

The MRFA Thanks You for Your Help with CCB-18!

In our winter issue of *River Currents*, we listed all the people who have made contributions to this important fund. We'd also like to recognize the people who have sent in donations since then. An MRFA thank you to:

John K. Bowen, B Co., 3rd-47th, 9th Infantry Div.
John Burke, USS Nueces (APB-40), TF-117
Daniel L. Coe, USS Krishna, (ARL-38), TF-117
Robert Coombs, USS Washtenaw Cty. (LST-1166)
Hubert Hamilton, USS Askari (ARL-30)
Steve Klosterman, USS Askari (ARL-30), TF-117
Joe Mattie, M-112-2
Wayne Meeks, Monitor 151-6, TF-117
Dennis Mrosewske, A Co., 3rd-60th, 9th Infantry Div.
Richard (Doc) Nelson, RivRon-15, TF-117
Larry Ott, C Co., 3rd-47th, 9th Infantry Div.
Owen W. Raven, A Co., 9th Sig. Bn., 9th Infantry Div.
Edgar W. Reed, Tango-92-9, TF-117
Bob Stumpf, D/E Co., 3rd-60th, 9th Infantry Div.
Bob & Linda Vargas, E Co., 2nd-60th, 9th Infantry Div.
Joe Mattie, Monitor-112-2
George C. Lang (MOH), A Co., 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div.
BMCs Raymond A. Lang, Monitor-112-1, TF-117
Douglas R. Lindsey, YRBM-17 NSA Saigon

CCB Reaches It's Final Destination

On Friday, February 16, 2001, the last boat for the "Operation Giant Slingshot" scenario arrived at her final resting place. This was the biggest nostalgic day so far. Being brought to rest next to her counterparts, PBR and PCF-104, the final piece of a display showing Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr.'s battle plan for the last Naval Combat Operation of the Vietnam War.

The small boat display is awesome in appearance as it distinguishes the pride of the Servicemen who served and died. This peaceful boat display setting is dignified by the manicured area with surrounding trees and shrubbery as if they were on patrol again. It is a unique historical display that is a vital part of the overall US Navy/US Coast Guard Vietnam Unit memorial monument, a small boat display which encompasses the US Navy as a whole team effort. This memorial provides an honorable tribute to the 2,558 Navy, 7 Coast Guard, 2,583 U.S. Army, 2nd Brigade MRF and all supporting units of the 9th Infantry Division, 1 US Army 458th Transportation Company (PBR), and 8 Australian Navy personnel. These folks paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving under the command of the US Navy, within the war zone parameters during the South East Asia Theater of the Vietnam War.

BOOK SIGNINGS

Three of our members have written books on their Vietnam experience while serving with the MRF and the 9th Inf/Div in Vietnam. They will have books at the reunion for purchase and signing. Jim Johnson's *Combat Chaplain*, will be available in hard cover (see additional information in this issue of *River Currents*). Charlie Palek's book tells the story of his two combat tours with 3rd/47th as an RTO, and as observer on an LCH with the 1st Aviation Brigade out of Vinh

CCB 18 - You Still Have Time!

If you have not made a donation to the CCB-18 restoration fund you can still do so by making a check or money order payable to the **MRFA CCB-18 Fund**, and sending it to: John Sperry at 7143 N. Centenary Rd., Sodus, NY 14551. If you need more information, you may reach John by phone at 1-315-483-0032, or by e-mail johnmrf@a.rochester.rr.com.

NOTE: We have decided that whatever donations/funds are not used for refurbishing CCB-18 will be donated to the **Vietnam Unit Small Boat Memorial**, where CCB-18 will be located.

Folks this is a good cause and a lot of good people have put their time and efforts behind the CCB-18 and the Small Boat Memorial. It will be a lasting memory to all who served in the Delta, Army and Navy alike. Ralph Fries who has been (and still is) the driving force behind the memorial is hoping to have all the U.S. Navy KIA's and 9th Infantry KIA's listed on the memorial wall.

If you would like more information about the Small Boat Memorial, please feel free to contact Ralph at 1000 Erica St., Escondido, CA 92027. You may also phone him at 619-745-0473, or reach him online at rhfries@pacbell.net. You may also contact Vice President John Sperry at the above address or MRFA President, Albert Moore at 106 Bellevue Dr., Conover, NC 28613. Al is available by phone at 828-464-7228, or e-mail mrf@a.charter.net. Anyone donating a \$100.00 or more will have their name inscribed on the Memorial. Any amount of a donation will be most appreciated.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you live in the San Diego area and would like to assist in the restoration of CCB-18 by being an MRFA Volunteer (member of the working party), Army or Navy member, please contact Don Blankenship, 12715 Fairbrook Rd., San Diego, CA 92131; phone 858-271-5477; e-mail domb@tns.net. You may also contact Jim Steffes, 3228 Fox Run Way, San Diego, CA 92111; phone 858-573-0276; or e-mail jimpcf12@sdcoe.k12.ca.us.

Flag Raised

Prior to lifting CCB-18 off the sand blast cart, the mast was raised into place. The flag that flew on BM1 Charles Campbell monitor M-92-2 in-country for the trip down Tulagi Road was raised. About 10:00, ACB-1 Seabees, with their traveling crane, lifted the CCB off the cart in preparation for loading her on the Big Signs Trucking Company of Lakeside, California's trailer. At 11:30, upon securing the boat to the trailer,

they began, at 12:30 her final movement began taking her to her final resting place as the truck backed down the road. It was a very moving sight, as she moved slowly with the flag waving in the breeze. Her final underway trip was about a half hour in length. It was a tight run turn onto the COMSURPAC parking lot but John Theakstone of Big Signs Trucking Co. made it look easy. He backed the trailer onto the cement slab to where the boat would be lifted off the trailer onto the keel supports. Marco Crane and Rigging Company of Lakeside, California had positioned their 75 ton crane prior to the trailer being backed onto the slab. After some adjustments and repositioning of the cranes to make the lift, the CCB was taken off the trailer. SIMA Seabees with EOC Schuck in charge of setting the CCB on the steel keel support was accomplished by aligning and lowering the boat to her final and permanent destination; about 3:00 she was secured. The line handlers were Seabees and members of the restoration working party, as we wanted to make sure that the boat was aligned with the slab for appearance. A Bravo Zulu goes out to Don Blankenship's hard work as CCB-18 restoration coordinator as well as these men whose hard work and effort also went into the restoration: Everett Jones, Charles Campbell, Tom Mason. A Job Well Done to all. We cannot forget those CISM field working party members who were in attendance for the move: Tom Mason, Dutch Hearn, David Hearn, Everett Jones, Don Blankenship, Alan Smith, John Branca, Daniel Reynolds, Norm McCulloch, Carl Fletcher, and Ralph Fries. Thanks to MRFA member Ralph Fries for providing us with this information.



After some adjustments and repositioning of the cranes to make the lift, the CCB was taken off the trailer. SIMA Seabees with EOC Schuck in charge of setting the CCB on the steel keel support was accomplished by aligning and lowering the boat to her final and permanent destination; about 3:00 she was secured. The line handlers were Seabees and members of the restoration working party, as we wanted to make sure that the boat was aligned with the slab for appearance. A Bravo Zulu goes out to Don Blankenship's hard work as CCB-18 restoration coordinator as well as these men whose hard work and effort also went into the restoration: Everett Jones, Charles Campbell, Tom Mason. A Job Well Done to all. We cannot forget those CISM field working party members who were in attendance for the move: Tom Mason, Dutch Hearn, David Hearn, Everett Jones, Don Blankenship, Alan Smith, John Branca, Daniel Reynolds, Norm McCulloch, Carl Fletcher, and Ralph Fries. Thanks to MRFA member Ralph Fries for providing us with this information.

Long. The book is available in paperback and includes a lot of pictures of the good, the bad and the ugly. Roy (Doc) Branch (4th/47th Medic), whose book is called *Reflections: A Vet's View-Poems from a Medic*. The book includes poems that draw from his three years in Vietnam, as well as writings about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. The book is 56 pages, 5x7 duo-tone soft cover will include photo's. You can contact Doc Branch at Box 7111, Lexington, NC 27293. You may also reach him by phone at 704-243-2301, or on the internet at

vnvet@lexcominc.net. Watch the summer issue of *River Currents* for more about Charlie Palek's story.

DON'T FORGET!!!

Your MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE is
now printed on the cover of each
issue of *River Currents*.