



River Currents



Happy Holidays

From the
MRFA
Officers &
Board Members

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THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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WINTER 2005

FROM THE GALLEY

ALBERT MOORE, MRFA PRESIDENT

May 4-6, 2006

MRFA Gathering of the Troops, Crews and Guests in Indianapolis, Indiana

Some of you may remember as far back to our reunions at the Galt House in Louisville, KY ('94-'95), and our first reunion at the Drawbridge in 1997. In 1994 and 1996, we had what we called a 'units gathering' at the Galt House and the Drawbridge where you, the members could come and see the hotel and local area prior to the reunions. This went over quite well with the membership. We will be doing the same thing at the Adams Mark Hotel by the Airport in Indianapolis. It will start on Thursday, May 4th with check-out on Sunday, May 7th. Gatherings are somewhat different than the reunions. We will not have any activities planned such as a meal or dance,

but we will have a hospitality room available with snacks and beverages. There will be no registration fee for this gathering. If you live in the area and just want to come and visit, that's great. This is also a good time for some who have missed our prior reunions. Come and visit. There will be a free shuttle to and from the airport. The Adams Mark also provides a shuttle service to and from downtown. They have free hotel parking, but no RV hook-ups. On the other hand, there will be no problem finding a parking space. The hotel has a large parking area. Room rates are \$79.00 a night. You must make your own reservations. You may contact the hotel directly by calling 317-248-2481 or the toll free reservations number at 800-444-2326. Be sure to mention you're making your reservations under the MRFA. For more information about the hotel, you may call Reggie Vaughn, Sales Manager at 317-381-6127 (direct line) or e-mail rvaughn@adamsmark.com. Angela Jordan, Convention Sales Manager, is

also available to assist you. Her e-mail address is ajordan@adamsmark.com. The Adams Mark by the Airport is located at 2544 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46241. Check out their web site at www.adamsmark.com. Be sure to select the Indianapolis Adams Mark.



2005 Reunion Speech Given by DONUT DOLLIE, CAPT. EMILY STRANGE

First I would like to clear up a rumor that my good friend, Albert Moore, has been spreading. He has told a number of people that I ran the USS Benewah APB-35 aground when it was at anchor. I would like to state that I never ran the Benewah aground. It was the Vernon County I ran aground while it was at anchor. I apologize for any part I had in perpetuating this rumor and I hope this ends the ugly rumor once and for all. NO WAY!!!

It is important that you understand that Donut Dollies had only 2 weeks training in Washington, DC, to prepare us to go to war. We learned such essential things as how to identify rank, that our skirts should not be more than 1 inch above our knees, that we should always act like ladies, and that we should never drink alcohol when we were in uniform.

They did not have amphibian training for us, nor did we learn how to fire M-16s. The ladylike way of boarding a helicopter in a skirt was never explained, nor was the proper thing to do when the prop wash blew the skirts over our heads. The fact that there were no "ladies rooms" at firebases was not mentioned nor was the proper dress code for running from the shower to the bunker. As a matter of fact, the words, "mortar attack," were never spoken during our 2 weeks of training. Imagine my surprise when I got to Dong Tam!



Despite our lack of amphibious training, we were allowed to bring our programs out to the ships and I must tell you that it was a real treat to visit the ships. They were clean, they had wonderful food, and, for us

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There will be an ARMY and NAVY Golf Tournament

Member David McCann has volunteered to put an Army and Navy golf tournament together for the '07 reunion. If anyone is interested in assisting David, please contact him at 1263 Big Horn Rd., Helena, MT 59602, 406-442-8168 or e-mail him at bdalmcc@ixi.net. David served in RivRon 15, 1970.

Pig Out

The Pig Out, as of right now, will be available and free for '06 and '07. The pig outs by Dean Ayers, the 709th Maintenance, and 99th Combat Support Battalion have gone over great. We just can't thank Dean enough for these cookouts. Also, we need to express our gratitude to all those who assisted Dean at our last reunion. We had a "pig pickin" good time!!! Thanks folks!!!

Rung Sat Special Zone a Special Kind of Hell

Rung Sat Special Zone, Vietnam--Dark at high noon, malodorous, eerie, and silent, covered with a crusty mud that may give away at any instant to plunge the unwary into a fetid pool of muck. The Rung Sat Special Zone spreads over 400 square miles in South Vietnam between Saigon and the South China Sea. For the 9th Infantry Division soldiers who must seek out the Viet Cong, there it's a special kind of hell.

Neither land nor sea, the Rung Sat is a tangled mass of mangroves dotted with bamboo thickets that always seem to be dying, never growing. The swamp is interlaced with sluggish salt rivers that appear incapable of supporting life.

Between the patches of dry land that offer secure footing, there are miles of soggy half land where a combat soldier will sink up to his knees with each step in mire the consistency of bubble gum.

The smell of decay permeates the humid air. It is an odor that soldiers never quite become accustomed too. It is putrid, acid,

even take a photograph; where the women, twisted trees are so thick that a large enemy force could hide only a few yards away and never be discovered.

When the soldiers who patrol there describe the Rung Sat, their conversation slips into profanity and ends in a slow shake of the head. The men leave from Vung Tau in ATCs (Tango Boats). After a 5 hour slow moving journey, it will take them to the heart of the Rung Sat and for 3 days this will be their home.

The landing gates drop and the soldiers plunge into the slime that gurgles up to their waists. No one even looks for a dry, hard spot. The mud will come sooner or later. It doesn't make any difference when.

For meals, they locate the highest ground in the area and hold their "C" ration cans with mud encrusted hands. Then they are on the move again--wading, swimming, or crawling. They keep moving and searching.

Night comes and an ambush is organized. Of those who are not part of the



*Night Comes On ...
An Ambush is Organized*

ambush force, some climb trees to sleep perched on low branches, some carry hammocks for sleeping, but most don't--the extra weight

and primeval.

Poisonous snakes, swarms of mosquitoes and other stinging or biting insects find refuge in the Rung Sat. Because of these hostile inhabitants and the nature of the terrain, the Rung Sat is a natural hideout for the Viet Cong.

Two Companies, B and C, of the 4th/47th INF, must sweep through the swamp and find the VC hideouts and must drive the VC from this haven.

Not all of the Rung Sat is so forbidden, however, there are some small hamlets in sunny open land but they are very few. Most are almost inaccessible to the rest of the country. The residents till the rich soil to feed their families.

It is not in the villages that the enemy has his base camps and munitions factories; he chooses hideouts deep into in the canopied mangroves where often it is too dark to

during the day is not worth the nighttime comfort.

Many just stretch out on the driest piece of property they can find and pray that the tidal rivers won't rise too high during the night.

Day and night, their constant companions are the mosquitoes and red ants. The men match each sting with a slap but there are always more--whining hordes of them that collide with each other in search of an exposed piece of flesh.

When 72 hours are over; the boats are waiting to take the weary troops back to the barracks ship. Where for 24 hours, they can take hot showers, relax, read, and answer their mail.

Then it's back to the Rung Sat, a special War, a special zone, a special hell.

Article was in the Army Times early 1967.

Rat's Nest is No Longer VC Haven

RACH KIEN, 3rd/39th Infantry

For soldiers of the 9th Infantry Division here, the "Rat's Nest" used to be synonymous with combat. Whenever the name was mentioned in connection with an operation, the men from the 39th Infantry knew their mission would be a "cake walk."

Infantrymen rarely emerged from the Rat's Nest without making contact with the enemy. A statement echoed by commanders and foot soldiers alike, "Any time we wanted a fight, all we had to do is go into the "Rat's Nest." They didn't have to go far. It's only 3 miles southwest of Rach Kien. It was dubbed the "Rat's Nest" because of the inevitable shadowy Viet Cong who infested the area.

The nest is relatively small (about 3 square miles) and from the air it is indistinguishable from the terrain surrounding it.

The dark soil of fertile rice paddies lies beneath several inches of mirror like water. Tangled, almost impenetrable thickets of mangrove dot the landscape and hug the banks of the many lazy streams that snake east toward the sea.

The uninitiated would not be able to pinpoint the Rat's Nest by sight alone. But the men of the 3rd/39th can.

Often they have struggled across these paddies feeling the mud turn to paste beneath their boots and knowing the next step might plunge them into a chest high sinkhole or trigger a hidden booby trap. "You couldn't move 100 meters without getting shot at," grumbled Sergeant John Henry of San Francisco, a Company B Squad Leader. But all that has changed.

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A Message to our Treasurer

Mr. Ardinger,

Thank you for your efforts to continue the get-togethers in the Twin Cities. I had hoped to attend this year, but regretfully, I need to be out of town at that time. Please pass on my compliments to other members and leaders of the Association for all of their hard work. It is always a pleasure to get "River Currents" and relive some fond memories. The report on the deaths of Adm. Stockdale and Gen. Westmoreland reminded me that we are all getting older; the other stories in "River Currents" reminded me of how much I enjoyed serving with the soldiers in the 9th Division and the sailors in the Navy. A good bunch, all.

Best wishes for the mini-reunion and best wishes to you and your family for the holiday season.

James Olav Saboe
C/ 3/47 INF Ninth Infantry Division,
1969
Josaboeseq@aol.com

Rat's Nest

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For the first time in months, a platoon swept through the Rat's Nest without incident. Not a shot was fired. The After Action Report for this operation in the Rat's Nest was unique: negative results.

The change was not a sudden "here today gone tomorrow." It was the result of long hours of sweeping and patrolling the short but vicious battles and harassment of the enemy.

That a lone platoon was sent on the mission is in itself, indicative of the gradual victory won in the "Rat's Nest." Two months ago we wouldn't have considered sending anything less than two companies into the area," said Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Richard Anderson of Russell, KS.

The destruction of the enemy fortified complexes and the Viet Cong themselves are not the only measure of success in the tiny Rat's Nest. Other signs of progress are also present. In April, contact with the enemy was so frequent and scattered that farmers dared not labor in the paddies and

the land remained fallow. Now the farmers are tending the paddies again. It's different now, all right, nodded Squad Leader Henry, "There were never civilians outside before."

Specialist 4 Forrest Nolan of Seattle, a machine gunner with Company B, chimed in. "The villagers are really friendly. They offer us tea and food when we are near their houses; it's like they want to thank us for getting rid of the Viet Cong."

Colonel Anderson is cautious, however, of over playing the 3rd/39th success in the Rat's Nest. He emphasizes that there is a long way to go before he will use the phrase "complete success" in connection with the nest. "The situation is typical of what has been accomplished in

many former VC strongholds around Rach Kien," he explained "We're not fighting VC units now they have all been driven off or scattered and forced to lay low. Now we're primarily after the guerillas and the VC infrastructure. When they are gone, the district will belong to the people again."

This article was taken from the Old Reliable, August 9, 1967.



MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Mobile Museum

The museum will be at our next reunion in '07. Board Member Rick Corrick handles all aspects of the trailer. The trailer will be open from 9 am till 5 pm. If you have never had the opportunity to see the trailer please plan on doing so, it's an impressive display. All the 9th Infantry Division KIAs, Navy Task Forces 117-116-115 KIAs, as well as all in-country Navy Units and Coast Guard KIAs are listed on the outside of the trailer under their respective units. We have pictures of all the different units of the 9th and all Navy units posted behind plexiglass inside. Rich Corrick served on R-112-1, 1966-1967.

Thanks to Our Members The Memorial Trailer is a Great Success!

The MRFA would like to thank the following members for their generous donations to our memorial trailer. If you would like to make a donation, please make check or money order payable to MRFA. Send to: Charlie Ardinger, 1857 County Rd. A-14, Decorah, IA 52101.

Charles E. Ardinger T-151-11
Preston Banks HHC 3rd/47th INF
Gery Benedetti T-112-2 and T-112-6
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Jeffie L. Hanks USS Benawah
SFC Michael D. Hanmer RivRon 13 / RivDiv 153
Michael A. Harris T-152-1
John "Jack" Herrmann ComRivDiv-92 1967-68
Lucien Hinkle HQC 3rd/60th Infantry 9th Inf Div
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David R. Jones Zippo 111-7
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Chris R. Knabe M-92-1
Michael A. Knowlton YRBM-18 1/68-1/69
George C. Lang A-3 4th/47th Infantry
Walter F. Lineberger III XO RAD 91 1968-69
ENT William H. Little RivRon 11
Ed Lohf C/Co/4th/47th
Robert Lorman T-152-6 6/68-6/69
Stephen Luft B Co. 4th/47th Infantry
David E. Lull B-2 2nd/47th Infantry
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BMC Robert C. Martin, USN (Ret.) USS Benawah
William McCollum T-111-2
Bruce McIver T-131-7 RAID-72 3/69-3/70



Adam Metts T-111-2
John P. Miller C Co 3rd/47th Infantry
Nicholas Miller COS RIVASTDIV 152 7/68-6/69
Albert Moore USS Benawah
Chuck Morgan RivDiv 91 T-91-5
Roy D. Moseman C-2 4th/47th Infantry
Richard E. "Doc" Nelson RivRon 15 Staff
Christopher O. Olsen T-131-8 5/68-5/69
SFC Claude Onley 3rd/60th Infantry
Luis F. Peraza Casanova D Co. 3rd/60th Infantry
Carl Petty A/Co/4th/39th Inf 1967-68
Bob "Doc" Pries B Co. 2nd/47th Infantry
Paul A. Ray Monitor 151-5 6/69-7/70
John J. Read USS Colleton ABP-35 In memory of nieces, Amy J.
Gilbert and Kristen Wagner
Joe Rosner Monitor 6, RivRon 15
Thomas F. Scheider A Btry 1st/11th Art & B Co 2nd/39th Infantry
Harry David Schoenian C/CO/4th/47th Inf 67/78
David M. Smith C/Co/2nd/60th Inf 1969-70
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Ken Sunberg HHC 5th/60th Mech. Infantry
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Charlie E. Taylor C-3 5th/60th Infantry
Robert (Bob) Thacker D/Co 15th Combat (Eng) 3/68-6/69
Jimmy Toney 3rd/60th Infantry
Ralph Tresser USS Benawah
Erol S. Tuzcu A Co. 3rd/60th Infantry
David Tyler RivDiv 132 M-3-6 T-24, 1969-70
Victor E. Unruh T-151-1
Roger C. Valentine USS Askari ARL-30
Robert E. Vandruuff T-91-5 and T-92-4
Gen. William C. Westmoreland (COMUSMACV) 64-68
Gerald Weston C/91/7 A/91/7 1967-68
William H. Wulff B Co. 3rd/47th Infantry

Emily Strange

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ladies, it was a real treat to use flush toilets. The men who served on the Navy ships were true gentlemen. No matter who was given the task of guiding us around the ship, they always let us climb the ladders first IN OUR SKIRTS but always went down first to catch us in case we slipped. We programmed at different locations on the ships.

I remember programming in sick bay and it touched my heart to see the sick and wounded smile and even laugh.

I remember one time that you Navy guys had gone to quite a bit of trouble to make our arrival on the ship really special. Two young handsome sailors met us at the chopper; helped us off; took our bags, and led us over to the side of the ship. When we reached the side, they had us peer over so we could see the barge packed with young men anxiously awaiting our decent down that REALLY LONG LADDER. They were all waiting and whistling, beckoning us to "come on down." At that moment, I felt like a gorgeous movie star ready to make her grand entrance down the spiral staircase in an elegant movie. In the moment, I thought maybe there was some validity to the Red Cross rule about the length of our skirts," another thing the RED CROSS had failed to mention in our training was that we would need to be really good sports in a country filled with young, testosterone crazed boy/men.

Looking out at you men today, many of you fathers, even grandfathers, I wonder deep in my heart how you would feel about your daughter being escorted up and down ladders in a war zone by a bunch of horny sailors?

Now I certainly don't want to leave out you rugged macho 9th Infantry Division Soldiers. It was pure magic to jump on a helicopter; fly to some muddy/dusty desolate fire base; drop out of the sky and watch trained killers turn into bashful little boys. I saw a miracle each time I watched a thousand yard stare change into a bright-eyed smile.

Sometimes we played silly games and other times we just sat and talked with you guys. One day I was at a firebase and the subject came up that Donut Dollies should know how to fire an M-16. I had never been around guns until I went to Vietnam. There I saw the damage guns could do and I saw no reason why I should learn how to fire one. But, you guys could be persistent. The scenario came up that the firebase I was at could be attacked while I was there. What if the firebase was being overrun and there were M-16s lying on the ground beside men who had been killed and injured? Wouldn't I want to help save their lives as well as my own?!? In the end, I agreed to fire one bullet.

So the group of men took me out into a cleared area, showed me how to hold the

weapon, gave me a few pointers, told me where to aim and told me to fire. What they did not tell me was that they had put in a full clip and put the weapon on "rock-n-roll." So I pulled on that trigger and that M-16 started emptying its clip wherever it chooses too. I had a death grip on that gun just to keep it from jumping out of my hands. I was holding on with all my might which included my finger on the trigger until the entire clip was gone.

Standing here today, I can tell you that those guys thought it was a really funny joke once the blood had returned to their terror-stricken faces.

If there is anyone out there who participated in that practical joke, I would love to hear from you. There is a question I always wanted to ask. "What the heck were you thinking???? "Again, I ask you Fathers and Grandfathers would you want your daughter to be on the firing end of an M-16 or your son to be anywhere close to a skinny little Donut Dollie who had no control over an M-16 with a full clip!?"

Sometimes it seems Vietnam was a lifetime ago. Other times it seems like it was only yesterday. I can still see your faces as young men in a war zone even as this gray haired lady stands before you as a relic of your past. It was an honor and a privilege to serve with the brave, courageous men and women of the Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division. War forges a bond that transcends time and breaks down the superficial barriers. Together here tonight, it matters not whether we are rich or poor, male or female, soldier, sailor, or civilian. We are forever bonded together by the simple fact that we all served in the Vietnam War in a place called the Mekong Delta.

We have all breathed the desiccated dust of the Delta and been mired down by the monsoon mud. We know the true joy of a long waited shower, dry socks, and the rare icy cold beer. We have savored the luscious taste of the coveted canned peaches and pound cake.

We learned those many years ago how precious life is and how fragile. Better than anyone, we know without question that when America sends her troops off to fight and die for their country, they and their families deserve the support of the American people.

I cared so deeply about each and every one of you. When I watched you jump on the choppers headed for a mission, I feared for your safety. When the ammo dump was blown up one night, it was you the Navy guys that I desperately prayed for. When I learned of casualties, my tears fell into the well of tears to be cried later, when you no longer needed my smile to remind you of home.

I was always so touched with the way you tried to protect the Donut Dollies. My heart was warmed by the pains you took to clean up the language when we arrived as though Donut Dollies had never heard 4-

letter words. I appreciated the way you so steadfastly guarded the latrine (head for sailors) when we were in there. We attended your stand down parties in Dong Tam. I was humbled that you risked your own lives to assure we made it to the bunker.

Tonight, I stand in a room full of heroes. Tonight, as in Vietnam, we celebrate the simple fact that we are alive and together, even as we remember those who have gone before us.

I would like to leave you with the story of my first mortar attack. Male or female, soldier or sailor or civilian, if you spent much time in Dong Tam, you were definitely going to experience a first mortar attack. If you were lucky, you would get to experience more than one.



My First Mortar Attack

I suppose everyone remembers their first mortar attack. I remember part of mine. My good friend Barb had finally talked me into singing with a group that sang around Dong Tam by countering my argument of "I really don't sing all that well" with "The guys don't care. They just want to stare at you." (prior to my joining the group, she was the only female, so she knew these things.) "Well if you get me drunk enough." "No problem!!!!"

So I ate steaks with the group and drank a keg or so of beer and was ready for whatever must happen. What did I, the FNG, know about the Navy EM Club? I'm pretty sure every guy in there bought me a drink and pinched my ---, so, by the time I got back to the hooch it was past curfew, I was way past drunk and Donut 6 was waiting with the appropriate lecture which I don't exactly remember but am sure I listened to contritely, made the appropriate apologies, then went to my room and promptly passed out.

Emily Strange

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In Dong Tam, when there was a mortar attack, certain rituals occurred. First, an obnoxiously loud siren went off. Next, the MP who guarded our gate stopped at each woman's door and knocked. Just in case we missed the blaring siren.

On this particular night, I remained passed out through both of those occurrences and awoke to Donut 6 screaming, at the top of her lungs, something like: "FOR GOD'S SAKE GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE BOTH DIE."

Even in my drunken stupor, that sounded pretty serious.... particularly screamed in that tone.... But my mind was so foggy.....and it was so hot.....and I was so nude.....

OK. I'll just throw the poncho liner around me and get the ---- out of here which I did and ran staggering toward the door but ended up on the floor bare --- to the concrete. Somehow in my confused state I had failed to remember that I had tied that slippery poncho liner to my bed to keep it from sliding off.

"GET OUT OF THERE!!!! WE'RE BEING MORTARED!!!!"

Well that would explain all those explosions I keep hearing. "I'M COMING I'M COMING!!!!"

Actually that was a lie. I was still sitting on the floor trying to untie the poncho liner. Modesty had not yet been abandoned.

After finally succeeding, I made another grand dash to the door. Only to discover that, for the first time and only time I was in Nam I had locked the door. (Where in--- did I put the key?)

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN BOTH DIE HERE? GET TO THE BUNKER NOW!!! "I'M HURRYING. I SWEAR. I'M HURRYING. (Dear Lord, help me find the key). By the time we made it to the bunker, I had sobered up

enough to realize that this was, indeed, dangerous. One round had landed in the ditch next to our hooch, so the fact that Donut 6 and I were still alive and uninjured was only by the grace of God... and it was really pretty frightening sitting in that bunker listening to the mortars falling around us.



Lessons Learned

If you wander onto a boat late at night in search of a restroom, the men living on there are never wearing proper attire for female guests. This lesson also applies to bunkers late at night.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your world then and now. You were my heroes then and you still are. You will always hold a cherished place in my heart.

P.S. During the reunion, I learned that it was not a Donut 6, but the MP, who was guarding our gate, Dennis Carstens. He ran back to get me on the night of my first mortar attack. Thanks for risking your life to save mine, Dennis!

Emily served with the Red Cross at Dong Tam 1968-1969. You can contact Emily at 242 Jefferson St. Johnson Creek, WI 53038, 920-699-5321 or her e-mail address strange@tds.net Check out Emily's web site www.emilydd.com . Dennis Carstens served with the Field Platoon 9th MP Co.

9/69-11/69. You can contact Dennis at 3917 Rue De Frenchman NE, Alexandria, MN 56308, 320-762-1068 or his e-mail address dwc@rea-alp.com .

Notes from the Membership Chairman

The printer left off the year on the MRFA dues expiration date on the fall issue of the River Currents. So only the month and day was displayed for the dues expiration date. The printer said this problem will be corrected in the winter issue of River Currents. We appreciate your support and patience. You will always receive a dues renewal notice by postal mail a couple weeks out prior to your dues expiration date.

Again, any time you have any questions about your membership or dues, send a letter by regular mail to Membership Chairman, 1857 County Road A-14, Decorah, IA 52101 or e-mail to mrfamembership@mabeltel.coop.

Charlie (Boats) Ardinger
Membership Chairman and Treasurer

Things to See and Do in Indianapolis from MRFA Vice President, Roy Moseman

In May, we will be at the ADAMS MARK HOTEL in Indianapolis, IN, for a gathering of the troops. We will hold our annual reunion at the ADAMS MARK in August '07. The Adams Mark is a beautiful hotel located within 10 minutes of the airport and close to downtown attractions. It is large enough to handle our association. It is well equipped with the amenities that we require. The hotel will be a gracious host willing to accommodate our every need. They will be doing a 10 million dollar renovation that will be complete before our '07 reunion.

Indianapolis is a fairly large city with a small town atmosphere. It really is beautiful with its downtown parks and more than 2 miles of canals winding through the

ble. If museums are your thing, then you are in luck. There are many museums in the area including the Crispus Attucks Museum, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, the Freetown Village, the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, the Indiana Medical History Museum, and the Colonel Eli Lilly War Museum and Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial.

They also have the Indiana State Library, the American Legion National Headquarters, and the Indiana War Memorial Plaza Historic District where a Soldier and Sailor's large monument is located. Indianapolis has the second most war memorials and monuments of any city in the United States--only Washington, DC, has

more. There are many places to shop including the downtown Circle Centre with shops in many of the buildings connected by sky bridges. If you like animals, there is the world famous Indianapolis Zoo with animals of all kinds. So bring your grandchildren or your young children.

For a few of you, there is the Caribbean Cove Indoor Water Park within 15 miles of downtown. Start planning now to attend our '06 gathering or our '07 reunion at the ADAMS MARK HOTEL. For more info on the Indianapolis area, please feel free to contact Paul Williams, Meeting and Sales Manager, at the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Bureau 1-800-956-INDY or use his e-mail address pwilliams@indianapolis.org. Web site: www.indy.org.

USS Clarion River LSMR-409 (Never Made it to the Family Gram)

It all started out with what someone thought was a "fire" in the shipfitter's shop. It turned out to be a lot of smoke from someone welding something which had paint and grease on it, but it wasn't over until everybody was at General Quarters (GQ) stations and ready to fight a real fire.

On a U.S. Navy ship, a reported fire sends everyone to their GQ "battle station." At battle stations, in addition to all the guns, operations, and engineering areas being fully manned, the ship is set in a watertight condition with all doors and hatches closed and the rescue parties and the medical parties are all at their highest degree of readiness. This is the way we organize to fight any fire, large or small.

When the GQ alarm went off, it was



about 1700 (5:00 pm) we were about 2 miles off the coast of Vietnam, headed out to sea, and the crew was relaxing after shooting an afternoon long fire support mission. The weather was warm, although the deck was wet from a rain shower earlier. The sky was clear and the sun was getting low in the sky.

I was standing the bridge watch as the Junior Officer of the Deck and the OPS officer had the OOD. We were relaxing, too. The OOD was reading radio messages and I had the "Conn" and was watching out for fishing boats ahead of us. We passed the word for "shower hours" and a line began to form on the main deck. We only had shower hours once every week or less often, so shower day was a big deal.

On this day, the Captain had declared that there would be shower hours for the crew and there were about 60 guys in line on the main deck waiting to get showers in the forward crews head--clad in nothing but towels and shower shoes and carrying their soap dishes.

What ENC Baker, the Chief Master at Arms, would do is line the crew up on the main deck with the head of the line up at the bow where there was a ladder down into the crews head. They would use one

shower and Chief Baker would stand there with his watch and give each guy 1 minute to wet down, soap up, and rinse off. Then the guy would walk off aft to the berthing compartment and dry off and dress.

Into this idyllic scene stepped Mr. Murphy. Somebody popped out of a hatch on the main deck and shouted up to the bridge "FIRE IN THE SHIPFITTER'S SHOP." The OOD looked at me and said "Hit the CQ alarm." Either I or the Boatswain's Mate of the watch in the pilot house hit the switch and everything got real loud and busy.

We were accustomed to going to GQ, but to special stations called "Condition 1 Rocket" where most of the crew manned the rocket launchers. We went to "real" GQ

very seldom, so there was a little confusion because this was different from usual. [It has always reminded me of that scene in Mr. Roberts where they set GQ on the ship and two guys bumped into each other running for their stations: "Is this my GQ station?" "I don't know, it was up here last year."] Of course, the fire fighting parties were the same for both, so LTJG Berlin had his people on station quickly, as it turned out.

Well when the GQ alarm sounded for the fire, about half the crew in line looked up to the bridge to see if it was a drill or what and you could read in their eyes: "I can't decide whether to go to my GQ station and lose my place in the shower line or not."

We were very busy on the bridge, getting into battle gear, taking "manned and ready" reports and setting things up. While we were doing this, I was still supposed to be driving the ship and so I would look out over the bow every few seconds.

You can imagine that many of the towels didn't make it to the GQ stations, I will never forget looking forward to the bow where one of the ship's 40 mm gun mounts was located and seeing a sailor [who shall remain nameless] vaulting buck naked over the splinter shield and into the gun tub. At least the rest of the gun crew had life jackets and were already.

They soon found out it was a false alarm called in by someone who had been walking by the Shipfitter's Shop and seen smoke billowing out into the passageway.

Serious then, funny now, nobody was hurt except for a few scraped knees and

elbows. No "Battle Dress" that day. Whew!!!!

When the Captain got to the bridge and found out it was a false alarm, he said something like this to the JOOD: "Nice time for a fire drill!" I think he might have been in the shower himself. That little incident DID NOT make it into the Family Gram.

**Ray Harvey, Family Gram Editor,
USS Clarion River (LSMR-409) 1970**

Reply: By Craig Doc Champion, Bad Day on the River (Summer Issue)

In the latest issue of *River Currents*, the article on page 5, Bad Day on the River, brought memories of that day. It was interesting to read about the Navy and the fighting they went through that day.

I knew there was a lot of firing going on all around, but I was so focused on what was in front of us that everything else got blanked out. I was a medic with E Co. 3rd/47th 3rd platoon and Alton Boyce (KIA) was our platoon Sgt. Lee Brager (KIA) was also in my platoon. Right after we offloaded our TANGO, just inside the jungle the 3rd platoon was hit by three VC bunkers with auto fire directly in front. Immediately, I had three wounded beside me. I backloaded these three to the TANGO that we had just unloaded. Our RTO was lying between two small canals and I managed to drag him back also to the TANGO. One of the guys said he saw Sgt. Boyce fall into the canal in front of the bunker on the far left. There was no way to get to him at the time. We spent the rest of the day down in the canals in about waist deep water exchanging fire. The artillery and bombing was brought in close and that was another concern. Everyone was almost out of ammo by the end of the day. Late that evening the firing seemed to stop and we all moved over to our right to dry ground and set up for the night. The next morning, we moved back into the area and saw the bunkers lined up about 60 feet apart. I found Barger in the bottom of an open bunker. The VC had taken all his gear and even removed his boots. The covered bunker where Sgt. Boyce was last seen had an enemy helmet laying on top. (Nobody touched it) I went into the canal and found Sgt. Boyce on the bottom. He had been killed instantly with a round to the head before falling into the canal. The 3rd herd of E. Co. took a big hit that morning as did the Navy. I just thought whoever put the article in *River Currents* might be interested in the above actions of E Co 3rd platoon who had 2 KIA and 4 seriously wounded.

Sincerely,

Craig Doc Champion
E/CO 3rd/47th 3/68 -11/68,
5178 FM 1245, Groesbeck, Texas 76642,
1-245-729-2422 or e-mail
cchampion@glade.com.

Saga of the YFU-79 and the U-Boat Sailors of I-Corps

(Authorized 31 OCT 05 by Tom Lanagan, MRFA member and prior U-Boat crew member)

When the Navy-Marine Team first landed in DaNang in March 1965 at Red Beach, there were U-boat sailors in the mix with the crews of the LCUs from Amphibious Task Force 76 who moved the Marines ashore. No, the U-Boat sailors of Vietnam are not some out-of-time holdovers from the German Kriegsmarine and they are definitely not submariners which is the question I usually get whenever I mention that I was once a U-boat sailor. As the Navy took charge of logistics for I-Corps, the Naval Support Activity DaNang was established in October 1965 and given the task of road and rail transportation networks, the Navy rapidly brought on extensive lighterage operations to supply the troops using LCUs, YFUs, LCMs and various barges. Those U-boat sailors in Nam were the hard working, hard fighting and pre-politically correct men who crewed all of those logistic workhorse crafts that hauled ammo and war material around-the-clock on the rivers and along the coast throughout I-Corps in spite of weather or enemy threat. That environment could be tough at times with the Northeast monsoons coming off the South China Sea with some pretty harsh blows to include the occasional typhoon and of course there was also the constant threat of enemy mines or a well placed North Vietnamese rocket or mortar striking a boat loaded with two-to-three hundred tons of ammo to add some stress to a guy's life. The focus of this article will be about just one of those boats, the YFU-79, a "Skilak", and one sailor's view.

As the fighting intensified and the Allied Troop strength continued to grow in the mid-60s, the Navy found that they needed to expand their lighterage capacity. Normally, the Navy would have gone through a rather lengthy procurement process to establish requirements for a new class of U-boats since much of the existing fleet of U-boats were originally built to support the WW-II landings. Since the Naval Command needed new boats to be available quickly, it was decided to pursue a new acquisition strategy of buying "Commercial Off-the-Shelf" (COTS) boats to meet the immediate war requirement.

The result of this early COTS procurement was a contract with the Pacific Coast Engineering Co. of California. They had a craft already designed and tested in the waters of Alaska where some of the earlier models had already proven themselves to be workhorses supporting construction of the Alaskan oil pipeline. These craft were known as "Skilaks." Under this contract,

the Navy purchased 11 craft under what was known as the YFU-71 Class with the first one being launched in July '67 and the last one a year later in July '68. Several of the boats arrived in-country in time to support the US and South Vietnamese TET '68 counter offensive that at that time defeated the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces.

Now in the case of the YFU-79, it was launched in May '68 and arrived in Nam later that summer. The YFU-79 was typical of all of the Skilaks in terms of configuration. We normally carried a crew of 11 which included our craft master Chief Mason of Colorado who was a Bosun and a Chief Engineer that was a 1st Class Engineman from South Carolina whose name now escapes me. We also had a 1st Class Cook who also hailed from South Carolina. Since these new boats had been bought via "COTS", they did have a rather nice galley as compared to the older boats and our "Stewburner" was a favorite member of the crew. The boats also had three to four other rated crews. This normally included a Gunners Mate who on our boat was Bill Suttle of North Carolina (we carried 3-50 cals, an M-79, a couple of LAWs, individual M-16s, and various types of gre-



nades), a Bosun Mate who was Peter Norcross from Maine, and either a Quartermaster, who on our boat was Rich Geiser of Michigan, or a Radioman which was later me, and another Engineman who was Gene May of Indiana. The balance of our 11 man crew were mixed between non-rated seamen and firemen to include guys like Cary Shiosaki of Idaho, Mike Clinard of North Carolina, Don Hayworth (who later became our Gunner) of Oklahoma and who subsequently transferred to Dong Tam down South, and Larry Dean of Texas. Yes, there were others in that crew who came and went during that year but although I can still see faces, I

can't recall all of their names after three and a half decades.

My time on the YFU-79 ran from the summer of '69 to the summer of '70 at which time the Navy transferred the YFU-79 and several other U-boats to the Army's 329th Heavy Boat Company as the Army picked up I-Corps logistics support from the Navy and we also began the Vietnamization process by transferring craft to both the South Vietnamese and to the Cambodian Navy. In fact, the last several supply runs that I made on the YFU-79 in May and June of '70 was with an Army Warrant Officer as the Craft Master with a half Army and half Navy crew as we trained the Army guys on Skilak operations. Running the boat as a Navy guy under an Army warrant was definitely different.

Now as a kid fresh in from the States, after landing in DaNang which was an interesting experience in itself with mountains on three sides and the pilot wanting to avoid potential enemy fire, and going through in-processing at NSA DaNang, I was assigned to the Lighterage Division and I was on to the YFU-79 after being in-country all of 2 days. Being non-rated at the time, I got to bunk with five other guys in a compartment right off the main deck. This

was tight quarters even by Navy standards (my subsequent assignment to a WW-II era ATF after I rotated out of Nam was spacious by comparison). However, we were all Can-Do types of guys and they made room for the new guy and we went to work.

I barely got my duffel unpacked and my gear stowed and we had a new cargo assignment that same day. So we pushed off from the Sand Ramp at Tien Sha in DaNang Harbor and proceeded to the anchorage area of the harbor where we pulled alongside an ammo ship. It was a Korean flagged vessel with Taiwanese and Korean crew. We took on about 250 tons of ammo from this break-bulk freighter and cast off and headed out of the harbor just at sunset. It had been a busy and deceptively beautiful day in the harbor and except for the fighter jets that you could see coming in to land at the air base and the Marine helos heading out to points unknown towards Marble Mountain, one could have been State-side until you looked at your cargo, and yes, you were in a war.

Once we cleared the harbor and were into the South China Sea, Chief Mason set the first watch. A watch section consisted of a 3rd Class rated guy plus two non-rated

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Saga of YFU-79

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

fellows with one normally a seaman and the other a firemen. I got assigned to our 3rd Class QM Rich Geiser. Rich proceeded to read me in on my duties and immediately gave me the helm and a course heading. We were running south along the coast after rounding Monkey Mountain and we would hold that course most of the night where we would stay about 5 miles out to sea. It was a languid night with a pleasant warming breeze coming off the light seas of the South China Sea. Again, I had to pinch myself to remember where I was and a look toward the shore would occasionally remind me that this was a war as you could see occasional artillery fire in the distant hills along the coast. My first watch on the YFU-79 ended at midnight as some light fog began to form and I went down to my bunk where I promptly sacked out.

Later that night about 03:00, I had a tap on the shoulder by one of my crewmates who told me that the Chief wanted me topside pronto. I popped up and noticed that the fog had gotten a lot thicker from when I had gotten off watch. Looking at the radar scope I could see that we were still running a few miles off the beach but there were now some islands off to the East that were showing and also a contact. The Chief had the port signal light up and told me to signal the contact that at this time had popped two flares that seemed other worldly in the fog conditions. I got on the light as our boat's radioman and flashed out that we were the YFU-79. They came back with an acknowledgment and immediately veered off from our port side heading north into the night's fog. The Chief told me that we had just met one of the close-in Market Time patrols who routinely patrolled the coasts interdicting NVA/VC supply junks and that it was good that I knew my code. Returning to my bunk, I sacked out until 06:00 when we were up for breakfast and the day's work.

After the morning chow, I checked to see where we were and we had just about arrived off-shore from our destination which was affectionately known as Gilligan's Island and officially called Sa Huynh. It was on the Batangan Peninsula and supported by the Army's Americal Division among other Army units near Duc Pho and Quag Ngai. Going into Sa Huynh, we were at General Quarters keeping a sharp eye out for potential mines as well as watching the surface water for any signs that the channel may have shifted since the boat's last visit. Once we crossed the sandbar to the lagoon area, the Chief headed us to the ramp where we beached and dropped our boat's ramp and almost immediately the forklifts from the Navy detachment at Sa Huynh began to offload the ammo.

As soon as we completed off-loading,

the Chief said that we should get ready for taking on some Army troopers, so we hosed off the deck and stowed our cargo rigging. We then took on a couple of jeeps, one of which was outfitted with a recoilless 105 mm and a platoon of combat troops with full packs. Leaving Sa Huynh, we headed out across the sandbar at the entrance to the lagoon and into the South China Sea where we again headed south. Still at GQ, we went around the peninsula and headed into a beach area on the SE side of the peninsula where some Army troops had already set up a combat perimeter along with their TOC. Once we had beached and dropped our ramp, the contingent of troops along with their jeeps departed and joined the unit already ashore. Raising our ramp, we backed off the beach and this time we had no backhaul to take north to DaNang, which was rare to ride empty. Yes, it was a fast trip riding with no cargo and we made the harbor and the Sand Ramp at Tien Sha about 21:00. So much for my first trip as a U-boat sailor on the YFU-79 and I hadn't been in-country a full week.



At around 23:00 on Feb 27 1969, three rockets were fired at LCU-1500 and YFU-78. One rocket hitting LCU-1500 counting for the loss of 12 men on LCU-1500 and 7 men on YFU-78 and 3 men on the bridge ramp.

Of the 11 boats built as Skilaks under the YFU-71 Class, one of them, the YFU-78, was completely destroyed in a rocket attack at the DaNang Bridge Ramp in 1969 with the tragic loss of most of the crew after taking on a cargo of ammo. Of the remaining 10 Skilaks, three of them still exist and serve in various capacities. The YFU-73 was transferred in '70 to the Cambodian Navy and still operates in those waters today. The YFU-81 was transferred to the Army's 329th Heavy Boat Co. in '70 and evacuated to Guam in '75. Subsequently, in the '80s the Navy reacquired it and operated it as YFU-81 in Roosevelt Roads until it was moved to Mayport in '03 and then transferred in '04 to the government of Panama. Interestingly, the YFU-79 after also being transferred to the Army's 329th Heavy Boat Co. in '70 and evacuated from Vietnam in '75 to Guam, was reacquired by the Navy in the mid-80s and went through a significant reconfiguration to become the IX-514 and is today the smallest "aircraft" carrier in the fleet where it serves as an at-sea training platform for helicopters and operates from NAS Pensacola. In fact, the saga of the YFU-79 aka IX-514 is an interesting one and I'd like to co-author a future article for MRFA with another enlisted guy who crewed the 514, so stay tuned for that one.

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Working Party Update

If you live in the San Diego area and would like to assist in the restoration of the CCB-18 by being an MRFA volunteer (Working Party) Army or Navy, contact Charles Campbell 677 G St. SP#1, Chula Vista, CA 91910; phone (619) 427-6835 or e-mail: ccic@ aol.com or Everett Jones at 1947 Gotham St., Chula Vista, CA 91913; phone (619) 421-3721 or e-mail: oneerj@pabel.net.

The USS Benewah Following its Distinguished Service in the U.S. Navy

The following account has been verified by several of the crew including Captain JG Pizarro MC (Philippine Navy). Captain Pizarro states: "I spoke to two (2) CPOs here in my unit, one of whom was (of all people) my own POIC in the Operating Room. They both confirmed what was written in the Philippine Navy history book."

According to Captain Pizarro, the Benewah was converted into a hospital ship for the Philippine Navy. The AH-3 Ospital ng Tulungan (formerly the USS Benewah) was indeed improved, repaired, even repainted white with a red cross at the middle hull, and stocked with supplies and medicines.

While all this refurbishing was going on at the Mariveles, Bataan Shipyards, an acetylene tank blew up inside the ship which caused a fire, thus severely damaging the AH-3. Apparently, after stocking the ship, it was never used as a hospital ship after the explosion and fire. Captain Pizarro further states "My POIC further informed me that after that (the fire), there were no more attempts to repair the ship - it was towed somewhere to the Southern Philippines and was, according to him, used as a barracks ship but where and for how long, he could not remember." He further states "Maybe after the fire, the Benewah was indeed sunk and used as a barrier reef, but I don't know where." I just thought you might want to know what fate your ship actually had after it left the service of the USN.

Happy Halloween and best regards sir!
CPT JG PIZARRO MC (PN)

The above account was verified by crew member Harold Hugo who wrote the following:

"I WAS TOLD THAT THE BENEWAH WAS BEING CONVERTED TO A HOSPITAL SHIP BY RANDY ELLIS, WHO WAS HER ENGINEERING OFFICER IN 1952/53, WHEN I RELIEVED HIM UNDERWAY TO NAPLES, ITALY, IN 1953. HE SUBSEQUENTLY WORKED FOR THE NAVY DEPARTMENT, AND SAW THE SHIP IN SUBIC BAY, AND EVEN MADE A PHOTO THERE, AND GAVE IT TO ME."

VETERAN'S DAY IN MINNESOTA



ADVERTISING IN RIVER CURRENTS

We have received many requests from our membership to place Advertisements in *River Currents*. Books, Medals, Patches, Watches, Boat Models, etc. Also, everyone wants a photograph of his or her posted product.

We are unable to do this because of space limitations. The only thing that will be published will be the name of the product and telephone number, postal address or email address. This info is posted at no charge to you. Please remember, if you received this service in any other publication there would be a cost involved.

- ◆ McGrogan's Military Patches: phone: 208-762-4481 or NEW E-Mail macpatch@mcgrogans.com. McGrogan Patches has one of the largest collections there is of Vietnam Patches, both Army and Navy. Don has missed the last couple of reunions due to family illnesses but will be on hand for our 2007 reunion.
- ◆ Military Watches: MRFA & 9th Inf 541-863-3144; seaweed@chiefsquarters.com; or visit www.chiefsquarters.com
- ◆ Books: www.mrfa.org
- ◆ Supplier of Challenge Coins & Military Key Fobs Frank Gubala Fgubala@aol.com 716-873-4821 www.9thinfantry.bravepages.com
- ◆ SEAWEEDES SHIPS HISTORIES & PHOTOS: 1-800-seaweed www-uss-seaweed.com.
- ◆ Mike Harris is our web master he does a great job with the web site. There is VA Info, KIA Info, just about anything you want on the 9th and the MRF and other in-country Navy units. You'll find patch, book and tour info on the web site also. You may contact Mike Harris if you want an item posted. Mike makes the final decision on what will be on the site. Contact him by e-mail mekong152@charter.net. Mike served on Tango-152-1 68-69.
- ◆ Veterans of the Vietnam War, 570-603-9740; email vvnwnatl@epix.net; http://www.vvnw.org.

The only products that will appear in River Currents will be those sold by the MRFA.

SEEKING...

I am the younger brother of Scott Edward Saylor who was killed in action April 26, 1969 in Kien Hoa Province while serving with D/Co/3rd/60th Riverine Infantry. I would like to hear from anyone who served with my brother. Please contact David Saylor at 1572 Clayton Rd., West Chester, PA 19383 or e-mail me at dsaylor1@comcast.net.

My cousin Herman A. Miller II ("He went by Ham") was killed August 11, 1968 in Binh Dinh Province while serving as a GMG3 with IUWG-1-3 at Qui Nhon. Two others died that day - QM2 Howard Burns and SM2 Robert Bouchet. I would like to hear from anyone who knew my cousin; he was my hero and still is to this day. Please contact Gary Miller, 180 Central Ave., New Providence, NJ 07974; (908) 898-1181; email: Gary.miller@us.calyon.com.

VETERAN'S DAY IN WASHINGTON, DC



TAPS

Those gone but not forgotten

BMC Don Jackson (USN Ret), member, passed away October 8, 2005, from Agent Orange related cancer and was buried October 14th in Osterville, MA. Don was a plankowner of the MRFA and the Inshore Undersea Warfare Group 1 (IUWG-1). Don was a man that when you met him for the first time, he impressed you with his kindness and winning personality. He was a Man's Man, and a sailor's sailor and I do not know of one person who didn't like him for the great person he was.

I remember how disappointed I was to hear Don couldn't join us at the reunion this year, but I knew he had to do what he had to do to try to get rid of his sickness. I know from talking to him that he was putting up a good fight and was in pain, but he still had a chance to laugh once in a while and say that he was going to beat this thing and try to get to see you all at the next reunion.

Don was a great man, and a good friend, he served his country for many years and loved being a Navy man. He is going to be missed by his Extended Family of Brothers in both the MRFA and IUWG-1 as well as our families. May he be sitting at the right hand of God in eternal peace. Don has gone on before us to make a path for us to follow some day--Like foot prints in the sand, he will guide us home when our time comes. Don is now one of God's Special Angles. May he rest in peace.

Jim Meehan

I served with 'Boats' Don P. Jackson in 1968 and part of 1969 at IUWG-1 Det. 1/Vung Tau. Don Jackson was one of the best sailors I ever had the honor and privilege to have served with. Not only was Don an outstanding sailor, he was a true gentleman, and once a friend always a friend. My last words with Don were that he wanted to make the reunion in Ft. Mitchell if at all possible but due to the cancer it didn't happen. He really loved the reunions and being with his fellow Vietnam Veterans. Don had been fighting Agent Orange related cancer for a number of years and he fought hard till the very end. He was a dear friend and will always remain so. You may contact the family c/o 87 Oakville Ave, Osterville, MA 02655 (508) 428-3661. Don always told me, "Al-B Once a Sailor always a Sailor", and he was truly that.

Albert Moore

Gil Reyna was killed in a motorcycle accident September 20, 2005. Gil served on Tango-132-21, 4/69-4/70. You may contact the family c/o Pat Reyna, 9863 Sagequeen, Houston, TX 77089; (713) 254-3035.

Glen Lee "Butch" Tennill. Glen lost his struggle with cancer on July 31, 2005. While Tennill served in Vietnam, he was the Boat Captain of T-91-6 from October 1967 to August 1968. He was proud of his

two tours in Vietnam and was honorably discharged as a BM1. His wife, Sandra, stated the following, "My beloved husband was the bravest, most courageous, and honorable man I've ever known."

You may contact the family c/o Sandra Tennill, 104 Vivion Ln., Georgetown, TX 78626; phone (512) 863-5952.

Carol Ann Long, spouse of James Long, Sr. He lost his lovely wife to cancer on August 25, 2005. It was 9 days prior to their 40th wedding anniversary. James served on the ComRivFlot-One Staff from November 1967 to November 1968. You may contact James at 971 Watertank Rd., Canton, GA 30115; phone (770) 720-1580; or email: long9@adelphia.net.



Rubin Binder passed away unexpectedly November 9, 2005. Rubin Served in River Patrol Section 531 PBR-105 Task Force 116, 1966. You may contact the family c/o Mrs Kris Binder, 15011 88th St., Snohomish, WA 98209; phone 1-360-568-7440.

The Family of William Childs Westmoreland General United States Army, Ret. thanks you for your kind expression of sympathy

Dear Charlie,

Thank you for the honor of making me an honorary member in the Mobile Riverine Force Association. I must tell you that in 1964. I had a long ride up the river on one of the boats that was in country at that time. I told the Captain that here he was on a small boat fighting a war, and all those great big ships were sitting at sea. He looked rather smug; what a contribution you gentlemen made!

General Westmoreland died in peace. He is buried in his beloved West Point.

With all best wishes
Katherine Westmoreland

GET WELL WISHES

MRFA Board Member and Products Chairman was in the hospital for an emergency appendix operation. Bob is now home and doing well. You may contact him c/o 2906 Starlite Dr., Topeka, KS 66605; or (785) 267-1526; email: bvdmrfa@networksplus.net. Bob served in RivDiv-92 68-69.

Lt/Gen General William B. Fulton. U.S. Army Ret.

I have been informed by Mrs. Nan Fulton that General Fulton is under the weather and is recuperating for a time in a rest home. He is planning on returning home in the near future. General Fulton as a Colonel was the 2nd Brigade Commander 1966-67. He later became Assistant Division Commander of the 9th Infantry Division. Anyone wishing to send a card to the General can do so c/o 4739 34th Rd., Arlington, VA 22207; you may also telephone the rest home at 703-842-1305.

Though I receive a lot of credit for the MRFA, General Fulton has always been my mentor and a large inspiration to me since our beginning. He has always told me 'Albert when things get rough there is always a better day on the horizon. Albert you just keep marching, just keep marching.' The good General is 86 years old and still loves his BIG MAC's.

Albert

In Memory Of:

This section is for the members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one their fallen comrades. In some cases 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 4 issues.

Jack Benedick for C/CO/4th/47th 66-68 C/CO/3rd/60th 69 E/CO/3rd/60th Inf, KIA 4-7-68

Ellen Bergman for Henry Bergman C CO 3rd/34th and 3rd/60 Inf

Tim Goins for Wife Andi Goins, A Lovely Lady and Wife James J. Byrnes for members of the Junk Force, Dung Island

James Roselli for Mark Schoenberger, B/CO/3rd/39th Inf Frank T. Buck SKCS (Ret.) for Son ENFN Frank H. Buck, KIA 12/28/67, T-92-10

John Philp for LTC William B. Cronin KIA April 27, 1967 CO 2/47th

John Philp for Colonel Arthur D. Moreland USA Ret. 2/47th 4/67-12/67

Fred Gottwald for Sgt. Walter J. Garstkiewicz C/Co/3/60 and C/Co/6/31st KIA-1-9-1970

Gene Cooper for Steve Brichford FT2-68/69 / Jerry Roleofs 67-68, USS White River LSMR-536

Bill Brennan for Tom Swanick, GMG3, USS White River LSMR-536

David Lynn for Howard Burns (QM2) Robert Bouchet (SM2) Herman Miller (GM3) 8-11-68 IUWG-1-3

Brothers of the 2nd/47th for all Army and Navy KIAs Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart, Tango-111-2 KIA, March 31, 1969

Robert Thacker for Earl T. Pelhan SSG KIA 15th Combat Engineers

Larry Hunter for Sgt/Maj Daniel Williams, U.S. Army (Ret.) Lloyd W. Austin for Arthur M. Day KIA 5/8/69 D/CO/4th/47 Inf

Chief Larry Marshall for CTF 116.9-TOC-RSSZ (NhaBe) and ACTOVRAD CTF 115 Radar Site 4 Duc Pho 1 Corp

James A. Morse for Mark W. Weachter, CTO-3 Adam Metts for SN Donald L. Bruckhart, KIA 3-31-69 / T-111-2

V.P. Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th 10/67-10/68

Tom Sanborn 4th/47th Inf. for Spec4 David Thorton, KIA 10/68 on Toi Son (VC)

Tom Sanborn 4th/47th Inf. for Lt James L. Tatre, KIA 8/24/68 near Kai Lay

Gary Williams for Dale Winkel C CO 3rd/60th 9th Inf Anonymous for Adm Elmo Zumwalt, Jr.



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Albert,

I was stationed on the Benewah as CDR, Co B. All of us who were wounded went to the Benewah. That was our hospital. It was a good field hospital, in Army terms. I also saw many locals who were brought in. The Doctors were dedicated to saving lives, no matter who. We took care of all folk.

I especially remember the doctors asking me about a young Vietmease girl, about 10 or 12 years old who had an M-79 round embedded in her shoulder. The doctors asked me, a combat guy, about the munition. The question was, would the thing explode during the operation to remove it? I told the doctors that an M-79 would spin for 10 feet before it was armed and told them that in all probability that if it had not exploded, then it would not. The doctors removed the M-79 round, based on my advice and the girl survived.

I have always thought those doctors showed such great courage, trusting in a Grunt's advice. Of course, I knew I was right. That's a lot of faith in me.

The doctors were very compassionate, they asked me to stay with her because I speak Vietnamese and could comfort her. I did so and held her hand and was able to tell her in her own language that I loved her and she would be all right.

I wonder where she is today.

-Mervin W. Greene LTC U.S. Army Ret.

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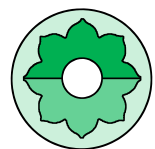
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