living the life every day without families, kids, lawns to mow, relatives in the waiting room, permit slips, or lawyers... well, it was real easy to perform at our best.

We had 6 tables...and believe it or not, we always kept one open "for Emergencies!" The soldier coming in with 5 minutes to live, and who, to survive, had to be "crashed" by the best surgeon we had. And they made it, just as our sign over the ER door said, "If you get to the 24th, we will get you home." Our busy times were early morning when the Medevac choppers could get in, and dusk when they had a last chance to get out. Just for example: In August 1968, we took 5,022 x-rays, gave 2,100 bottles of blood, and operated on 1,100 soldiers.... those were the times in which 500 Americans died every week.

And, there were miracles! There was the kid whose cigarette-pack sized Bible in his left front fatigue pocket stopped a coasting-in AK-47 round, and another whose big St. Christopher medal held a giant RPG frag cradled in its bent middle portion, embedded in the boy's sternum...but never broke through to the heart, and the 9th Division's own Clayton Peterson,

zipped up for dead in a body bag, who wiggled in the pile and was lucky enough to wind up on Dr. George Lavenson's 24th Evac OR table for big time surgery and now lives with his large family in Oregon. And there is door gunner Sam Langhofer in Kansas with one leg after his gunship crashed, and Dennis Haines 199th Infantry, put behind the "curtain" where kids were put not expected to live...but we made rounds in there hourly... and heard him talk, and despite two AK hits to his right brain, he lived and went on to become Director of Building and Planning at Univ. Pennsylvania Medical Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania...and win the prestigious VVA Award, "Images of Bravery" in 2007. He will be visiting us in California 2 weeks from now, as will your brother 9th infantryman, our patient and dear friends, Andy and Maureen Brigante.

I would like now, to ask all of you who were Medics or Chopper pilots to stand, because without you out there, we were nothing.

Thank you so much brothers...from all the surgeons, nurses, corpsmen, and staff at those hospitals...who would, were they still living or able, cry their eyes out to see you 45 years later, the result of their dedication, talent, and love. You are living testimony to their efforts and your own courage. Thank you. Please sit down, and thank you again.

I returned home to a hostile medical staff in Monterey, California, none of whom had served....ever....and none of whom cared about "the war" or what I did or what you were still doing. So, like you, returning to your homes, I went into a shell, nearly insane, "Dinky Dau" and repressed the memories (but NOT the lessons....) but went forward. And made it out as have all of you.

It was not until 20 years later that I got out my Bronze Star and started wearing the little ribbon on my suit jacket, always amazed how few people inquired "What is that?" Jeannie never ever told people she had served in combat, was a decorated ACM recipient, but she, like I, and like most of you, had finally surfaced and we were all healing.

Things had changed in America. Jean and I went to The Wall in Washington. Completed in 1982, designed by a Yale artist, a Chinese-born lady named Maya Lin, and picked by a group of distinguished people from 10 competing designs...the Jan Scruggs-inspired Memorial held 58,000 names with room for additions as POWs and MIAs were discovered.

It was there that we found Bruce Clark. Bruce came into the 24th on Thanksgiving Eve 1968...a handsome 18-year-old athlete from Cumberland, Rhode Island...having been blown up by a hand grenade...and when morning came, I had a patient in Recovery with no eyes, one leg, and one arm. He challenged every surgical talent we had, but 4 weeks later, my Commander allowed me to accompany him to the 249th General in Japan, as Bruce and I had become father and son. I bade him farewell, both crying, he blind, half the man he was, with a future completely out of his control. Bruce Clark, just a kid, destroyed by this war.

Jeannie and I, have struggled, as have you, with issues like these...lost buddies, kids cradled in your arms in the mud or paddies,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Bill Gist, Frank Kiem and his son, Frank, Jr., presented the MRFA wreath.



Doc Saylor left a field jacket at 40W honoring a Brother who died of Agent Orange this past year.



Ed Rutowski and Patrick Hughes presented the 9th ID wreath at 31E.



Dave Schoenian and Roy Moseman presented a plaque at panel 48W in tribute to the 15 Brothers of the 4th/47th who were KIA overall in a 2-day battle.



Ed Vandenberg, Frank Begovich, and Dave Lull presented the 47th wreath at 11W honoring 8 47th KIAs on this panel.

Veterans Day in Washington, DC, 2011

The gathering of the Mobile Riverine Force/9th Infantry Division veterans had a good turnout to honor our Brothers in DC this week. We had about 40 people that participated in our wreath laying ceremony on Veterans Day. Dwight Strickland and Doug Smith made some comments and said prayers as wreaths were placed.

Bob "Doc" Pries
B Co. 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf

Right: MRFA Gathering at the Lincoln Memorial



Admiral Lopez Addresses MRFA Reunion

Admiral Thomas J. Lopez, USN, Ret.

Thank you. This has been a great reunion and perhaps the best one. I want to personally thank Albert Moore and the entire Mobile Riverine Force Association staff for making all of this possible. All of us have seen old friends and listened and danced to some great music. I am always happy when I can attend.

Before I begin my short address I want to share with you a humorous story about our most famous and oldest warship; the USS Constitution.

She never lost a battle and is still in commission today. I understand that we learned of this story some years ago when the ship's log was examined concerning her war cruise during the War of 1812.

The USS Constitution set sail from Boston harbor in August of 1812 with 475 officers and men and she had onboard the following supplies: 48,000 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shots, 11,000 pounds of black powder, a few thousands of pounds of food supplies, and 79,000 gallons of rum.

She sailed to the Caribbean

for training when she arrived in Jamaica in October. She took on 824 pounds of flour and 69,300 gallons of rum.

She was trained and ready for war. Constitution set sail for Great Britain. Enroute she stopped in the Azores Islands where she loaded 55 tons of beef and 64,800 gallons of Portuguese wine.

On 13 November 1812, she left the Azores and set sail for England. In the ensuing days USS Constitution defeated 5 British Men of War and sank 12 British merchant ships; she salvaged only their rum. By 27 January 1813, her powder and cannon shot were exhausted, and she could no longer engage other ships; nonetheless her brave landing party went ashore in the town of Clyde with only rifles and pistols and they captured a whiskey distillery and transferred nearly 40,000 gallons of scotch whiskey onboard.

Constitution was ready to sail for home. She made port in Boston on the 23rd of February 1813 and had onboard no cannon shot, no powder, no food, no rum, no whiskey, and no wine. She did,

however, have onboard 48,000 gallons of stagnant water. The Navy has changed a bit since those days.

Growing up as the grandson of Italian immigrants and the son of a former coal miner and the owner of a gas station in West Virginia, I could only dream of seeing the world as part of our Navy. I'm not certain that I knew where Vietnam was located when I enlisted as a teenager in the Navy in 1959. Little did I know that in less than 10 years I would be a young lieutenant in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Many years later, when I was the senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, then Secretary Dick Cheney, and we said in a private conversation what a remarkable country this is where a young man from Casper, Wyoming, and another youngster from a small coal mining town in Fayette County, West Virginia, can become the Secretary of Defense and an Admiral in the United States Navy.

There is simply something extraordinary about the United States of America. I visited over 60 countries in my Navy career and more since then, but the more I have learned about the world and the many wonderful countries in it, the more extraordinary I find my own country. We are not envious so much for our constitutional democracy or our wealth, but for our individual freedom. Our unique



Admiral Thomas J. Lopez USN (Ret.)

freedom and individual rights are what set us apart. And, one right that is not exactly spelled out in the Constitution or Bill of Rights is the right to succeed. Without that right, many of you nor could I be here today. Truly, in America as in no other country on earth, opportunity, perseverance, and determination allow you to achieve almost any goal.

I had the good fortune to be part of our Navy and our military and to serve side by side with Army, Air Force, Marines, and our allies. What you realize early on in your career is that there is never a successful one man ship or organization. I learned that first hand in River Division 153 in Vietnam. I certainly could not have success in the Navy without the support of the men in River Division 153. I would ask that the members of RivDiv 153 here today stand so that I may say thank you!

What I treasured most in my career was the opportunity to serve

I visited over 60 countries in my Navy career... the more I have learned about the world and the many wonderful countries in it, the more extraordinary I find my own country.



William "Hutch" and Jack Watson

Vets Gather at Kokomo, IN

September 16-18, 2011

Thanks to William "Hutch" and Corine Hutchinson for providing the pictures and also for Jack Watson for help manning the MRFA booth in Kokomo.



FROM THE GALLEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

be able to count on donations to help with the cost of the pig roast but with the economy the way it is donations have all but dried up. We checked with the hotel about a sit-down dinner. The cheapest meal was \$39 not counting taxes. Add taxes and it would have been close to \$90 for a couple. We tried the sandwich route with the hotel but we were talking close to \$10 a person so we had to go with snacks. I know some of you were disappointed in not having the pig roast, etc. Maybe next reunion, we can work out something with a new hotel. We did the best we could but who knew the hotel food would be terrible and the service as bad.

Frank and Linda Jones did an excellent job with the dance. The DJ was good. Andy Brigante and Herb Franklin put out a wine, cheese, and cracker layout that went over good--none was left. It was a first for me to see a **** Star Admiral out on the dance floor. He said he still had the moves? Saw Doc Baldwin doing the funky chicken; I mean the man was getting down... All-in-all, the dance went over real well and it was great seeing everyone enjoying themselves.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Albert

I was extremely pleased with the reunion this year. My wife had the best time at the dance. I tell you that because she remembered the awful time we had one year with the DJ. This time was the best and I think you had greater participation by the attendees, as evidenced by the crowded dance floor. The program on Saturday morning was your best in years. All speakers were on target and made excellent presentations. Each had a special theme that wowed the audience.

Karen and I are happy we came to the reunion. It was more than worthwhile. To spend a few days

with our brothers is a treat for all of us. Thank you and the many volunteers for all you do to keep us together.

Sincerely,
Douglas S. Smith, BG, USA (Ret.)

Dearest Al

Just a short note to let you know we (Frank and I) had a great time at the reunion as always.

I hope I did the MRFA proud with the raffles and all. We had a great bunch helping with the tables. Gunner did a terrific job at product sales. The men and women who helped at the registration table also did a great job. I hope we all made MRFA proud. What a wonderful organization to be a member of.

Hope you are resting up for the next one.

Hope to have more surprises for the raffle table. We sure do have a lot of talented men and women who donate raffle prizes. If you have any ideas that you think would make it even better, let me know.

I am going to send a shout out to Debbie and Paul and some of the ones that are on Facebook and thank them again for their great help. Sue and Rod are another great example of the MRFA.

Take care and keep in touch.

Love U Al
Mable (Thelma) One of the Raffle Queens! lol



50/50 winners Jim Masters (left), Gunner Stan, and Roger Grossinger (right)

This Sunday morning after most had already left the reunion, Mary and I walked past the River Division's hospitality room to hear a church service in progress with

some really good Gospel music rocking the house. Somehow it seemed appropriate and I think you arranged it. If you didn't, take credit anyway. Thanks again.

David and Mary Raybell
M-111-3, 1966-68

Funny! I knew they were coming in there as the hotel was concerned we wouldn't be out in time. Must have been the couple of beers we left them that made them sing so well!

Harry Hahn

Albert: Thanks for all you do! It was a great reunion this year. We had an outstanding turnout in the RivRon Room this year. The room was packed by people all the time. They all had a great time. Sorry we didn't have more time to talk as I was tied up in there for the whole time.

I'm glad Rich got to say a few words. Really tough! He has done so much. Take care of yourself. I know you push yourself maybe a little too hard when you're at the reunion. I told Gunner Blankenship, who has been a great friend of mine, that I would help him in San Diego with whatever he needs. That is, if he is able to find a hotel, etc., and it's a go! Take care my friend!

Harry Hahn
RivRon 13

Albert

It was truly an honor to do the Memorial Service. The Piper was great, Jim Johnson did well, and Gunner was great.

My emotions are still getting me, I was awake both nights going through that service wondering if I should do the poncho presentation, and how would it be received. When the Piper came in, then everyone stood up, I knew that all their emotions were where I wanted them to be. What a feeling. I had friends come from Nebraska, Virginia, Montana, etc. I didn't know how having the speakers before the service would

work, but it turned out great. I didn't get to hear much of it as I was out front of the hotel waiting for the Piper, praying he would show up.

I got a lot of comments saying the whole program from 10:00 to 12:00 was the best ever. We had great speakers. We had to leave after the service as my daughter was coming home early Sunday morning.

I truly didn't hear any complaints. My people all went and did their sightseeing, etc.

Again thanks for all you do, as I know it isn't easy, but you get it done, and done well.

Albert, it is truly an honor for me to be a part of this MRFA and help with the Memorial Service. I hope you ask me again for the next reunion.

Dave Schoenian

Albert, I can only imagine how tired you must be. I was honored to meet you (finally) and you are a sweetheart! Thanks for the hug. It was great!!!! If we can help you in any way at all, please let us know.

What a tremendous job you have done at this year's reunion, Albert. Wonderful speakers and great company. What a tribute to your dedication to the Riverine Force. Thank you so very much.

Also much gratitude and appreciation to Harry Hahn for the great job of hosting all of us in the RivRon Div Room.

Warmest regards
Ron and Nancy Baker

Albert

Thank you for putting on another great Mobile Riverine Reunion. It was great. I had an opportunity to re-unite with two more fellow infantryman with the 3rd/47th that were on the boat with me when we got hit on Friday the 13th in 1969 on the river boats.

Again, thank you for giving us the opportunity to again meet those that went through the hell we went through in Vietnam.

Jim Lundgard

Reunion, Pony Tail and WWP

Dennis et al., you are to be commended for being willing to have your pony tail "savagely cut off" by Chuck Howe, even if it was to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). Your pony tail has been your trademark for years. And, yes, many of us have teased you about it for years. And, yes, you took it all in stride. But, you were game... for a great cause.



Chuck Howe cutting the ponytail



Cpt Dennis McDougal, 3rd/60th 9th Inf Div

Unfortunately, I was exhausted on Friday evening and missed the dance and the events of having "contributions" in order for your hair to be publicly shorn.

John Iannucci asked that I deliver the money to the WWP. This was easy since I drove two days directly from Indy to Jacksonville, Florida, on Sunday and Monday for a couple of days of appointments back at the Mayo Clinic.

On Tuesday morning prior to my first appointment, Barbara and I delivered the cash to the WWP Headquarters. Since I had

been there before, there was no problem finding it.

While I waited for the money to be counted, a young man who looked in his mid-20s came into the WWP office. As he was waiting to see someone, he sat across from me. He had short hair and I asked him if he was in the service. He informed me that he was medically discharged in 2006. It was then that I noticed the scars on his neck area and partly on the side of his head. I was stunned as I once again was brought to

the sobering thought that combat does cause severe injury and does kill. Of all people, Dennis, you know that, don't you?

Then, as I was leaving, I saw a woman who looked to be in her 30s with one leg. Someone at WWP was helping her with her disability in some way. Seeing the woman also reminded me that in today's wars, females are also in harm's way as well.

The total amount raised for WWP was \$1,339. I asked the lady at WWP to please write a letter to you to acknowledge that the money was given in honor of you.

By the way, the beginning of my radiation treatments were delayed for 6 days in order to do all the geometric calculations that are way beyond my small brain to comprehend. I leave Sunday and we will basically move to Jacksonville for the next 6 weeks. First treatment is scheduled for Monday.

It was great seeing all you at the reunion. I do love you all.

*In brotherhood,
Jim Johnson*



47th Infantry Reunion will be in April

The 6th Biennial 47th Infantry Regimental Reunion will be held in Fort Benning-Columbus, Georgia, April 25-29, 2012. The reunion will be at the Holiday Inn-North, Columbus, Georgia. Room rates are \$82 per night, per room. You may begin making reservations at any time, but you must call before March 25, 2012, to get this rate. The best way to make your reservations is to call the hotel directly at 706-324-0231 and tell the reservations clerk the reservation code is "47th Infantry Reunion." Another option is to call Holiday Inn toll free at 1-888-465-4329. We have reserved a block of 145 rooms, but they will go quickly, so make your reservations soon! For more information, contact Russ Vibberts at 860-684-2072, cell 860-832-1020, or rvibberts@gmail.com.

FROM THE GALLEY CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

I was apprehensive about attending this reunion (being a Coast Guard Veteran). I did not know how I would be received. It was remarkable, as no one knew me from before, yet I was received and treated like a Brother.

I came away feeling great. I cannot wait until the next reunion. *God Bless you and the rest of the guys.*

*Semper Paratus,
Daniel Cannode (GM2DG)
Coast Guard Squadron One
Point Grey 82324
Cat Lo, RVN 1969- 197*

Daniel
WONDERFUL! Together then... Together Again! We are all glad that you were well accepted and enjoyed the reunion.

*Warm Regards
Mike Harris (RM2)
River Assault Squadron 15*



Daniel Cannode

finished orders back to Saigon to be dispersed to individuals. I also hauled mail back and forth to Nha Be from FPO at COMNAV-FOR-V compound. Seeing and meeting many of my shipmates who benefited from my minor efforts made me feel like I belonged. We are a unique bunch of people I will say that. The bond is special.

*John Gibbs
"The terror of the Nha Be Road"*

Ok Albert, Here is my feedback from my first MRFA reunion: Main rooms/Exhibits/Grand Hall--Excellent layout, well prepared, and lots of rooms to visit/review exhibits/etc.

Ditto Daniel Was with NAVSUPACT SGN. Any Navy or Marine who went on R&R in '69 could thank me for hauling his request to the Saigon computer and then taking

Hotel--Poorly prepared for crowd, not staffed for restaurant, didn't honor room requests for king bed/oversold, food prices for breakfast buffet were extremely high \$16, and most ice machines not working on rear end of floors. On the positive side, price for rooms very good (\$79/plus tax), extremely good location as concerns for trip from airport, and friendly, accommodating front desk staff.

Speakers--Great selection of speakers. Good Missing Man table ceremony, well done.

Delta to DMZ dance--Great music, good attendance, lots of fun for all. DJ could have thrown in a little "Good morning, Vietnam"



winner of quilted print

routine as was heard over AFRN-Vietnam to really jog some memories.

Golf Tournament--Nice, simple course, easy distance from hotel, some distractions as to shirts/prizes/scores and team re-arranging were needed, results not posted nor announced during reunion, etc. (Yes, I realize that the organizer had to attend to his mother who was very ill. However, if he had passed it on to a designated fill in, we could have helped them with details/plans/etc.). Fun event and was enjoyed by all!

The main purpose of the reunion is to meet up and visit with all the people we served with in 'Nam and it accomplished that in spades!! Thanks for the work/effort of all who helped put this together and we look forward to the next one!

*All the best,
Al Taylor*

Albert, just wanted to say thanks to you and your staff for a wonderful reunion.

Rod Walker

Remembering My Pal, Bill Geier, and June 19, 1967

By Bill Reynolds, 2nd Platoon,
Charlie Company, 4th/47th
(May '66-January '68)

Bill Geier and the rest of us came together in May of 1966, as the 9th Infantry Division was reactivated for combat in Viet Nam. All of us trained together and bonded close friendships for many months before our January 1967 train trip from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Oakland, California. Then, onto a troop ship, the USS General John Pope, and three weeks later landing at Vung Tau Harbor, South Viet Nam.

At each leg of the trip, our 9th Infantry Division band sent us gloriously on as we naively believed the mighty 9th would bring an end to the war by year's end. To me, Bill Geier was already a hero even before the morning of June 19, 1967, when the 4th/47th disembarked from Navy landing craft in rice paddies down in the Mekong Delta. Bill had already risen to many occasions to patch up our wounded. This fateful day, Charlie Company was on yet another search and destroy mission with the 2nd Platoon taking point and I ended up as point man. All morning, we humped from one dry rice paddy to the next while flanking a narrow tributary that fed into a larger Mekong River. Unbeknownst to us riflemen, U.S. Intelligence had provided a location for the 5th Nha Be VC Battalion, and our job was to seek and destroy it.

It was late morning, when the first shot rang out causing everyone to instantly hit the ground. I found myself lying exposed in the middle of a rice paddy and I quickly sprang up and raced back 50 yards to a rice paddy dike for cover. As I ran, all of our guys were scrambling for cover as bullets and rockets were screaming through the air. The Viet Cong were heavily entrenched on the other side of a narrow

river. Clearly, we found our enemy. Several of our guys who were in small river boats were immediately killed. A sniper was hitting men all around me from a tree line off to our left rear and that's when Bill Geier came hustling up exposing himself to enemy fire to help as we were yelling, "Medic--Medic." First, he bandaged Lt. Jack Benedick's RTO Bob French who had been hit in his lower back and then Bill began patching Ronnie Bryan's buttocks' wound. I was firing my M79 grenade launcher towards a tree line when a bullet blasted right through my barrel, narrowly missing me. Suddenly, Bill was hit as he was giving a shot of morphine to Ronnie. I tried everything to bandage him and to keep him talking. For a while, he talked and he guided me with his bandaging. Lt. Benedick yelled out instructing me that if it was a bubbling wound the plastic must go down. I didn't fully realize it at first but Bill was mortally wounded.

I desperately wanted him to keep talking to me, but Bill's breath and his life just slowly slipped away . . . and there was simply nothing that I could do for him.

For hours, Huey gunships and jets were screaming in from the rear slamming the entrenched enemy with a few rockets hitting our side of the river; a few guys were hit with friendly fire. At one point, a courageous medevac pilot came right in for our wounded and we hustled Bob French onboard. The Huey took many VC bullets as the pilot attempted lift-off and his door gunner was hit. Suddenly the Huey slammed right down swing the rotor hard right throwing Bob onto the ground and

narrowly missing a few troopers. Other medevacs landed way to the rear for our wounded. I looked back once and saw a group of our wounded guys scramble onto a chopper and as I watched it go airborne, it was hit about 100 feet in the air. We were all yelling, "Go—Go—Go!" Weaving and sputtering, it lost control and went crashing down onto its side losing everyone onboard. At least four Hueys were shot down that day.

By late afternoon as the firing diminished, we were ordered back to the Navy Tangos at the river's bank. Captain Herb Lind informed us that we're going to cross the river and assault Charlie's positions. Landing on the other side, we began running and shooting everywhere as the

enemy scattered. They still had a little fight left with small arms fire and mortar shells coming in but the battle seemed almost over. Suddenly, a mortar came whistling in exploding nearby and hitting my firing hand with fragments. My M16 had been jamming as I attempted to shoot a VC and I had to extract each spent shell with my fingernails and I was plenty pissed off. That's when I got hit. When I scrambled back to find a medic, I was cussin' a blue streak when I came upon Chaplain Windmiller who ignored my bad language and said, "Go to the boat, son." There I was bandaged, along with several other troopers, and we were lifted out of there. I'll never forget how fortunate I was that my wound was not life threatening and that sniper's bullet had missed me when it blasted my grenade launcher's barrel. Certainly, that sniper had me pinned in his cross hairs.



Doc Bill Geier

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

ADMIRAL LOPEZ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

with and be supported by sailors, soldiers, airmen, and marines. In Vietnam we were in joint warfare when "joint" wasn't cool. The Pentagon didn't recognize it until the '80s. For myself working with regular Army, Special Forces, and Assault Forces when in the River Division was a great learning experience. But when I think back about it, even in Vietnam there was some humor when you put Army and Navy together in the Mekong Delta!

I remember one instance where I was on patrol and we had an Army squad aboard that we were going to insert. Behind me a young private said to his sergeant, "Sarge, I don't like being on this little river. The VC are going to pick us off." The sergeant reassured him by saying, "We would beach soon and offload on the land." I smiled! We then did



USS Constitution

a flanking movement and nosed into the beach and the boat captain yelled at the soldiers, "You guys hurry up. We're sitting ducks while we're on this beach." I smiled again! Everybody, even in war, has their comfort zone.

We had a tremendous number of awesome weapons at our disposal, but none were as awesome as the people operating them. Riverine people of all services were special and heroism was an everyday

event. I considered anyone in my division or for that matter in Vietnam, a hero just for being there and doing their job. Numerous medals were awarded; some for doing things above and beyond the call of duty, but in Navy language everyone took care of their shipmate. Everyone had someone else's back and heroism was routine. It was almost expected.

I hope all of you have had the chance to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It is a fitting tribute to some of the finest, most brave men and women who have ever worn our nation's uniforms. The names on that Wall ensure that we will never forget those who gave their tomorrows for our today. But it is also a tribute to all who served and is our nation's way of thanking all of you who returned home.

It is my dream and yours that someday we will have no more veterans of war to honor because

we will have no more wars. But where there is peace on earth it is because in large measure men and women of the United States Armed Forces, like us, have been there. Peace and freedom will always depend on American leadership and American resolve just as it depended on us in Vietnam. We should take heart that the standards you set in patriotism, dedication, professionalism, and courage are now being followed by young Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq. We should be thankful that this new generation of Americans has assumed the obligations that freedom demands. You, the veterans of Vietnam, paved the way and set the standard. This nation is stronger and better because of who you are and what we have given. You should never forget that! God bless you and the United States of America. Thank you! ♦

From the Membership

August 14, 2011

Dear MRFA Members

My son who is an NYPD Police Officer was patrolling Staten Island, New York, on a sunny afternoon when he pulled up to a red light and observed the license plate holder on the car next to him with the markings 9th Infantry, Mobile River Force. Knowing I was in the MRF, he opened his window and asked the gentleman driving if he was a member, the man replied, "Yes." My son then informed him that his father was a member and the man asked him to pull over to the side of the road. My son exited the vehicle and approached the man who asked, "What's your father's name?" He replied, "Bob McMillan." Just like his. The man smiled and identified himself as John Gallo while stating your father and me were in the same unit Company A, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division. John then gave my son two commemorative medallions, one of his good friend George Lang who won the Medal of Honor while serving in the unit and the other displaying the unit insignia of the Mobile River Force 9th Infantry.

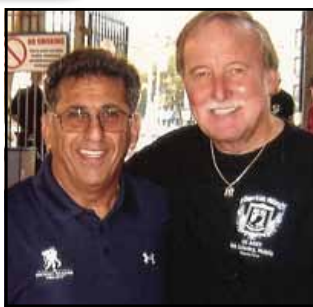
Needless to say my son contacted me with John's telephone number and we got together for the first time in over 41 years. I brought some old photos of Ray Kwarter, David Mack, Bill Chase, and

others and reminisce about old times. John told me he was good friends with George Lang who passed away in 2005. John also informed me that George got him involved in the Wounded Warrior Project where he does a lot of fund raising. John invited me and my family to a Wounded Warrior Project fundraiser at the NY Yankees Staten Island minor league baseball game that overlooks the Manhattan Skyline and the Statue of Liberty.



John Gallo receiving a check for the WWP

I attended the game with my 7-year-old grandson and other family members and was impressed how John coordinated the Wounded Warrior Project. As you approached the outside of the stadium, various military organizations were represented with vehicles of all types staged on the sidewalk for the kids to interact with along with rides. Prior to the first pitch, John had a representative from each branch of the service for each War throw out the first pitch.



John Gallo and Robert McMillan

He then had a military helicopter buzz the stadium that made the kids look in awe. Topping it off, John was presented with a large check for the Wounded Warrior Project. I am proud to know John Gallo who is a true American who continues to fight for all men and woman who ever served in uniform.

I'm a firm believer that whatever is meant to be is meant to be in this life is meant to be. Here we are 41 years later and if my son did not pull up to that traffic light or John never moved to Staten Island from Queens or didn't have a Mobile Riverine Force license plate frame no meeting would have taken place. You know it's kind of like the old movie/TV series (1948-1963) "The Naked City" where the commentator says, "There are eight million stores in the Naked City and this is one of them. I hope you enjoy this story.

God Bless America
Robert McMillan
Staten Island, NY
718-612-4463

Hope you enjoyed the reunion

We want everyone to know that the reunion doesn't end after our memorial tribute and speakers on Saturday. We have moved the dance to Friday evening so everybody can enjoy a restful Saturday afternoon and evening visiting with their shipmates and friends. It also leaves open visiting downtown Indianapolis, the race track, casino, or the many other sites of Indianapolis. We are sorry for any confusion that these changes caused at our last reunion. We are just striving to make these reunions as enjoyable and restful as possible for everyone. This includes leaving a little time for the board members and their families to enjoy the reunion also.

Thanks again and see you at the next reunion in 2013.
- Frank Jones

Thanks Volunteers!

We would like to thank all the wonderful volunteers who helped out at the reunion. Their support was greatly appreciated.

If we missed anyone please excuse us as it was not meant intentional: Rod and Sue Walker, Paul and Debbie Jefferson, Sandy Marthenze, Lyn Blankenship, Mabel "Thelma" Springer, Janice Boblitt, Sue Hanmer, Marty Aegler, Sandy Weiss, Debra Pries, Robert and Esther Lightwine, Linda Jones, Wesley and Lillian Spyke, Robert and Betty Schrader, Maureen Brigante, Jeannie Baldwin, Kathryn Goudelock, and Diane Jones.

Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

- New Member Associate Member Renewal Sponsor
 Donation CCB-18 Mobile Museum
 Change of address below.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

- Postal Delivery Go Green with Email

Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone _____
Cell _____
E-mail _____

- WW-II Korea Vietnam

Army Member
Unit (Division, Brigade, Battalion, Company, Platoon, Battery)

Navy Member
Unit (Ship, Boat Hull Numbers, Navy Activity/Detachment, etc.)

Dates Served in Unit (mm/yr - mm/yr) _____ to _____

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- 1 Year \$20 3 Years \$50

DONATION

- _____

To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable To MRFA) to Charlie Ardingner, MRFA Membership Chairman, 1857 County Road, A14, Decorah, IA 52101-7448.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

MRFA,

I attended the MRFA reunion in Indianapolis this past Labor Day at the invitation of Mike Harris. I am the brother of David A. Land, who was KIA 1-14-69, T-151-5. My father, Ed Land, and I were each honored with a flag and citation, at your Saturday memorial service. There are not enough words to tell your fine organization how honored, challenged, and comforted we were by your profound and thoughtful program on Saturday. I can say that the Navy took excellent care of my parents and us all as they saw us through the ordeal of David's return home. But after all these years, to be surrounded by my brother's shipmates, to shake their hands, hear their stories, and know their love and respect endures to this day for my brother, brought a deeper healing than I thought possible. I have a special thanks to Vic Unruh, John Dabbs, John Gibbs, Bruce Graff, Douglas Neathery, and our host, Mike Harris, who so graciously made this experience possible.

Thank you.
Joe Land

Member Notes

The MRFA and all its members wish Mrs. Bill Fulton widow of LtGen Bill Fulton Happy Birthday as she just turned a young 90 years old - Albert

Correction

Correction for the Fall River Currents, volume 20, Number 3

Rich Corrick's email is ortrlc@aol.com.





Master of Ceremonies
Gunner Stanley

Chaplain
Jim Johnson

Gunner presents flag to
Thomas Hamm

Chaplain
Richard MacCullagh

MajGen
Blackie Bolduc

Dave
Schoenian

Charlie
Ardingier

Memorial Services held at 2011 Reunion

David Alden Land Family

David Alden Land was Killed in Action when T-151-5 was hit by a large water mine on January 14, 1969. We also lost Jose Ballantine Campos in the same incident.

A few years ago, Joe Land, David's brother, made contact with me via my "Riverine Sailor" Guestbook. I had posted a tribute to David and Jose several years earlier and Joe came across it while searching the Internet. After a few weeks the contact dissolved.

In the spring of 2011, I was contacted by a gentleman who had been named after David. His father, Clyde "CW" "Pete" Peterson, served on Z-152-1 and was present when T-151-5 was sunk. He was so touched by the loss that he named his son "David."

David Peterson was searching for the "Land" family. I had not had contact with Joe for years, but felt it was worth researching my old emails to see if I could find an email address. I found one, but did not have much confidence that it would be good as it was 6 to 7 years old. Much to my surprise, Joe was still using the same email address. I let him know that, David, a namesake of his brother's, was interested in talking to the family. Joe was surprised and honored that someone had not only remembered David, but had also named his son after him.

Joe and I began chatting via email as well. After a few communications, he called me and we talked on the phone for over an hour. It was good for me to learn more about the Land family. Joe was 14 when David lost his life. They also have an older brother named Michael and a younger sister named Diane. Their mother, Peggy, passed away in 2005, but their father, E. H. "Ed" Land is still living. He is a proud WWII veteran who served on the USS Sitkoh Bay (CVE-89) throughout the Pacific Theater.

Joe began to send me photos of David from when he was young and after he joined the Navy. I must admit that they tore at my heart in a way that I haven't experienced in a long time. In almost all cases when we lost sailors on the rivers and canals, we never had contact with their families. A saying prevailed during those days of close combat with the enemy. It was simply, "It don't mean nuthin!" In reality, it was our attempt to avoid grief and survive combat. If we convinced ourselves that it did not mean anything to lose our fellow combatants, then we could somehow move onward. It didn't work as we sailors who survived dozens of vicious ambushes still grieved those young men who were Killed in Action.

If I were to choose a couple of words filled with meaning regarding this story they would be "remembrance" and "survival." As I talked to Joe and later Ed Land, it became acutely apparent

that the family needed to know that someone who knew their son and brother had never forgotten him. It has been over 42 years since that fateful day and the family has had very little communication with anyone who knew and served with David. After much discussion with Joe, he also became aware that we who survived had very little means to relate to the family so we grieved in our own personal way.

It hit me strongly that we fellow sailors had shared David's life for a few short months after he left his family to never see them again in person. We were, in a very special way, gifted with David's presence to love and take care of for those few months. Many of us have felt for years that we did not do a good enough job. Not only with David, but with all of our other young men who were Killed in Action fighting against the communists.

The years and decades had passed with much remembrance and survival not only with the Land Family, but also with we who had fought side by side with David.

My personal recollections of David are that he was a very handsome young 19-year-old with an infectious smile. Even though I was not a Christian at the time, I knew that there was something special about David. He played the guitar on lonely nights, which brought great solace to us young men who fought for our lives on a daily basis. Ironically, Jose Campos was much like David. He seemed to always sport a wonderful smile and countenance. I believe they were meant to be together for that short period of time in their lives.

“ *Before David joined the Navy, he had a profound dream ... that he was on a small boat, there was a large explosion, and he died.* ”

One day I told Joe about the upcoming Mobile Riverine Force Association reunion that was going to be held in late August 2011. About how our association made a special effort to not only honor our lost sailors and soldiers, but to also honor the families of those Killed in Action. I suggested that he might want to consider attending. Joe was a bit apprehensive and said that he would think about it.

After a few more emails Joe told me that he was strongly considering attending the reunion. I then suggested that his father come too. He was quick to state that, even after over 42 years, it would be too tender for his Dad.

One day I received an email from Joe. He was

excited to inform me that his father had reconsidered and had decided to attend. I was elated as I sensed that something special was about to happen. I also prayed for God's divine doors to continue to open for the Land Family.

When Joe and Ed arrived in Indianapolis, they asked me out to dinner. Joe had done business in the city and was familiar with a nice Italian restaurant up the freeway from the Wyndham Hotel where the reunion was being held. They picked me up at the entrance and we drove about 5 miles north to the restaurant.

One of the first things I noticed was that Ed was wearing his WWII hat. Up to that point, I did not realize that he was even a veteran. Later Joe told me that David had always wanted to grow up and be a sailor like his father.

The evening felt like a blind date to me. Last year I had traveled back to the exact spot where T-151-5 had been sunk to salute David and Jose. Now here I was communicating in person with the father and son David.

As we ate dinner, I began to be impacted with certain facts. We who served with David were able to share intimately with him in person while the Land family only had letters to communicate with him after they sent him off at the airport. The family had grieved profoundly for years, but they hadn't realized how David's death had affected so many of we boat sailors. I also witnessed how fresh the loss had been on Ed and Joe even though his passing was over four decades ago.

All three of us were like sponges. We wanted to soak up all of the details that we could from each other's experiences. Tears came to the surface and the Spirit of God was in our midst. As time passed we all became more comfortable with our situation.

As we entered the Wyndham Hotel, we strolled through the corridors. I pointed out each individual hospitality room. No one seemed to notice us until we approached a couch just before the main hospitality room. Two men rose quickly and one said, "Are you the Land family?!" Both men knew David as they had served in the same Naval Reserve unit with him in Wichita, Kansas. Again, tears emerged as stories were shared. It was very pleasing to Ed and Joe that someone not only remembered their son/brother, but also came to meet them. Other sailors would step forward as the weekend passed along.

Later that evening in the River Assault Squadron Hospitality Room I could see that Ed was weary, but he was willing to stay up late to absorb whatever he could. Joe mingled and spoke with several



Missing Man Ceremony



In Memory of all who gave their lives



Gunner presents flag to Joe Land



Gunner presents flag to Ed Land

DOC BALDWIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

bleeding, having been shot...we search for answers, but they do not come. We all have our Bruce Clarks and stand for them today.

It was June of 1984 that Jeannie and I first saw The Wall in Washington and standing in front of the '68-69 year's panels... the name BRUCE CLARK came at me from the black granite. He had died!...somewhere. And so the search and the digging and finally, the answer: a giant blood clot killed him instantly in February 1969 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I held Jeannie and we both thought....blind, severely damaged.

So..... Where are we now? Our daughter, Nancy went to Vietnam for her company. Landing at Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon (HoChiMinh City), she told the articulate English speaking Viet taxi driver, "My dad was stationed at Long Binh." In perfect English he said, "That, little lady, is exactly where we are going. It is where the REEBOK factory is located." And home to Columbia sportswear and Fruit of the Loom, among others. Our war is over; the page has been turned forever.

Regardless of your political position, we all must understand that our great nation is engaged in a new and deadly war, which

will last well into and beyond, our final years. We cannot even guess as to the outcome. It is no longer a "given" that once again, America will prevail. Our oceans and even our skies and borders are no longer protective. Your grandkids may be asked to serve, or, you and your families may become victims of attacks of great violence in our own country.

“ *We all need to rededicate our lives to the best there is, to our country and to our fellow man, and to the honor of those who have died. This is our obligation to our fallen brothers.* ”

I believe that this time is no different from 1941. There are those who understand reality and those who are lost in La-la land. None of us can see the future, but we face a determined enemy, the name of which is radical Islam, which translated means "to submit" or "to bring into submission." It is YOU that must be brought into submission. The goal of those who wish to kill us is not so much to take away "our stuff" but to take away our religious faith and our way of life. Someday, they may use suicide bombers here at home in a mall or airport or football stadium. This possibility is more likely, more deadly, more

terrifying, and infinitely cheaper than an atomic bomb, and they have no hesitation to do this.

I bring these thoughts to you, during this address on Vietnam, because we can no longer remain in denial...from our top elected officials on down. We are at a critical point in history. It could be May of 1939 when the Paris night-clubs hummed with laughter and

the clink of glasses, but 6 weeks later, Hitler stood under the Arc de Triumph, shaking his swagger stick. Or it could be 1974, when we abandoned Vietnam after years of fruitless struggle for a cause we still do not understand. Or it could be something entirely different, and unimaginably worse.

No matter what the historic parallels, as we approach the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, I believe WE, and particularly people like you, the Riverines, should speak up and LEAD. I believe in the valor and goodness of the American spirit, which surfaced in phone calls from doomed 9/11 planes on their way into buildings and fields: "I don't

know if we'll make it out. I love you and I love the kids," and, after saying the Lord's Prayer with a Verizon operator, Todd Beamer on United Flight 93, headed for the White House, uttered the valiant, "OK, Let's Roll!"

At the tomb of England's Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey, are these words by the poet W. H. Auden: "To save your world, you asked this man to die, would this man, could he see you now... ask 'Why?'"

We all need to rededicate our lives to the best there is, to our country and to our fellow man, and to the honor of those who have died. This is our obligation to our fallen brothers.

No matter what the price, not one of us, man or woman, soldier or family, can say today that Vietnam did not make us better people, stronger people, and more patriotic people. We survived it all, the survivor guilt, the pain, and the aftermath. We are stronger and better for it, and for that we can only say..."Amen brother!!"

It is your time, once again, to stand up!

God bless you all. Thank you for the special honor of speaking to our remarkable Band of Brothers! Thank you for allowing me to share my beliefs and my thoughts in the spirit of Freedom. ♦

MEMORIAL SERVICES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

former boat sailors.

One piece of history that struck me like a sledgehammer came from Ed. Before David joined the Navy, he had a profound dream that he shared with his father. He said that he was on a small boat, there was a large explosion, and he died. It shocked his father, but he told his son that "As long as he was right with God that he would be ok." Neither man knew then how prophetic David's dream would become. It is estimated that T-151-5 was hit by a 500-750 pound command detonated water mine taking the lives of David, Jose Campos, and at least one Vietnamese soldier.

While talking to Joe on the telephone and via email, it was as if I was reliving what happened so many years ago. But, there were new details now--the photos of sailors at attention in dress blues, pea coats, and holding rifles at the funeral.

How "Rega," David's treasured horse, whinnied and acted up when David's casket was removed from the hearse. How the Land's home church, seating one thousand people, overflowed out into the grounds and parking lot. All a tribute to how a young man had impacted so many people at such a young age.

As the MRFA Reunion came to a close, Ed Land placed his hand on my shoulder. He said that it was very touching to know that so many cared for his son after the family had last seen him. The most comforting aspect to him was that David had turned out to be the fine Christian man that he was raised to be. Then he spoke of the "next Reunion." God had been faithful to bring comfort and peace to Ed and Joe Land. They then carried the blessings back to the rest of the family, loved ones, and friends to share with them.

In closing, I would like to mention one more special happening. Unbeknownst to Joe, his wife,

Julie, was putting together a scrapbook about David's life. One evening Joe arrived home and found Julie in tears with the scrapbook in front of her. He asked what was wrong. She uttered, "I never knew David, but now I know him and I also miss him."

A contemporary word today for overcoming tragedy is "Closure." The Land Family, as well as many boat sailors, received something special over that weekend. It is easy to call it "Closure," but I would rather use the word "Grace." God, as only He can do, provided His divine comfort and peace to a family that has been struggling alone with their loss for over four decades.

Michael A. Harris (RM2)
River Assault Squadron 15
River Assault Division 152
Boat: T-152-1
July 1968 to July 1969
♦

Remember the Unmistakable YD-220 Crane

Hello Albert, I've had the MRFA membership for a few years now and have always enjoyed receiving and reading River Currents. Always saddened to read TAPS but also pleased at how others have come forward to share their VN experiences. It's possible that I missed anything previously printed but after reading Don Blankenship's "Boats and Ships of the MRF," I could not help but consider that I've never read or seen anything in RC about one VERY important vessel that played a BIG role in the MRF.

That vessel would be YD-220, the unmistakably large floating crane tied to the ammi-piers at Dong Tam.

I was one of three YD-220 crew members from March through September of 1969, having served at Dong Tam from September '68 through September '69.



YD-220 YRBM-17 Dong Tam

Roy Haake, an E6 Electrician's Mate was our skipper (on his third or fourth VN tour at that time). He was the chief operator of the crane.

James McNulty EN3 was another of my mates. The two of us were responsible for among many things, keeping all things mechanical greased and oiled, ready at a moment's notice to fire up the massive Chicago-Pneumatic power plant to start generating electricity for the next "lift."

Climbing the "boom" with grease guns and zerk fittings in hand to lube the myriad cable wheels and pinned couplings was also part of our task.

Primarily, we lifted all manner of watercraft, ATCs, ASPBs, and PBRs for dry-docking or whatever other reason. But occasionally we'd be "tugged" out onto the river to perform a lift for the MRF that would be anchored mid-stream.

I will always remember the

ATC that was brought in to us by a salvage craft...the ATC had flipped over during an operation somewhere out in the boonies. This was one of the ATCs that had a helo-deck.

It took divers and Roy's skills most of the day to get the rigging in place before we were able to right the vessel and ultimately lift it up and placed on an ammi barge for salvage.

I never got confirmation but was told there were many casualties that day when a jammed bow ramp allowed the boat to take on water, leading to the overturning.

We lifted a lot of MRF vessels that met up with less than desirable conditions while on their post.

That crane was huge and an obvious target for VC rockets and other manner of explosives that they liked to lob at it. It was obviously an important part of the NSA Dong Tam operations and the VC who posed as day workers on the base (I never understood why those little fu%^ng creeps were given the freedom to roam all over that place) were very aware of what a score it would be to take it out of commission.

The crane was, in fact, struck numerous times during my time at Dong Tam.

When the ammo dump (built by the VC laborers) went up in March 1969, huge, red hot shards of artillery projectiles rained down on us. McNulty and I avoided serious injury, or worse as we scrambled from the engine room where we lived, to the bunker on deck (where Roy lived). The shrapnel did serious damage to the lift/boom cables and we were in fact out of



YD-220 Dong Tam

commission for about a week as we waited for a replacement cable to arrive from the Philippines.

There are many more stories but I just wanted to give an introduction and send along some photos.

YD-220 YRBM-17 Dong Tam

Best regards to you and the MRFA membership.

Wally Barnick EN4

NSA Dong Tam 1968-'69

To those who ever served or went into Dong Tam you could not miss YD-220. She played a very important role in the Brown Water Navy... A job well done to all who served on her. Albert ♦

REMEMBERING BILL GEIER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Later, I learned Alpha Company, 4th/47th had been nearly wiped out that day and altogether 47 brave soldiers had given the ultimate sacrifice with many more wounded. The Viet Cong left 250 dead communist fighters lying out there.

Over the years much has been written about our June 19th battle near Ap Bac Village and I know more is yet to be written. However, it should be noted that although Alpha Company was pretty much decimated that terrible day losing 31 Killed in Action and almost everyone else wounded, the troopers of Alpha Company were as brave and as skilled as any in the 9th Infantry Division. Periodically, writers have indicated that Alpha troopers tired and bunched up causing their breakdown. Having

“ *A sniper was hitting men all around me from a tree line... and that's when Bill Geier came hustling up exposing himself to enemy fire to help as we were yelling, Medic! Medic!* ”

communicated with a number of Alpha troopers, I believe this is not exactly the right explanation of Alpha's predicament. Alpha Company RTO Sonny Castellano wrote: "We were crossing a dry rice paddy just before noon when we got the call to hit the deck because Sgt John Hill who was on point had spotted a claymore, so we all hit the deck. That's when all hell broke loose; I was 5 yards in front of Sgt Zimmer. We were in

no way bunched up; we were spread out so far that we covered several rice paddies." Having read the After Actions Reports and speaking with a number of 4th/47th officers, I think it's fair to say that Alpha Company's suffering resulted from an inexperienced Company Commander. It's generally known that their CO directed his troopers to patrol across open rice paddies rather than through adjacent tree lines and/or sending recon patrols into the trees. That is where the heavily armed VC were hunkered down in reinforced bunkers.

To this day, I can still visualize Bill Geier's face--although we were all only 19- to 21-years old, his face seemed so much younger. I will never forget the bravery of Bill Geier and all of the men in the 4th/47th and the 3rd/47th on that horrendous day. Lt. Jack Benedick saw to it that Bill Geier was awarded the Silver Star posthumously for his heroism. ♦

Diary Entries from June 19, 1967

Dear Mr. Ardinger

My name is Jerry Matheis and I just received the River Currents (Volume 20, Number 3, Fall 2011) that has the battle of the 19th of June near Can Giuoc in it. I was there and all this brings back a lot of memories. I was with B Co. 4th of the 47th 9th Inf Div. We came up behind A Co. to try and help them out of the fight that they got into. I was pinned down in the mud for 4 hours until we were able to get back to the waterway after dark. I have pictures of the battlefield and the air strikes that were taking place and also pictures of some men from my squad taken on the 20th of June. I also have what I wrote in my diary from the 19th, 20th, and the 21st of June.

19th of June

We left the pontoon at 5:30 in the morning. We got off of the boats at 8:00 and then moved fairly slowly through wide-open rice paddies. During the morning, we checked out all kinds of buildings and picked up three suspects that were later taken in to be interrogated and locked up. At noon we heard a lot of shooting over to our right and front. A Company and C Company were over that way. We got word that they were in a lot of trouble and that we were supposed to go over and get them out of it. We moved over behind A Company and getting a lot of sniper fire all the time. Nobody was hit at this time. We saw where an evacuation chopper was shot down and was being hauled away by a Chinook chopper. About then another chopper came in to pick up some wounded and when he took off he went straight up and came right back down on its side. I think that all the people in it were killed. An hour later they had that chopper out of there. We were still trying to get up behind A Company. We heard that A Company only had about 12 or 13 men left that were not wounded or killed in the whole company. It was really bad. Our second platoon got up alongside of A Company and they got hit really hard.

One man named Martin was the machine gunner and he was killed right away. Another machine gunner was also hit in the shoulder. He lay out in the open and nobody could get to him to help him. He was hit three more times in the legs and bleed to death. A whole mess of guys from 1st and 2nd Platoons were wounded. Finally it was dark and we were supposed to go up and help 2nd Platoon get their wounded out. Three guys went up to help and Dave Cox was hit by a sniper in the arm.

|| ————— ||

One of the men that we found was hit in the head the day before and woke up and did not know where to go until we got there. The last thing he remembered was seeing a VC and then he was knocked out again until morning.

|| ————— ||

They got up to where 2nd Platoon was bringing their wounded through and a short artillery round fell on them and wounded about 10 guys. Three of these guys were in my squad. Sgt E6 Johnnie Jones was hit really bad. They did not know if he was going to live or not. They wrapped his arm up to his body and sent him in. We found out later that he made it and was sent to Japan. Our Company had 12 wounded and 2 dead at that time. Now they decided that it was dark enough to move up alongside of A Company to help them out. When we got up there they said that they had at least 5 wounded and about 15 or 20 dead lying out there in the open rice paddy. They wanted us to go out there and get the wounded out for them. So four

of us (Jerry Matheis, my squad Bob Good, Jim Miller, and Ernie Slavik) went out there without our rifles. All we had were two hand grenades in each pocket and went out there. I was scared shitless. We found five guys out there, two were dead and three were wounded. We made a litter out of a poncho and carried one back to the water that we were in. We did this three or four more times and got them all back to the water. Boy I was never so scared in all of my life. You could hear all the guys laying out there calling for help. They were really in bad shape. All the while that we were getting those guys out, they were shooting artillery flares off so we were standing out there in almost daylight. We were only about 50 to 75 meters away from the enemy bunkers.

20th June

We sat in a river all night that was waist deep in mud and neck high in water. I did not sleep at all that night. Who the hell could sleep after what had just happened the day before. The next morning they called in air strikes again just like they did the day before. They could not get the VC out so they started dropping napalm and that stopped everything right now. After that was all done, we started to sweep the open rice paddy and found all kinds of dead bodies from A Company out there. One of the men that we found was hit in the head the day before and woke up and did not know where to go until we got there. The last thing he remembered was seeing a VC and then he was knocked out again until morning. We swept the area and found all kinds of bunkers and things all blown up. We did not police up the VC bodies because the ones that they did not drag away they bobby trapped for us. Finally, the action was all over and we set up for the night alongside of the gun boats that did a really good job and saved a lot of lives.

21st of June

The next morning they policed up all of the dead that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14





Mobile Memorial Museum Travels

Since taking over the duties of driving the Mobile Museum Trailer in June, we have had some good times—showing and displaying it. We first went to Eitzen, Minnesota, for the 4th of July Parade and then to Harmony, Minnesota, in the afternoon. At both places, it was open to the public for about 2 hours. We also went to Decorah, Iowa, later in July for their Norwegian celebration. We took it through the parade and the public could view it. We were then sponsored by the American Legion from Parkersburg, Iowa, to come to their town's celebration and parade. Again it was open to the public to view. We got a lot of good comments on the memorial and we even picked up a few donations. People don't realize this memorial/museum exists. We then took it to Indianapolis for our reunion and all went well there. The last place we took it was Cresco, Iowa, to the Crestwood High School. The teachers wanted to use it for a tool to teach the Junior High and High School kids about history and Vietnam.

It went over well, we had Charlie Ardinger, Ed Ottney, and myself helping explain things and displayed some of the museum pieces.

We are now planning on getting some work done on the trailer and pickup. The pickup is rather old and is going to need some major repairs. We may be better off purchasing a newer model truck since we may well be putting more money into the truck than it's worth. We will soon be storing the truck for the winter.

Anyone who would like to help find a way to get the truck updated with donations, please let me know. It has 540,000 miles on it and it shows its lack of power. It also needs some body work. It sure would be good to get it updated or maybe a member knows a dealership or someone working for a dealership that is a member and would like to help.



If anyone in the membership would like to help with a donation or knows someone who can help, it would be greatly appreciated. Some of you have asked about bringing the trailer to your area. The problem is no one wants to pick up the cost of the Association hauling the trailer to their area. The Association asked that anyone that wants the trailer brought to their area must pay for the fuel (\$1.25 per mile), lodging and food for the driver, and a donation to the Association for the trailer's upkeep.

That's all the news and info I have.

Take care

Bruce Graff

USS Passumpsic AO-107 (07/65-10/68)
pincrek@mabeltel.coop

About the 3rd Battalion 34th Artillery

Headquarters 3rd Battalion
34th Artillery

14 April 1969

AVDE-AD

Subject: Annual Historical Report

Chief of Military History

Department of the Army

Washington, DC. 20315

1. Reporting Period 1 April 1968 to 31 January 1969

2. Major Activities

a. During the period 1 April 1968 to 1 June 1968, the 3rd Bn 34th Artillery provided close and continuous fire support to elements of the 2nd Brigade's Mobile Riverine Force. In fifteen major operations that ranged into Kien Hoa, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, and Vinh Long Provinces, the barge mounted elements (Btry B and C), and the airmobile guns of Battery A, occupied numerous fire support bases well forward in 2nd Brigades area of operation, in order to deliver timely and accurate artillery fire. These operations along both sides of the My Tho River added immeasurably to the security of this important delta communications artery.

b. On 2 June 1968, the Mobile

Riverine Force moved into a series of long range strike operations that began in Long An Province below Saigon and ended with the first penetration of the U-Minh Forest of the Vietnam War. Wherever the 2nd Brigade moved, the 34th Artillery was close by providing the fire support required to assure destruction of the enemy. During this period, Btry A moved on to the artillery barges making all three batteries water mobile for the first time. Each firing battery participated in air-mobile operations during the month of August 1968; howitzers were air lifted directly off the barges to inland fire support bases, adding a new page to the lengthening list of the battalion's accomplishments. During the week of 4 August, Btry B and C occupied four different fire support bases separated by 150 kilometers of waterways varying in width from 50 to 1,000 meters. The occupation of FSB Winchester, located 15 miles southeast of the Gulf of Thailand and 43 miles southwest of Can Tho, was the deepest penetration of the area by U.S. Forces in Vietnam. The Battalion supported elements of the 2nd Brigade, 5th VNMC, and local GVN District Forces on this operation. The 3rd/34th Artillery proved to everyone, during the month of August, that barge

mounted Artillery loses none of its mobility. The batteries moved in every conceivable way during the month by water, road, and air lift. On 24 August, all three batteries and the battalion GP were airlifted from their boats and barges and placed in three different FSBs to support a combined 7th ARVN Div and the 2nd Brigade operations.

c. On 9 September 1968, the 2nd Brigade and the Mobile Riverine Force began the accelerated pacification campaign in Kien Hoa Province. One infantry battalion moved in the semi-permanent base areas in the enemy-infested areas of central Giong Trom District. Battery A tied up near the newly established Fire Support Base David and provided fire support for the incipient campaign activities. The remainder of the battalion moved to the mouth of the Ham Long River to support the first of a series of MRF strike operations on the periphery of VC-dominated Kien Hoa Province. Three mortar attacks, a mining incident, and an ambush all delivered against units of the 3rd/34th Artillery, highlighted this problem. All units reacted in a professional and disciplined manner and continued their mission of close and continuous support by artillery fires to the 2nd Brigade.

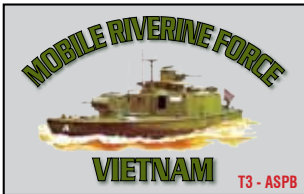
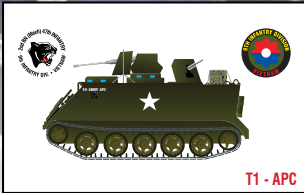
d. Btry C was lifted off the barges in early October 1969 and set up in a land fire base at Giong Trom Town, the waterborne elements moved to the eastern extremes of the Kien Hoa to the Binh Dal secret zone of the VC. Working in close operations with a Navy destroyer, the guns of Btry A and B helped account for more than 300 enemy bunkers and structures destroyed in this traditional enemy stronghold. The 3rd Bn VNMC joined the 2nd Brigade on 18 October 1968, 34th Artillery Liaison and forward observer parties helped provide this outstanding unit with the close and timely fires. B-52 strikes follow-up missions became common place as the 2nd Bde hammered at the pivotal central Giong Trom region. By early November, Btry C was established on the field artillery firing platforms at FSB KLAU. This unit lent close support to the 3rd/37th Infantry's continuing patrol base construction program. By mid-month the crucial TL 26 Highway had been opened on a regular basis and security upgrading of central Giong Trom was a reality.

e. Btry A and B steamed into the enemy's Thanh Phu secret zone to establish two fire support bases in this traditionally VC-dominated

T-Shirts

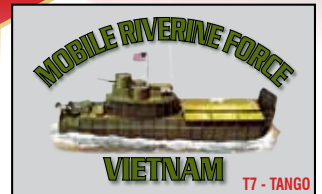
Clearance Priced!

Get yours while they last!



T1 and T2: \$15
 T3-T8: \$20 S-XL
 T3-T8: \$23.50 XXL-XXXL
 T9-T20 \$20

Limited quantities of the embroidered shirts, when stock is depleted, they will be screen printed.



NOTE: Once embroidered shirts are sold out, we will be replacing them with screen printed designs.

Once T8, T13, T16, and T19 are sold out, the colors will change from white to ash and tan to ash.



100% heavy-duty cotton T-shirts. Featuring full-color logos and high quality image detailing! Perfect for parties, especially with us!



GEAR ORDER FORM

Visit our web site www.mrfa.org to download our product catalog from the MRFA Gear Locker!

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Cell _____
 E-mail _____

Ordering is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Indicate your choice of item number (be sure to include color and size, if applicable), with quantity, and total amount. Add amounts for grand total to enclose.
2. Make your check or money order payable to the MRFA.
3. Mail Gear Order Form and check to Products Chairman, Chet Stanley Jr., 205 Carolina Ave., Easley, SC 29640-1409; 864-306-8400; gunnerstan@aol.com.

Item No./Description	Size	Quantity	Amount
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
NOTES:			
Total items ordered _____			
Grand Total			\$

NOTE: New Products Chairman.

DIARY ENTRIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

we had and took them to Saigon. They loaded us on the boats and took us down river to sweep another area. We sweep through mud and water for about 3 hours. I got stuck in the mud 3 feet deep and could not get out so I had to crawl out an inch at a time. We were going through some really thick stuff and we saw a guy swimming in the water and he was trying to get away so I shot him and then my buddy Tom finished him off. He was a VC trying to get away but he did not get away. Finally at 4:45 they picked us up by boat and we got to the ship at 6:00 that night. It rained all day so we were a real mess. We cleaned up and went to bed.

There were five helicopters downed and a lot of people lost in them. They estimated between 200 and 300 VC were killed and a lot that we did not see because they dragged them away and a lot of them were floating down the river. There were seven companies of hard core VC out there when it

Summary of Operation			
	A Co.	B Co.	C Co.
Wounded (approximately)	70	22	25
Killed in Action	26	3	13
Missing	7		

all started. The Navy also lost a lot of people. The VC used recoilless rifles and 50 caliber machine guns and other automatic rifles. We lost some M-16 rifles that VC probably got. Overall, we kicked some ass but it was a hell of a price to pay to get it. I heard later that we killed around 256 VC.

We left Vietnam some 40 years ago and we are there every day since. You never forget any of the war but you try to get by the best that you can. I really like getting the *River Currents* and am glad that some of the stuff that we went through gets in it once in a while. I lost my only brother in 1970. He was killed in Cambodia one day after his 20th birthday.

About a year ago, I wrote you a letter trying to find a poster that you had in St. Ansgar that I had



seen and you sent it to me and I really want to thank you for that. We have it displayed in our Military Museum that our Legion Post has in Adams, Minnesota. I invite you to come and see our museum any time that you would like. I can get into it any time after 4 in the afternoon. All you have to do is give me a call and I will work it out for you to get in there. I think you will really enjoy seeing all the stuff that a small town can put together.

I did not know who else to send

this to. You can do whatever you want with it. I just thought that maybe you would like to see it from someone else that was there on the 19th of June 1967.

*Sgt Jerry Mathesis
B Co. 4th of the 47th
9th Inf Div. Vietnam
1967*

*Jerry Matheis
10164 640th Ave
Adams, MN 55905
507-582-3443*

ABOUT THE 34TH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

region; a highlight of this coastal sweep by the MRF coordination of naval gunfire by the 34th Artillery control center. On November 23, Btry A made the first artillery transit of the Mo Cay District Town. Btry C on their paddy platforms in Giong Trom, suffered 1 KIA and 6 WIAs in two enemy mortar attacks during the month. Btry C continued their mission in a truly outstanding manner through all these actions. The attacks were evidence of the effectiveness of the type operation being conducted by the 3rd/47th Infantry in the area. The Viet Cong had been hurt and had to strike back. The battalion supported eight major operations during November. The newly established "Eagle Prep" technique gained maturity as the units of the 3rd/34th Artillery smothered helicopter landing zones with deadly prep fire.

f. The Gordon and Search Operation entered the 34th Artillery's list of accomplishments in early December 1968. This type of activity was to become more prevalent as the intensified pacification efforts in pivotal Kien Hoa continued. Battery 4 made the always dangerous canal passage to Mo Cay again and again, and by the end of December it was a routine activity of the battalion. 2nd Brigade operations picked up speed and became even more widely separated with the insertion of the U.S. Infantry into Mo Cay Town, from My Tho to the lower Ham Luong Rivers, the 3rd/34th Artillery was hard pressed to keep up with the fast moving 2nd Bde strike forces. Out with split batteries

echelon moves and indomitable spirit all critical battle areas were covered. On 20 December, Btry A displayed the flexibility that has become the watch word of the 3rd/34th Artillery. The unit was alerted for movement to Can Tho in the deep Delta region, resupplied with rations and fuel and water, they departed for extended duty all in the space of three hours. As the dry season descended on the Mekong Delta in earnest, the land mobility of Btry C was displayed by two split operations featuring a platoon of howitzers being towed off the paddy platforms and road marched to fire bases in Giong Trom Town.

g. Late December 1968 and early January 1969 saw the 2nd Bde moving into Mo Cay and Don Nhon Districts, both lone VC controlled. Gordon and search operations were again prevalent as the real business of pacification continued. The 3rd/34th Artillery, displayed the ingenuity and resourcefulness that have marked the Riverine Field artillery unit since inception, placed a FPS-5 surveillance radar on a LCM-8 boat. Detailed surveillance of river activity proved entirely feasible under this technique. The first four months of the Mobile Riverine Forces operation in support of the GVN accelerated pacification campaign in Kien

Ho province has resulted in more than 1,500 Viet Cong KIA and a 100% increase in the Chieu Hoi rate. Throughout the campaign to date, the 3rd/34th Artillery, has on every occasion, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, provided the close and continued artillery support essential to successful prosecution of United States goals in Vietnam.

h. During the period of 1 May to 31 January, the Headquarters and Service Battery has become fully entrenched in Dong Tam Base. Using limited resources, an outstanding base camp area has been constructed, including the mess hall, 3 troop billets, a BOQ and BEQ Headquarters building and an S-4 shop. The area has been further enhanced by the addition of a network of sidewalks. Construction has also included two personnel bunkers and a bunkered aid station.

i. In the way of civic action programs, the Battalion has initiated an aggressive ICAP/MEDCAP program, using all modes of insertion, air, water, and road. The battalion since 1 November has conducted 30 MEDCAPS and 20 ICAPS, treating 4,534 patients and distributing commodities to five times that number. In addition to ICAP/MEDCAPS, the battalion has provided materials for construction of a Pagoda in Giong Trom District and is gathering material for construction of a school and church in Ham Luong District. Btry C makes a monthly contribution of \$90 to the My Tho leper colony.

**From the Commander, Norman L. King CPT,
Field Artillery Adjutant, stoogie536@aol.com.**



TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one of their fallen comrades. In some instances, the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam. It's \$25 for four issues.

Larry (Doc) Austin for Arthur M. Day D Co. 4th/47th KIA 05/08/69
 Maj/General Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler
 Bill Brennan for Tom Swanick GMG3 USS White River LSMR-536
 Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs
 Frank Buck for son Frank H. Buck ENFM USN T-92-10 KIA 12/28/67
 Lee Connell David Wilson 2nd/60th KIA 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton
 4th/39th KIA 06/25/69, Steven Murray 4th/39th KIA 05/26/69, Harvey
 Crabtree 2nd/4th Arty KIA 06/19/69, and Dennis Mattox 1st/501st
 101st Abn KIA 08/23/69
 Lee Daley for Ken Kirkland USS Askari ARL-30 (10/67-01/69)
 Elizabeth Deal for Walter C. Deal RivRon 15 (05/68-04/69)
 Col Monte G. Euler for Cecil R. Hobbs, Jr. A Co. 4th/47th Inf KIA 04/04/68
 Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div
 (1966-68)
 Ted Fetting for Roy Phillips, Fred Jansonius, and Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc B
 Co. 2nd/60th and KIA 02/02/68
 Tony Garvey for Billy Olsen, Wes Sade, and SSgt James Williams C Co.
 4th/47th 9th Inf
 Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68
 James Henke, Tony Spradling, Dave Nelson, and the Band of Brothers for
 Sgt Gerald Thurman A Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf (1967-68)
 Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from
 Pennsylvania
 Alexander Kaufbusch for John B. Titus and Steve Mirick A Co. 3/60 Inf
 Harry Kawamura for CPL Terry T. Kawamura MOH 173rd Airborne Bde
 KIA 03/19/69
 David Lynn for Howard Burns (QM2), Robert Bouchet (SM2), and Herman
 Miller (GM3) IUWG 1-3 Qui Nlon KIA 08/11/68
 Men of C Co. 4th/47th 1967 for our Brothers KIA 03/19/67 Benito Alaniz;
 MIA 04/09/67 Ronald P. Schworer; KIA 04/13/67 Charles "Duffy"
 Black; KIA 05/15/67 Donald M. Peterson; KIA 06/19/67 Robert J. Cara,
 Robert J. Jindra, Timothy A. Johnson, Forrest L. Ramos, Cameron A.
 Rice, David A. Robin, Sheldon B. Schulman, Hubert J. Fink, Kenneth D.
 Frakes, William M. Geier, John L. Winters; KIA 07/11/67 Marion "Butch"
 Eakins, Elmer F. Kenney, Harold W. King, Phillip A. Ferro, George E.
 Smith; KIA 07/29/67 Cecil B. Bridges; KIA 09/29/67 James M. Sunday;
 KIA 10/06/67 Gale A. Alldridge, Danny D. Burkhead, Charles W. Davis;
 KIA 11/10/67 Charles W. Grizzle; and KIA 05/06/68 John T. Hoskins
 Richard MacCullagh for John Phillips HMC and Rene Petit, LT, Chaplain
 Kenneth R. Marple for brother SSGT Reece L. Marple B Co. 3rd/60th KIA
 05/11/68
 Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69
 Albert Moore for Ralph Tresser CS3 USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-67)
 Albert Moore for Tom Bityk CS3 IUWG-1 VC-Hill/Ha Tien (1969-70)
 Weaz and Linda Morgan for Lt George Stefencavage CO River Section 532
 VP Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)
 Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67,
 SGT James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D.
 Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2
 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th and 5th/60th
 KIA 10/28/67, CPL Harold K. Southwick B-2 2nd/47th Inf KIA 03/02/67
 (first KIA in B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam), and PFC Robert C. Voltz B-1
 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th
 in Vietnam)
 Dennis Sawlsville for brother Richard Falda A-112-6, passed away
 10/29/10. "Lucky" may you have peaches and pound cake for eternity.
 Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIAs of the MRFA
 (1967-70)
 Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert
 L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA
 02/01/68
 Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69
 Robert Thacker for SFC Earl T. Pelhan Jr. 15th Eng, 9th Inf Div, KIA in
 Delta Lo
 USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster
 Ronald Wallace for all those lost from 3rd/47th Inf
 Tom White for my brother Mackroy White T-151-4 and A-152-4 (04/68-
 01/70)
 Grant Wieler for LTC Mercer (Monk) Doty, Battalion Commander, 3rd/60th
 Inf 1967 and SSG Lowell Holden A Co. 3rd/60th Inf KIA 09/15/67
 Gary Williams for Dale Winkel C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (01/68-01/69)
 CPT Steve Williams in memory of 2LT David George Williams Co. A
 4th/47th KIA 09/21/67

Member BM1 **James P. Caldwell** passed away May 16, 2010. Boats served as a Boat Captain on a Tango Boat in RivRon 11 (1969). You may contact the family c/o 42 Warren Ave, Tiverton, RI 02878-1722; 401-846-0043.

Jerry H. Curtis passed away due to Agent Orange November 7, 2009. Jerry served on M-111-1 (11/67-06/68). You may contact the family c/o Emily Curtis, 1096 NE Beaumont Ln, Bremerton, WA 98311; 360-782-4590.

Johnny C. Gillespie passed away November 22, 2002. Johnny served on T-112-7/T-112-9/A-112-5. Johnny was residing in Lawrenceville, Georgia, at the time of his passing.

Larry L. Ruthrauff passed away August 14, 2009. Larry served on Tango-111-12 (1968/69). Larry was residing in Springfield at the time of his passing.

Member **Richard G. Hanks** passed away September 9, 2011. Richard served on the USS White River LSMR-536 (1968/69). You may contact the family c/o Audrey Hanks, 2925 Squirrel Ct, Middleburg, FL 32068-6331; 904-291-6832/904-654-5576. May our shipmate and brother rest in peace.

Earl W. Swanner passed away September 18, 2011. Earl served as a GMG2. Earl served in RivDiv 554 and later on YRBM-16. You may contact the family c/o Pam Swanner, 2438 Belshire Dr, Conover, NC 28613-9102; 828-465-3641.

Harold Edwin Tittle passed away October 2, 1999. He was president of the Fleet Reserve Association, Corpus Christi Chapter, where he enjoyed camaraderie with his shipmates and friends. He retired as a Lieutenant Commander after 24 years of meritorious service in the U.S. Navy. He received a Bronze Star with Valor for service as Commanding Officer of the USS Page County (LST-1076) during the Vietnam War.

George H. Brown, Major, U.S. Army, (Ret.), passed away October 6, 2011, at his home. He was born July 12, 1926, in Newark, NJ, moving to Livingstonville, NY, as a child. He enlisted in the Army September 5, 1944, and retired September 30, 1965. He served with A Company, 2nd Battalion 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division in World War II, and also served in Korea. He was a lifetime member of the VFW, Military Officers Association of America, and 9th Infantry Division Association, where he served as President for 1 year after his retirement from the Army.



George H. Brown

Member **Richard "Gumby" Kulpa** Bravo Company 3rd platoon of the 3rd/60th passed away October 4, 2011. You may contact the family c/o Gail Kulpa, 54 Appleblossom Ln, Taunton,

MA 02780-4736; 508-823-4030. He was in my platoon... and a good soldier and brother. John Sperry

Member **Robert Daubenspeck** passed away October 7, 2011. Robert served on the USS Cavalier APA-37 (11/65-08/66). You may contact the family c/o Helen Daubenspeck at 112 Redwater Way, Greer, SC 29651; 864-877-7745; hgd@bellsouth.net.



Richard "Gumby" Kulpa

Kenneth Collie passed away in 2005. Kenneth served on the USS White River (06/65-08/67). Kenneth was residing in La Fayette, Georgia, at the time of his passing.

Brian Kesler passed away March 12, 1990. Brian served on the USS White River (1967-68).

Robert McGarvey passed away June 19, 2007. Robert served on the USS White River (1966-68). Robert was residing in Leeds, North Dakota, at the time of his passing.

John Oakwood passed away May 16, 2008. John served on the USS White River (06/65-07/67). John was residing in Sullivan, Wisconsin, at the time of his passing.

Jerry Roelofs passed away April 5, 1999. Jerry served on the USS White River (1967-68).

Robert Tesone passed away November 1, 2004. Bob served on the USS White River (06/65-10/67). Bob was residing in St. Louisville, Colorado, at the time of his passing.

Member **Anthony J. Hoene** passed away July 28, 2010, from a heart attack and atrial fiber. Anthony served in IUWG-1, Cam Rahn Bay (02/70-02/71). You may contact the family c/o Marjorie Hoene, 11275 N Southridge Ct, Effingham, IL 62401-5628; 217-342-4399.

Member **Kent Roiecki** passed away. Kent served in B Company 1st Platoon of the 3rd/60th Inf (08/68-07/69). You may contact the family c/o Jeanette Roiecki, 427 2nd St, E Northport, NY 11731; 631-368-1077.

Member **John F. Brownell, Jr.** passed away December 26, 2010. John served in B Company 3rd Platoon of the 3rd/47th Inf (05/66-05/69). You may contact the family c/o Victoria Brownell, PO Box 212, East Freetown, MA 02717.

Alton L. "Country" Woolard passed away October 7, 2009, due to an accidental drowning. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 13, River Assault Division 132 as the forward 20-mm gunner onboard ASPB 132-3. The last know address was PO Box 354, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512-0354.

Lt. Col. **Collen K. Carnes** USAF (Ret), wife of Paul Carnes, passed away November 11, 2011. Paul served on the USS Colleton (12/67-06/69). You may contact the family c/o Paul Carnes, 2608 Oaktree Ct, Alamogordo, NM 8831-7736; 505-437-4505; paul.carnes@juno.com.



Your membership expiration date is printed on your River Currents just above your name and address.

Sponsors...

Dallas Abbott A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (06/67-06/68)
 Anthony Aiken Point Caution WPB-82301 (04/68-05/69)
 LT H. M. "Murk" Alexander ComRivDiv 132 (06/68-06/69)
 Jimmie J. Apel A Co. 4th/47th and 6th/31st (1969-70)
 Charlie and Georginia Ardinger T-151-11
 Walter A. Ardisson, Jr. A-153-48 and A-153-49 (1969-70)
 John Armstrong HHC 3rd/47th Inf (04/66-01/68)
 Larry (Doc) Austin D Co. 4th/47th (12/68-07/69)
 Carl Ayres A-91-6 (02/68-02/69)
 Robert T. Bak Z-132-2 (04/69-04/70)
 Col Paul Barnes HHC and B Co. 3rd/39th Inf (12/66-11/67)
 Jack Benedict C Co. 4th/47th Inf
 Bill Bevington USS St. Francis River LSMR-525 and USS Iwo Jima LPH-2 (1965-69)
 Richard Bittle USS Nueces (06/68-04/69)
 Tom Bityk IUWG-1-Vung Tau/Ha Tein (05/69-05/70)
 MajGen Blackie Bolduc USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/47th Inf
 Tom Brady B Co. 3rd/47th (11/67-01/69)
 Brothers of the 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf
 Capt Kenneth Brown A Co. 3rd/60th Inf
 C. Vic Brumley USS White River LSMR-535 (1965-67) transferred to Naval Advisory Group in Nha Trang (1967-68 and 1970-71)
 Gary Bruno USS Benawah APB-35 (02/70-02/71)
 MGen Walter Bryde, Jr. HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (07/68-08/69)
 James Byrnes LCM-P7718 (08/61-10/62)
 John and Pamela Carlin in honor of Erol Tuzcu
 RADM William Carlson CO USS White River LSMR-536 (10/65-03/68)
 Gary Chapman USS Colleton APB-36 (08/68-08/69)
 John and Doris Chranowski A Co. 4th/47th and B Co. 6th/31st (03/69-03/70)
 Pasquale "Chick" Cicarelli YRBM-16 (09/67-09/68)
 Michael H. Clark A Co. 4th/39th Inf (04/66-09/67)
 Randall Cook USS Monmouth County (1970)
 LTJG Robert Conaty XO RivDiv 131 (05/68-04/69)
 Joe Cortinaz B Co. 5th/60th Inf (10/67-03/68)
 William Currier HSB 3rd/34th Arty (11/68-08/69)
 William Dabel C Co. 3rd/39th (01/69-10/69)
 Orville Daley USS Askari ARL-30 (1967-68)
 Dan Dodd PHC (Ret) ComRivFlot-One
 David DuHou USS Windham County LST-1170 (1968-70)
 Bruce Dunlap USS Mark AKL-12 (07/70-07/71)
 Robert B. Durrett T-112-7 (01/67-12/67)
 Virgie Eblen Associate Member
 Leon Edmiston B Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (06/68-05/69)
 Christopher Emerson CWO USA (Ret) A-112-4 (04/68-04/69)

Edith Ethridge Associate Member
 Larry Gunner Ethridge USS Askari ARL-30
 Col Monte G. Euler A Co. 4th/47th Inf (01/68-12/68)
 Cdr Kirk Ferguson USN (Ret.) ComStabRon-20 (11/69-11/70)
 Stephen Ferragamo B Co. 2nd/47th Inf (02/69-03/70)
 Terrance Fetters HHQ 3rd/47th Inf (04/69-07/69)
 Ted Fetting B Co. 2nd/60th Inf (10/67-02/68)
 Denny Frank D Co. 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)
 Dean Fritz and Carol Campbell
 William B. Fullerton USS Benawah APB-35 (1970)
 Nan Fulton Associate Member
 Gamewardens of Vietnam Mid-Atlantic Chapter
 Tony Garvey C Co. 4th/47th Inf (1968)
 Regina Gooden Associate Member
 Ron Gorman T-91-10 (01/68-12/68)
 James (Jim) Grooms NSA Danang (1966-68)
 Roger "Grossie" Grossinger D Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (1968-69)
 Pat Haggerty River Div 111 and USS Westchester County (12/66-08/69)
 Daniel B. Hall, Jr. Staff ComRivFlot One (12/68-07/69)
 Roger Hamilton, Jr. USS Mark AKL-12 (08/68-08/69)
 Robert Hammond HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (10/68-08/69)
 Jeffie Hanks USS Benawah APB-35 (01/70-01/71)
 BMCM (Ret) Wayne Haggood RivRon 15 T-52
 John Harrison C Co. 3rd/47th Inf
 Richard Hause U.S. Army WWII and Korea
 Charles Heindel C-91-1 (11/67-12/68)
 Jerry Hensley T-92-13 (02/67-11/67)
 Joe Hilliard T-48 (09/69-03/70) and T-44 (03/70-07/70)
 RMC Jerry Howard USN (Ret) USS Askari ARL-30 (11/68-10/69)
 James Hoyer 1097th TC (MB) (08/68-07/69)
 MajGen Ira A. Hunt Jr. HHQ 9th Inf Div
 Alan G. Hyde 9th Signal (1966-68)
 RM2 Bill Isettts USS Askari (07/66-08/67)
 David V. Jarczewski C Co. 4th/47th Inf (05/66-05/68)
 Bruce Jensen T-111-3 (1967-68)
 Ron Jett T-92-8 (01/67-01/68)
 Gerald Johnston USS Nye County LST-1067 (01/66-01/67)
 David Jones Z-111-7 (10/68-10/69)
 Everett Jones CCB-151-4 and CCB-152-5 (04/69-04/70)
 Frank B. Jones RivRon 15 T-48
 Mackey Joyner USS Krishna ARL-38 (1946-49)
 Jerry "Hollywood" Kawecky B Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (1968)
 Lt David P. Justin A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (07/66-10/67)
 Dane Keller RivDiv 532 PBR-121 (05/69-05/70)
 Tim Kelly C Co. 2nd/47th (Mech) (1968-69)
 General William A Knowlton ADC 9th Inf Div (01/68-06/68)
 George Link USS Tutuila ARG-4 (01/70-01/71)
 Ken Locke Sr. USS White River LSMR-536 (06/66-01/68)
 Richard Lorman T-152-6 (06/68-06/69)
 James and Debby Lowe APL-26 (05/68-05/69)

Raymond L. Mans B Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf Div (09/68-09/69)
 Kenneth R. Marple A Fellow Vet
 Michael Marquez A Co. 3rd Plt 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)
 Anthony Lee Martin USS Chesterfield County (1966-67)
 Frank O. Martinloch A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (03/68-03/69)
 Sgt E-5 Ken McLean B Co. 4th/47th Inf 2nd Bde USS Colleton (11/68-01/69)
 Thomas L. "Mac" McLemore T-112-7 (12/66-12/67)
 Bill McMullen C Co. 6th/31st 9th Inf (04/68-04/69)
 Big Jim Meehan IUWG-1 Nha Trang
 Adam Metts T-111-2 (08/68-10/69)
 Terry Metzgen C-4 3rd/60th Inf (01/66-11/67)
 Alan Metzger LCUs NSA Danang
 Cdr David Miller USN (Ret.) CO RivDiv 112 (11/67-12/68)
 Nicholas P. Miller COS RAS Div 152 (07/68-06/69)
 Capt Lawrence Monahan NavSupAct Saigon (07/70-07/71)
 Paul Moody USS Pivot MSO-463 (1966-67)
 Albert and Sarah Moore USS Benawah (APB-35)
 J. Russell and Alice Moore A-91-5 (11/68-06/69)
 Roy and Lynn Moseman 4th/47th Inf
 Co Van My TF-115.3.7 Cat Lo
 CSM Joseph M. Natividad B Co. 3rd/60th (1967)
 CWO James T. Natividad HHC 3rd/60th (1966-67)
 Jasper Northcutt B Co. 2nd/47th Mech Inf (11/66-05/67)
 Gary T. O'Brien USS Mercer APB-39 (04/68-12/69)
 George R. O'Connell USS Terrell Cty LST-1157
 Christopher Olsen T-131-8 (05/68-05/69)
 Charles Ostrov HHC 2nd/4th Mech Inf (01/68-12/68)
 John Oxley E Co. 3rd/47th Inf (01/65-11/67)
 Dwayne Parsons M-111-1 (Zippo 1) (11/67-11/68)
 Robert Pawlicki T-111-11 (03/67-12/67)
 Luis F. Peraza D Co. 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)
 John Perry T-132-11 (06/68-06/69)
 Col Pete Peterson USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)
 LTC Nathan Plotkin USA (Ret.) HQ 2nd Bde
 W. R. Posey Craft Master YTB 785 (1967-68)
 George Queen USS Benawah (04/67-11/67)
 Paul Ray M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)
 Capt W. J. (Mick) Riedmann CO USS Tom Green County LST-1159 (1968-70)
 Donald and Marijo Robbins USS Benawah (APB-35)
 Russ Naden USS Tutuila ARG-4 (03/69-03/70)
 Gerald C. Robinson USS Hampshire County LST-819 (01/66-09/67)
 Durwood Rosser M-91-1 (09/67-06/68)
 J. Robert Roth USS Benawah (08/68-08/69)
 Matthew F. Rovner USS Colleton (09/66-12/67)
 Steve Ryan M-112-2 (05/68-06/69)
 James Saboe C Co. 3rd/47th Inf (02/69-07/69)
 Donald Sack C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (10/67-10/68)
 Billy Sanders RivRon 11 RAD 112 T-112-1 & CCB-112-1 (Vietnam 1967)
 Norman Saunders B Co. 3rd/39th Inf (01/69-08/69)

Dave Schell RivRon 15 Tango 49 (07/69-07/70)
 Duane Schinn Z-111-7 and M-111-2 (12/67-06/68)
 Harry David Schoenian C Co. 4th/47th Inf (07/68-07/69)
 Jerry (Doc) Schuebel B Co. 3rd/60th Inf
 Col Sam L. Schutte USA (Ret.) B Co. 4th/47th Inf (VN)
 Mark Seymour YW-118 NSA Danang (01/70-09/70)
 Jerry Shearer C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (04/67-04/68)
 Edward Sicilia 9th MP Co. (12/67-12/68)
 Jim Silva D Co. 3rd Platoon 4th/39th Inf (Vietnam)
 Richard Simpson C Co. 3rd/47th Inf 9th Div (05/67-06/68)
 William Sinclair CDR USS White River (04/65-02/68)
 Terry Sloat River Assault Squadron 11 (12/68-04/69)
 BrGen Douglas Smith USA (Ret.) Cdr 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf
 Thomas Smith 9th S and T Battalion (03/67-06/68)
 Chet "Gunner" Stanley C-111-1 and M-111-3 (1966-68)
 John Stone USS Harnett County LST-821 (08/68-05/70)
 Norman Stone, Jr. HQ 4th/47th Inf (01/66-08/68)
 Alan Strickland A Co. 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf
 John P. Sturgil USS Colleton (APB-36)
 Robert Sutton RivRon 9 M-92-2, Z-92-11, and R-92-1 (11/68-05/69)
 John Swart T-132-1 (04/68-04/69)
 Bryan Swisher B Co. 3rd/47th Inf (12/68-06/69)
 William Tamboer T-151-9 (05/68-06/69)
 Jack Terry USS Colleton APB-36 (08/66-02/68)
 Charles Thompson 9th Admin Co. (02/66-11/67)
 Milton W. Turnage BMCM (Ret.) Boat Captain M-151-1 (07/68-06/69)
 LCDR Lewis Turner CO USS Nueces (06/68-06/69)
 Wayne Turney USS Guide MSO-447 (04/62-06/66)
 Erol Tuzcu A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (1968-69)
 USS Terrell Cty LST-1157
 Roger Valentine USS Askari ARL-30 (07/67-05/68)
 Bob and Nancy VanDruff T-91-5 and T-92-4
 Henry Velez MD B Co. 2nd/39th Inf (07/68-07/69)
 GMG1 Ricky Vice T-131-7 (1968/69)
 Terry Volz USS Luzerne County LST-902 (03/69-03/70)
 Ronald Wallace B Co. 3rd Platoon 4th/47th Inf (05/66-08/67)
 Connie and Jack Watson 3rd/60th 9th Inf (12/68-09/69)
 Bill Weidman T-111-12 (02/67-02/68)
 Gary Weisz A-91-4 (10/67-07/68)
 David H. White USN (Ret) USS Satyr ARL-23 (08/69-08/70)
 Trentwell White USS Whitfield County (LST-1169)
 Edward Whitmarsh A Co. 2nd/60th Inf (03/68-03/69)
 Stephen G. Wieting USS Benawah APB-35 (11/66-02/68)
 Norm Wilkinson B Co. 4th/47th Inf (03/67-03/68)
 Col Bruce Williams CO 3rd/47th (1969-70)
 Jeffrey L. Withers RivRon 11 A-112-8 and M-112-12 (06/68-06/69)
 Robert Zimmer XO USS Mercer APB-39 (1968-69)
 Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV

VISIT WWW.MRFA.ORG

Our expressed thanks to those who have become MRFA sponsors! It's never too late to get onboard as a sponsor, so we continue to seek and welcome those who wish to defray the cost of producing in the MRFA. Sponsorship lasts for a period of one year, with your name and information appearing in River Currents. Sponsorship information appearing in your issues. Send your \$25 (payable to the MRFA) to Charlie Ardinger, 1857 County Road A14, Decatur, IA 52101-7448



Mobile Riverine Force Association

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
 1857 County Road A14
 Decatur, IA 52101-7448

