

THE

RED 5 DIAMOND

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To appease my disappointment of not having our yearly reunion, I decided to create a tribute memorial for Veterans at my home. I built the cannon 25 years ago and decided it would look good in my display. I acquired the Red Diamond plaque at the Kokomo reunion last year. Other articles were gathered at random places. There are also poppies planted on either side and in back, but they have been unpredictable in their blooming.

I pray that hopefully we can return to normal for next year's gathering to reminiscence. Although I have no desire to go back to the war, I wouldn't trade anything for the experiences I had and the memories and friends I'll cherish always.

Jim Serdy
5/4 Arty B-Btry Gun 4 L.Z. Sandy, Dong Ha
12-68 to 12-69

“WE WILL”

Deadline for submission of articles for the next Edition:

15 OCTOBER 2020

2018 – 2019 Society of the Fifth Division Officers – Roster

Objectives of the Society

A. To perpetuate and memorialize the valiant acts and patriotic deeds of the Fifth Division; to electrify and unify that invisible current of fellowship, friendship and comradeship molded in the throes of war and the exigencies of a peacetime service, and promote the interests and welfare of its members.

B. To publish and preserve the history of the accomplishments of the Fifth Division and the Society, in war and peace, and set forth the gallant and heroic deeds of its members.

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- *Maj. Gen. Hanson E. Elyz (1919-22,24-25)
- *Col. Philip J. McCook (1922-23)
- *Dr. E. C. Morton (1925-28)
- *Maj. Gen. Paul B. Malone (1929-30)
- *Capt. Peter Murphy (1930)
- *Maj. Walter E. Aebischer (1930-32)
- *Capt. Peter P. Zion (1932-34)
- *W. Walter Healy (1934-35)
- *Lloyd A. Reder (1935-37)
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- *William Barton Bruce, Sr. (1938-39)
- *Emil Everts (1939-41)
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- Alex Candelaria/Steve Wheat (2016-2019)

* Deceased

Executive Board Member & National President
Hal Roller – Sheryl
15517 Woodward St • Overland Park, KS
66223 Phone: 913-681-4915 • e:
hal.roller@sbcglobal.net

Executive Board Member &
National 1st Vice-President
Louis Pepi - Pat 181 Fairbanks St West
Boylston, MA 01583
508-835-3345
lapepi@charter.net

Executive Board Member & 2nd Vice President
Gary Haverman - Jeanne 409 Prairie Street
Bayard, IA 50029
C: 712-830-6081
email: gary.haverman@gmail.com
C Btry, 5/4 Artillery

Executive Board Member & National Secretary
John Estrada – Diana
423 Middlefork Lane • Oroville, CA
95966-8823
Home: 530-589-9897 • Cell: 530-990-2575
e: whitewater50@hotmail.com

Executive Board Member & National Treasurer
George B. Shoener – Andrea
7472 Pamelas Way • Easton, MD 21601
Home: 410-822-9717 • Cell: 443-496-1177
e: gshoener@goeaston.net

Executive Board Member & Historian (Archive)
Roger Allen

Advisory Committee

All Executive Board members (above)

All Active Past Presidents

Robert Rochell – Libby
1129 Castle Bluff Circle • Waco TX 76712
Cell: 254-723-3280
e: rochell@msn.com
HHB, A Battery 5/4 Artillery

Jim Spiller – Joanne
500 Pearson Circle Apt 4011 Frederick, Md. 21702
Home: 301-662-2752 • Cell: 301-788-5459
e: spiller612@gmail.com
HHC, 1/77 Armor

James Balderson – Jackie
905 Sutton Place • Richmond, IN 47347
Phone: 765-966-7175 • e: jaybalderson@yahoo.com
Co D, 1/11 Infantry

Robert Dudley
16385 148th Street • Bonner Springs, KS
66012-9373
Phone: 913-422-3543 • e: colrdudley@aol.com

17218 Hodges Rd Hilliard, FL 32046
campreddevil@hotmail.com

Executive Board Member & National Chaplain
Ron VanBeek
5411 Quest Drive. SW • Wyoming, MI 49418-8357
Phone: 312-343-0678 • e: ron@mtcnet.net

Executive Board Member & National Judge Advocate
Phil Maniscalco – Sandy
23 Franklin Street, Unit 17 • Westerly, RI 02891
Home: 401-315-0968 • Cell: 860-961-6450
e: pmanis@cox.net

Executive Board Member &
National Editor (Red Diamond)
David Kocan
9016 Simms Ave, Parkville MD
C: 410 804 1335
drkocan@verizon.net

Executive Board (Past President)
Stephen L. Wheat – Sandra
4838 Rockledge Trail • Smithton, IL 62285
Cell: 618-334-8410
wheatsco@gmail.com

Executive Board (Past President)
Dennis Thompson – Judy
97 Mount Zion Road • Oxford, GA 30054
Phone: 770-786-4507 • e: jtanddt@bellsouth.net

Quartermaster
Dennis Coulter
4118 E Stanford Street • Springfield, MO 65809
Phone: 417-414-5680 • e: dwcoulter1@aol.com

Mike Sperling
14503 E. 257th Avenue • Brush Prairie, WA 98606
Home: 360-892-7639 • Cell: 360-798-7111
e: sperlingmichael@hotmail.com
HHC Recon, 1/61 Infantry

Bernie "Buck" Kean – Mary
498 Ebenezer Road • Ellijay, GA 30536
Home: 706-273-1793 • Cell: 770-361-6670
e: Buck5div@wildblue.net

Co D, 1/11 Infantry
Wayne Cumer – Darlene Kopp
150 Cumer Lane • Burgettstown, PA 15021
Home: 724-947-3859 • Cell: 724-622-6564
e: wccumer371@verizon.net
HHC Recon, 1/61 Infantry

James "JJ" Jackson – Karen
P.O. Box 1845 • Cold Springs, TX 77331
Home: 936-767-4229 • Cell: 713-560-0008
HHC Recon, 1/61 Infantry

Representatives at large

Northeast
Carl Hiestand
4 Slater Drive • Wernersville, PA, 19565-9467
Home: 610-678-6348 • e: cmhnlh@ptd.net
Co C, 1/61 Infantry

Joseph Rahie
14560 Lakeside Circle, Apt. 244
Sterling Heights, MI 48313-1354
Phone: 586-803-3082
Co M, 2nd Infantry Regt

Southeast
Col. Henry Neill (Ret)
7417 Jenna Road • Springfield, VA
22153-1349
Home: 703-569-5397 • e: reatta@mac.com
A Co, 75th Support Battalion

Gary Barard
1660 Esprit Court • Atlanta, GA 30331-8428
Home: 404-349-8247 • e: gbarard@aol.com
Co A, 75th Support Bn.

West

TBD

Ray Collins
1230 Phillips Street • Long Beach, CA 90805-4854
Home: 562-428-6243 • e: raymcl8@aol.com
HHC Recon, 1/61 Infantry

Vietnam
Nick Pink
40662 Elizabeth • Sterling Heights, MI 48313-4037
Home: 360-892-7639 • Cell: 360-798-7111
Co D, 1/11 Infantry

Vernon Songerth
930 Timber Ridge Road • Princeton, IL 61356-2886
Home: 815-872-4171
Co D, 1/11 Infantry

A Note from the President
Hal Roller



For the first time in 100 years, the Society of the Fifth Division is not holding an annual Reunion. If you read the last Red Diamond, you know I wrote that the 2020 Reunion was on. But it isn't. The Executive Board did the right thing in cancelling. There were just too many factors putting all of us at health risk. Even if we stubbornly refused to accept reality and held the Reunion, it would be a miserable time because of Covid-19 restrictions. A Reunion in San Antonio, Texas September 10-13, 2020 may be off, but the Society of the Fifth Division continues to move forward.

Contracts with hotels for Reunions in 2021 and 2022 have already been signed. Tours and events are well into the planning stage. The Executive Board has approved a ballot of National Officers for 2020-21 to present to you for a vote. The Society of the Fifth Division is moving forward with the motto: "Nothing Changes but Remain Flexible." Under Lou Pepi's leadership, we are headed to the vicinity of Boston for our next Reunion. Then, Gary Haverman has us in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks. Since we missed San Antonio this year, how about we go there in 2023? You have to admit, attending the Society of the Fifth Division Reunions lets you see this great country of ours.

The immediate challenge is to get National Officers elected for 2020/21 since there is no annual membership meeting. This has to be done in a manner that is another first for the Society of the Fifth Division. Seems like everything this year is the first time we have done it that way. So, for this election email addresses will be used. All the email addresses our Secretary, John Estrada, has. Kudos to the webmaster, Joe Boman, for designing a program for the ballot. Joe works at a level far above my technical understanding, let alone, my ability. Thank goodness Joe has Robert Dudley to assist and advise. The Society of the Fifth Division is blessed to have Joe and Robert.

Joe Boman and Robert Dudley are just two of many who have helped this year. As I end my year as president, I want to thank the Executive Board members for their great work and support. Although not technically on the Executive Board, I want to include our quartermaster, Dennis Coulter. Whenever I would call one of these guys, everyone of them would make themselves available and willing to help. It has been a real pleasure for me to work with you wonderful guys and I thank you to the bottom of my heart.

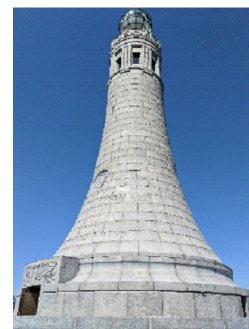
Also, I want to thank each member of the Society. What a year! A pandemic shuts everything down- even our Reunion. Yet, I have received nothing but support. Thank you. The Executive Board has decided to give me another try. So with your vote for me as 2nd Vice President on the 2020/21 ballot, we will go to San Antonio for the 2023 Reunion. As they use to say in the old Army, RE-DO!



A note from 1st Vice President Lou Pepi

Well, it's been quite a first half of 2020. Like our 100th reunion in San Antonio, most of our plans for the year have been cancelled. And the future is uncertain, but we move on and hope for the best. No, we won't be seeing each other in San Antonio this year, and we are all very disappointed, but no more so than our president, Hal Roller. I'd like to call out to everyone, the boundless hard work and meticulous dedication he has put into the last to years in preparation to our 100th reunion. Yes, we are all disappointed but we just have to accept that this is just part of God's plan.

On a more positive note, Pat and I look forward—as I hope you all do—to our 2021 reunion in New England. For all of you that have not visited the Northeast, consider the Providence, Rhode Island reunion as a jumping off point to visiting a unique part of our great country at the perfect time of year. Mid-September offers some of the best foliage viewing in the world. There are several great foliage rides, like the Mohawk Trail (Rt2) to the top of Mount Greylock in North Adams Massachusetts, a ride (or hike) to the top of Mount Wachusett in Princeton, Massachusetts, Rt 93N to Franconia Notch and the Kancamagus Highway near North Woodstock, New Hampshire, and the scenic Green Mountains in Vermont. Then there is Maine—our favorite—from the rocky Bold Coast of “Down East Maine” to the vast wild tracks of land called the Great North Woods. Of course, there is the city of Boston, rich in revolutionary history—and the surrounding towns of Concord (shot heard round the world), Lexington (actual first shot), and Salem (witchcraft trial). Boston has a world class aquarium, the JFK Museum, Old Ironsides, the Old North Church, Paul Revere's House, Scene of the Boston Massacre, Cheers Pub, and Quincy Marketplace. You can see all this on double decker Tour busses (jump off one and get on another) called the Freedom Trail Bus Tours.



*War Memorial atop Mt
Greylock*

And there is more—Battleship Cove & Lizzy Borden's house in Fall River, MA, The Whaling Museum in New Bedford, The New England States Exposition (The Big E) in W Springfield, MA, Plymouth Rock & Plantation and Old Cape Cod & the Islands (Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and Chappaquiddick—LOL). These are only a fraction of the places to visit before and after the reunion.

But... Let's talk about the reunion. Thursday, September 9th is getting reacquainted night if you are not one of the early birds taking advantage to the sites of the northeast. The Crowne Plaza Warwick/Airport Hotel has just gone through a 25-million-dollar renovation and everything is state of the art.

Two tours are in the planning stage. The first is a tour of nearby Newport, Rhode Island—including the sights in the city and along the Atlantic Coastline. We will pass by the Newport Naval Intelligence College and the Newport Mansions after touring the city. A plan is in the works for a 60-minute stop at Rose Cliff Mansion (Where “The Great Gatsby” was filmed) and hopefully a picnic lunch on its beautiful ocean-front lawn and gardens.

The second excursion, is a tour of the General George S Patton Jr Homestead/Museum in Hamilton, Massachusetts. To our beloved and indebted World War II veterans, this would be a great opportunity to visit your brothers one more time. We look forward to seeing some of you.

In closing, keep the faith brothers. We will meet again. Pat and I hope to see you all in September of 2021.

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- 1. Bascom Lodge Hostel atop Mount Greylock, N Adams, Massachusetts
- 2. Fall Foliage Franconia, Notch, New Hampshire
- 3. Mount Monadnock from atop Mount Wachusett, Princeton, Massachusetts
- 4. Schoudic Point in Down East, Maine on the Bold Coast
- 5. Patton, Bradley and Montey
- 6. Rose Cliff



A Note from 2nd Vice President Gary Haverman

From the 2nd Vice President

Hello again to all of the Red Diamond readers. I hope and pray that everyone is staying safe and healthy through this time.

When this all started in March, I had no idea it would last this long and would call for all the cancellations and postponements of so many events to include our 100th Reunion. I will tell you I was not happy to vote for the postponement, but it was the right thing to do in view of the recent flare ups in Texas.

I want to thank SOFD President Hall Roller for all this hard work these last three years to make the reunion happen and so sorry he could not see it to fruition. He has also shown his leadership ability in these time for which I have been truly impressed with.

I'm sure we all think back what we were doing in Vietnam this time of year. For me it was July 4th, 1971, a buddy and I were watching the sky light up in celebration around us. We made (what I know now) was a bad decision to join them by getting atop a bunker and started popping off what I would call some unauthorized flares. We were having a great time until at that time our Lt. Bob Dudley caught us red handed. He was not happy with us to say the least. Thank God and Lt. Dudley that he didn't press it any further than some well-chosen words he had selected for us.

About a week to ten days later, things started to change in a big way. We received word that the 5th Division was going home. By this time, I had been in country for ten months and was given a choice to extend to another unit or go home. After Lam Sam 719, we were getting hit what seemed like two-three times a week at Charlie 2 and I was done dodging rockets, so Mom I'm coming home.

The day we left the fire base, we backed out of our gun positions and set up again along the bunker line to allow the ARVN troops to set up. They took forever. They had to look through all the stuff that we left behind. After we took off, mid-morning, I recall very well the young ARVN soldier waving good bye as I drove past him and out the front entrance. I know it may not have been the proper thing to do, but I returned the wave to him, unfortunately I chose to use only one finger!!!

We were headed to the city of Hue non-stop with one major problem. I was driving a gun with a leak in its hydraulic system. One of the guys had to refill the reservoir whenever. I started losing steering ability. When we got to Hue we loaded all of the guns and other vehicles onto huge barges and began to float down South China Sea on our way to Da Nang where we spent the next 4 to 5 days cleaning and preparing all of our equipment for storage.

The days were filled with hard work, but we could always find enough energy to have some fun at night. I remember one night we went to a USO show and might have had too much fun. Coming back to our barracks after the show on the back of a deuce and a half we were pulled over by the MP's. My mind is a little fuzzy what we did for them to do that, but I do remember that Lt. Dudley had to be awoken from his sleep, so we wouldn't have to sleep at the MP station.

The last thing we did as Charlie Battery 5/4 Arty was to have a day at Da Nang's China Beach, swimming surfing and had one hell of a great meal. The next day we went back to HQ at Quang Tri where I started my paper work, got out of my jungle fatigues and into khakis, grabbed my freedom bird ticket, made my way to Cam Ranh Air Force Base and on the 26th of July, 1971, I headed Home. Strangely enough, as I am writing this it was exactly 49 years ago today.

Our country goes through lots of intense situations, whether be in country or out. In the process sadly, many good people are lost. May what we are going through now find a way to be turned around with the precedence being peace and love of country.

Thank you one and all. Please everyone take care and stay safe and healthy, so we can reconnect at our next reunion.

Chaplains Message:

Ron Van Beek

Chaplain Message - Christian - Jonah in the Whale -

Few stories out of the Bible receive as much skepticism and mockery as the story of Jonah swallowed by the whale, and living in the whale's belly for 3 days. Yet Jesus openly uses this incredible experience of Jonah in the belly of the whale, as an example or analogy of His Life, and even as a Prime Example of His Glorious Resurrection out of the Grave.

Try to fathom that incredible experience of Jonah was in the belly of the whale. It goes far beyond words. First, we must see this experience of Jonah as a Divine Miracle. Secondly, this is one of God's logical miracle that requires no special reasoning outside of nature. Lets look at why Jonah's Miracle was fairly straight forward and reasonable. Certainly to doubt and laugh at this simple story, doesn't hold out might hope that such a person could understand huge Miracles like the Resurrection...yet Jesus, Who sent this whale, uses Jonah's experience, to illustrate the much bigger Miracle of the Resurrection.

Let us examine Jonah's experience to see how really reasonable to human understanding this story was. Remember, the average whale's stomach is 3-4 times as big as a human being. Obviously, this means there is no difficulty in understanding, whether there was even enough room, in a whale's belly for a Jonah to be there for 3 days. Additionally, it is easy to answer the question of how did Jonah breath. A whale is an air breathing beast, who must surface to breath often. Naturally, Jonah had plenty of air to breath, as the whale's air blow hole kept real oxygen rich air in its belly, which Jonah breathed for 3 days. God was certainly angry with Jonah for disobeying Him; and for 3 days He taught Jonah an incredible lesson...don't disobey God...ever! To bring that Message home to Jonah, we can read of how sea-sick he became, as he tumbled around with in the whale's belly, with each new dive. Jonah tells us of the other ingredients of the whales diet, the vegetation, the weeds, wrapped around his neck. It had to be a terrifying 3 days for Jonah. Remember it was pitch dark in that belly, no light for 3 days and 3 nights, the pitching helplessly, the tumbling end over end constantly, the constant struggle to rise above the surface of the level of liquids and ingredients within the whales belly. Jonah got no sleep as he desperately tried to use all of his human knowledge and strength to stay alive.

The real miracle is that God positioned the whale, and sent the whale to swallow Jonah, at exactly the right time and place. Obviously, God Who controls all the storms and weather, caused this violent sea for this specific purpose. The acid inside every stomach had to make Jonah's skin burn greatly. The smell had to be awful. The thundering of the whale had to be loud. The taste of stomach acid had to be bitter. The confines of Jonah's prison in the deep had to be agony. Another real Miracle had to be that the whale did not digest Jonah into his bowels. But it was a desperate 3 days struggle for Jonah, that sapped all of his energy. At the end of these 3 days, Jonah tells us something of his utter exhaustion. Now when he is ready to give up. Now when he is ready to breath his last breath, Jonah comes to his senses. He had forgotten about God! Now, Grace and Mercy arises within his soul. Now, he remembers, why he was in this awful predicament, how he had even come into this situation, and he realized that the only solution was repentance and to God. Now faith revived within Jonah's heart and soul. Jesus lived Eternally, and because He Ever Lived...Jonah Believed He would live, and yes the whale spit him out on dry land. The rest is history.

The Great Watermelon Raid

by Bill Rutledge

Our fire team (Det8), was staging off the Hunterdon County (LST-838) and out of the Rach Gia short strip. We had been flying combat ops between Long Xuyen and Rach Gia and had spotted about a half acre of (VC) watermelons growing on a flat spot above a village which was along a river.

George Decker(GT) and I were the gunners on the heavily armed lead gunship. After checking the area for enemy, our pilot took us down, landed at the edge.

William RutledgeVietnamWarHistoryOrg

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George Decker(GT) and I were the gunners on the heavily armed lead gunship. After checking the area for enemy, our pilot took us down, landed at the edge of the patch, while the trail bird flew high cover for us. GT, being from Louisiana, knew his watermelons and said they looked ripe. I was GT's nugget and was being trained by him, so whatever he said or did was right.

As we landed, we both jumped out of the right door to confiscate some of those enemy round, basketball sized melons. With no one in sight, we headed for the center of the patch where GT says the best ones would be. After gathering up five or six each we started back for the bird, when out of no where came this old betel nut chewing Granny Mamasan (VC of course), with bright red juice (betel nut juice) flowing from her mouth. With flying hair, and a crazed look on her face, she was armed with a wooden three pronged, curved pitchfork, and came at us screaming.

GT, with fear on his face yelled, "BACK TO THE BIRD!" as we were being pursued by this vicious enemy. We dropped many of the

melons as we retreated in face of the enemy attack. Quick thinking GT started throwing Piasters from his flight suit pocket and I did the same, throwing all the money I had. The rotor wash of the turning blades caught the money and blew it everywhere.

She stopped her advance and started grabbing for the money, so we made our escape. We two brave SEAWOLF gunners jumped in the bird like a couple of whipped whining dogs. The pilot had the helo hovering for a quick getaway as we got in, for he doesn't want to have to explain that we all had been hurt and the gunship destroyed by one old Mamasan while we were stealing watermelons.

As we got airborne, Mamasan stopped gathering up the money and shook her pitchfork at GT. When the shaking and fear subsided, GT and I started badmouthing old Mamasan like a couple of guys on the block that had their butts kicked and the butt kicker was now gone. We got all brave and bad telling each other what we would have done to Mamasan had she kept coming. I think we ended up with five melons that cost us 30 or 40 dollars. Needless to say, we never did that again.

This is the first time this story has been told on GT for he still awakens, shaking, in a cold sweat from the recurring nightmare that old Mamasan has come to the States with her three pronged pitchfork and is tracking him down. Had we stayed and battled it out with old Granny and got our butts kicked, we would have had to tell a big lie and concoct a story to cover the event.

Headlines in the STARS AND STRIPES would have read:

"LAST WEEK TWO HEAVILY ARMED GUNSHIPS OF THE FAMOUS NAVY SEAWOLF SQUADRON ENGAGED A BATTALION SIZED FORCE OF HEAVILY ARMED, ENTRENCHED VC/NVA NEAR LONG XUYEN, RVN"

"The two Navy gunships, while on routine combat patrol, spotted a heavy enemy concentration harvesting crops in a known enemy stronghold, a free fire zone known as the watermelon patch(not found on any maps). As these brave sailors made their first attack, they came under intense ground fire from automatic and crew served weapons at which the lead a/c suffered battle damage forcing it to land among the enemy positions. The crew exited the bird and engaged the enemy in hand to hand combat.

Although wounded, they continued taking the fight to the enemy, while the trail gunship made low level attacks covering the downed crew with devastatingly accurate fire. The pilot, over the din of the battle, heard the engine still running and jumped back in the helo and found only the warning system was shot up. Getting his wounded crew aboard, he lifted off and under heavy ground fire again exited the area, going back to Rach Gia where the wounded were treated and the bird repaired.

During the follow up investigation, it was determined that the enemy was using a new kind of weapon, for the wounds of the crew were identical to the holes in the aircraft. Three holes spaced evenly apart curving downward and the crew and aircraft smelled of Watermelon." by JO3 HAL a'Pena

- **William Rutledge Author.** THIS WAS HIS RESPONSE when laying in the Hospital after a Liver transplantTHIS IS A RESPONSE FROM ONE OF MY SEAWOLF DOOR GUNNERS (ADJ3 TOMMY DECKER) OF A COMBAT MISSION WE FLEW WHICH I NAMED THE GREAT WATERMELON RAID,,,,,,,,,,,,,This is reply to William Rutledge post about the 'Great Watermelon Raid' . In February 2001, I was in University of Loyola Hospital Chicago. I was very sick. I had just came out of induced coma from a liver transplant . Archie Mark Ellerbee & Bill Newcomb were in my room as I became conscious . Archie Mark had the story that William Rutledge had written . As he read it my blood pressure started rising, heart beat fluttered wildly and the machines began squawking & beeping . Nurses & Doctor s ran to my room demanding that Mark quit reading the account of the 'Battle of the Watermelon Patch'. I told Bill & Mark that I would crawl across the desert to get to San Diego to kill 'Wild Bill Rutledge' for I had kept that secret for over 30 years .Several days later as Mark & Bill were leaving I ask them to read the story again . I had to beg Mark to read it . As he had been told not to excite me because I was still in recover in ICU . I beg him to and he relented . This time the machines started squawking and beeping & here came the Nurses & Doctors . They got mad at my friends but instead of me being mad , I was laughing so hard I had set the alarms off. True I still wake up with cold sweats & visions of the Old Mama-san chasing us with

that wooden pitchfork . but as long as 'Wild Bill' was in the other door, I knew I would be safe . Sometimes we had to make our self's laugh .

Dear Society Members,

Just wanted to share a couple short and somewhat uplifting items:

1. Late last week (Thursday), I had a 30 minute beautiful & unexpected conversation with Alex Candelaria. Alex's voice appeared a little stronger than previously. We talked about the Covid-19 pandemic, the current political state of affairs in our Country, the wonderful support that Roci (Alex's wife) is giving to Alex and how much Alex misses being actively involved in the Society. And, we also laughed a little.

While Alex is no longer having chemo treatments, he is having fluid removed periodically from his abdomen (I believe the term is paracentesis). Alex is leaving his outcome totally in God's Hands. We both agreed that Life is Precious and only God knows when our time on this earth is fulfilled.

2. I am pleased to report, (thanks to Jeanie Knight's continued and unending work), that the 5th Div/Vietnam KIA Photo Project now has a gravestone or picture or both for all the 514 Vietnam War KIA slides, except ONE (that's 99.81% completed). The one slide without photo or gravestone is:

a. Sp4 Hector Villegas-Vila, B 1/61, 21 years old, KIA 11/25/69, buried at Cementerio Historico de Cuaynabo, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

Thank you. Phil Maniscalco



National Editor of The Red Diamond Message: David Kocan

My wife Linda and I along with my grandson just returned from a wonderful time with a good friend Roger Jones and wife Anita. We were in Blairsville, Georgia. If you never been in that area of the country, put it on your bucket list. The air is clean, the scenery is beautiful and our company outstanding.

One of the places you should stop by is the Brasstown Pharmacy. A drugstore is the action place of this town, you get re-fills and re-loads. Yes that's right a drugstore where you can get a Pistol and/or Prozac. Dispensing Happiness is their motto. Where else in America can you find drugs and guns all in a 1 stop shop. And yes T-Shirts are available 1 for you 1 for the wife and 1 for the grandchildren. Be assured that your 2nd amendment rights are well protected in this neck of the woods.

Now being a city guy living in Baltimore going to sleep at night time was different. No sirens, no helicopters only the sound of frogs and crickets. The Jones's have an interesting neighbor, Rita. Rita's brother was a dog handler in Vietnam and was killed by throwing himself on a sappers charge saving his commander, he received the Medal of Honor. So when you see sitting on her front porch in her rocking chair, salute and say hi.

**God Bless America and all the towns
like Blairsville that make you proud to
live in the USA**

Thank you Roger and Anita , we will be back, Linda, Dave, and James Paul

Some others will not agree with what I will be writing. If you feel anything in this reply shouldn't be put out, please remove or restate what you feel might be more appropriate, but I do stand by what I will say.

I would like to add some more information to the Article Malcolm Estrada, wrote in the Red Diamond May Issue. Thank you Malcolm for writing it.

By now, some of the Fifth Divisions members know I was one of the Graves Registration Officers during the 5th Division deployment in Vietnam.

I arrived at QTCB Repo Depo November 2, 1969. I was assigned to 1st Brigade HHC as Property Book Officer (PBO). My Company Commander was Captain Bacon. Since we were classified as a "Separate Brigade" in November, we were Commanded by a Brigadier General (arrived late November), and a Full Bird Colonel as the Deputy Commander (arrived January replacing a very good DCO) . This included General Staff and Brigade Staff and numerous Attachments. The total Brigade strength was close to 10,000 soldiers and civilians.

This is where I and some other lieutenants met Lt Jim Howard and got to know him. Jim was married, tall, friendly, freckle fair skin. Like most of the LT's (ROTC), we weren't planning an Army career and most of us could relate more to Enlisted Soldiers than the Career Senior NCO's & Officers. I totally hated PBO job, and found another job assignment in early March to Company C , 75th Spt Bn, as the Field Service Platoon Leader (included Graves Registration). My Company Commander was Captain Eicke. From time to time I still ran into Jim after I went to Co C, 75 Spt Bn (located next to 1/11 Bn Camp Roberts). In 2nd week of May, I was due to go on R & R to Hawaii meet my wife, Joy; Jim was also scheduled to meet his wife too on the same week. When I got back to QTCB, I ran into Jim at the Brigade TOC and he looked worn out. He said he couldn't make R&R because the DCO had decided to expand the Security Platoon Mission and being pushed hard to meet the DCO demands. His Platoon Sergeant had been killed the past week. He asked how I was doing and I told him we had received a lot of KIA's, but many were from the 101st Airborne Division and the Ashau area was heating up. I told him to be careful out there; his response back, told me he and the DCO weren't on the same track.

June 1, 1970, Graves Registration received several Body Remains that day. A group of four had come in an hour or so before I got back to the Collection Point. First, I always looked the list of names who have arrived to see who I knew; I was shocked Jim was on the list. I couldn't believe it. After I got myself together, I went to the refrigeration unit to see if I could help in the identification of Jim. There wasn't much of anything; maybe a Body's worth of weight for all Four combined. We laid out what we had; I could tell some of Jim's body, but overall there wasn't more than 40 lbs of part of a torso and partial leg that I identified; there wasn't either for the other Remains. I filled out the paperwork as a "Believed To Be" Identification and as to why for Jim.

No matter what, all Body Remains go down to DaNang (Embalming ,Official Identification, Shipping back to USA) as a "Believed to Be" or "Unknown". They will then use medical records, dental records, identifying marks on their body, statements from witnesses present at the KIA location, and other statements pertaining to the KIA identification.

Remember it's 1970, we're at the end of the supply chain, it's a primitive Graves Registration Collection Point/Mortuary. Back then there was no DNA. Probably some of these four Remains in the condition they were in, may not have been completely Identified, but at least all Four had something for a Burial as there was enough identification as a Believed To Be, and we did know how they died.

For many years I was very bitter and angry with this DCO. It was his last chance to get his STAR, and I believe to this day he caused the situation to happen because of the pressure he put on Jim to "Hurry up, I've got another Mission for you to do". I was told this by another LT at HHC at the time who had heard the conversation on the radio back at the TOC. He may have been a loving Husband and Father, but he was an ass hole leader who got people killed for the benefit of his career.

Please if anyone heard differently please defend this DCO.

Jerry Collman

Graves Registration Officer

CompanyC, 75th Spt Bn

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div

Gary,

Perfect, I was hoping you would chime in. Thank you.

I'll contact them.

Not sure they will know the answer to my questions though as this isn't a norm: How can I get the Names on the list for Body Remains who died June 1, 1970 from the Danang Mortuary, and I don't know the day they were escorted down to them? What happens when you have a Name and no Remains in the body bag matching; what's the process? Where happens if you have Partial Remains, but the Military Unit ID doesn't match; what's the process? The reason I'm asking the last question; the Fourth KIA had shortly arrived from another Unit. I know some of the Records don't follow with the Remains; hopefully they are sent to DaNang Mortuary later; my guess sometimes not all.

Can you steer me to a Contact for the Group who is handling the Vietnam Casualty Information? Can I get any help from Mortuary Affairs? I'm not sure which Departments would handle something like this. You got any ideas? I already checked the MIA Reports of any MIA's for June 1, 1970 and nothing there; this is why I am focused on the Fourth KIA previous military unit.

Of Course another answer could be, Bob and Jerry are nuts; I know that's not so.

I'm going to try to get the Daily Logs for my Company & Battalion for June 1, 1970 and review the Body Count I provided daily. Not sure who to contact for this, any clues?. My only problem with even getting this information is all the Body Remains we received that day includes other Units besides the 5th Division Units such as 101st AB Division.

The bottom line ,we still need to know who this person is; the most important Search to get this information is from Security Platoon, Brigade HHC, 5th Division.

BOB and I are working on this and hopefully we'll get some help.

By the way, I am okay. Waiting for the GRMA and Fifth Division Reunions in 2021.

Roger,

Hope all is well with you.

I asked Bob Gliemmo this morning if he would reach out to you, since he witnessed the Security Platoon Events on May 26, 1970, and June 1, 1970 as to the Historical Records of the 5th Division Fallen accountability, but it really is my responsibility as the Graves Registration Officer In Charge in this time frame to follow through with this request; I am asking if you could help us.

Bob and I are creating a factual "Timeline" and will then address the "What Ifs" and follow up with them if any is required.

First we have to confirm what the 5th Division Records state; hopefully, it was based on the Vietnam War Casualty Department List out of Hawaii which they would have matched via the National Archives for HHC 1st Brigade, 75th Support Battalion, Company C, Graves Registration Quang Tri Collection Point, Graves Registration Danang Mortuary, Daily Logs and Journals for these two dates. That's a lot of work ahead of us if necessary to do; hopefully we'll have answer before we have to go this far.

This is where we could use your help Roger. At the last 5th Division Reunion (Sept 2019 there was a Memorial Service Sunday Morning; it was followed for those who wanted to stay and acknowledge our Fallen via a video/disc/slide viewing of each Name, Date of KIA & Photo of each of our Fallen, starting with the earliest date to the latest date (if I remember correctly).

Do you know where I can get a copy of it, or can you or someone else you might know, be able to inform me of the KIA's for May 26, 1970 and for June 1, 1970?

Can you help us?

Jerry

A Note From our Treasurer:

2020 Reunion Cancellation – Reunion Booklet

If you submitted money to the Treasurer for an ad in the 2020 Reunion Booklet, your options are...

1. You do nothing this year, but you submit an ad next year for the 2021 Reunion Booklet. Treasurer will move your money to 2021 Reunion account.
2. You want your money back. You will need to submit your name and address to the Treasurer via email...gshoener@goeaston.net or via Text...410-253-0710.

Thanks...George Shoener, Treasurer

The Minutes from the National Secretary: John Estrada

Society of the Fifth Division, US Army General Membership Meeting Minutes- September 2019

President: Steve Wheat
Called Meeting to Order

Chaplain: Ron Von Beek
Gave the innovation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

President: Steve Wheat
Recognized Past Presidents and First Time Attendees.

Officer Reports

President: Steve Wheat

The Executive board had a meeting every other month.

The minutes of the General Membership Meeting were published in the August 2019 Red Diamond and dispensed without reading.

First Vice President: Hal Roller

The Societies 100th Reunion will be in San Antonio, Texas in September 2020

Second Vice President: Lou Pepi

The Societies 2021 Reunion will be in September in Providence, Rhode Island

National Secretary: John Estrada

We have 887 Members

Recruitment

Members need to update their addresses, phone numbers, e-mail and send their information to the Secretary

National Treasurer: George Shoener

We have 21,912 cash and 43,051 in CDS

National Historian: Roger Allen

Took possession of the Societies Archives from previous Historian Leigh Blood

Inquiries

National Chaplain: Ron Von Beek

Vietnam Veteran Awareness

Speaks at Schools and Churches

Vietnam War

National Judge Advocate: Phil Maniscalco

Executive Board Meetings

Recognized Committee Members, Bill Baugh, Mike Sperling, Alex Candelaria

Robert Rules of Order

continued

Vietnam Photo Project
Fifth Division killed in Action Project
Best Practices Guide

National Editor: Steve Wheat
Red Diamond Expenses
The Red Diamond will be digital and posted on the Societies Website beginning in 2020
The New Red Diamond Editor will be Dave Kocan
The Red Diamond to the WW2 Veterans

Webmaster: Joe Boman
Absent
Bob Dudley spoke on the Great Job Joe is doing

Quartermaster: Dennis Coulter
35 Mail Order Transactions
Contributions
Legacy Books on the Societies Website for Sale
Donations
Volunteers
Vietnam Trip

Co-President: Alex Candelaria
Thanked all and those who helped put on the Societies 2019 Reunion in San Diego

Nominating Committee Chairman: Bob Dudley
Thanked Committee Members Phil Maniscalco, Mike Sperling, JJ Jackson, Alex Candelaria

Incoming Executive Board:
National President, Hal Roller
1st Vice President, Lou Pepi
2nd Vice President, Gary Haverman
National Secretary, John Estrada
National Treasurer, George Shoener
National Historian, Roger Allen
National Chaplain, Ron Van Beek
National Editor, Dave Kocan

Past Presidents
Steve Wheat
Dennis Thompson
Alex Candelaria

Unfinished Business
None

New Business
None

Good of the Society
The National WW1 Museum is opening a 1945-1975 Vietnam War Exhibit open Veterans Day 2020 to Memorial Day 2020

Meeting Closed

What You Can Do If You Are at Increased Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19

Are You at Increased Risk for Severe Illness?



Based on what we know now, those at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- Older adults
- People of any age with the following :
 - Cancer
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
 - Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Type 2 diabetes mellitus

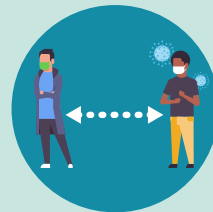
Here Is What You Can Do to Help Protect Yourself



Limit contact with other people as much as possible.



Wash your hands often.



Avoid close contact (6 feet, which is about two arm lengths) with people who are sick.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.



Avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

Call your healthcare professional if you are sick.

For more information on steps you can take to protect yourself, see CDC's [How to Protect Yourself](#).



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Brothers & Sisters,

With a little luck and thanks to Him above I survived a fractured right ankle in 2011. It was fractured in three places and I still have seven screws and a plate holding it together.

On April 2 this year I was blindsided by a car while running in the morning. I was wearing reflective clothes and a flashing red light. The impact knocked the car's mirror off and I was thrown to the ground. But the speeding driver didn't stop and has never been found. What a coward! If it had happened in Vietnam he would have been shot as a deserter!

With pandemic restrictions in full force and physical therapy not an option it's taken longer to get back to running. But I'm plugging away again. As the 5th motto says: "We will never give up!!"

Stan Shaffer 5/4 Arty - A Btry
shafferandrea10@gmail.com

Life in Vietnam

I worked at a village about 25 miles south of Phu Bai in 1967 . The VC had blown the bridge and our Seabee bridge crew was building a new bridge . The Mamasan kept offering me food as we worked near her hut . So I went over to check it out . She stood next to her pot over the fire and grinned at me . I don't know how old she was , that could be deceptive in Vietnam. She could be forty or older . Her teeth were all deep red from chewing beetlenut . I looked in the pot and saw rice and a fish . The fish stared back at me with its eye that was up . She stirred it again and got a dish and dished up a small plate with rice and pieces of fish in it. It didn't smell real good but it was steaming hot. As I ate some of the rice , she squatted on her haunches across from me and grinned with her red teeth at me. I ate as much as I could , pushing it around on the plate . I had made a friend . I gave her a few piasters and she was ecstatic . Before the bridge would be finished we Seabees would be grenade fishing for her . I can still remember her waddling away carrying a big fish about two feet long that looked a lot like a big carp. The smells were so intense , the river , the village cooking fires , but everything seemed more intense in Vietnam .

Special Forces Battle

Today we pause to remember the seven men assigned to B-52 (Project Delta) who were lost on January 29, 1966 in the An Lo Valley. Binh Dinh Province 12 miles west of Tam Quan, South Vietnam. The An Lao Valley was long and narrow with rice fields interspersed with patches of tall elephant grass. Heavily forested mountains rose up on either side of the valley. At the time, B-52 was led by MAJ "Charging" Charlie Beckwith. The three recon teams inserted suffered so many injuries, Delta was temporarily out of business. Charging Charlie was also wounded while flying overhead in his command chopper, but he survived.

Delta's mission was to support the 1st Air Cavalry Division with RT's. TAOR was in the northern end of the An Lao Valley. RT's were to observe the main routes leading into the area to determine if VC or NVA were using them to reinforce or to withdraw from US Marines pushing south toward the valley and the 1st Cav and ARVN pushing north. Intelligence was from unconfirmed agents, weather was terrible, limiting air support and communications, and it was common knowledge that bad guys controlled the valley, 1958 being the last time a friendly unit had operated in this area. Everything looking negative, Delta staff decided to brief the RT's and ask for volunteers. Three teams, 17 men total, volunteered and were infiltrated at last light, 27 January 1966. Five would be killed, three wounded and two reported MIA. The following is a list, from official sources, of those men:

TEAM One: SFC Henry A Keating; SFC Robert P Whitis; SSG Norman C Dupuis (WIA); SSG Agostino Chiariello and SSG Brooke A Bell.

TEAM Two: SFC Frank R Webber (WIA); SFC Marline C Cook (KIA); SSG Donald L Dotson (KIA); SSG George A Hoaglund (KIA); SFC Jesse L Hancock (KIA); and SSG Charles F Hiner (WIA).

Team Three: SFC Marcus L Huston; SSG Billy A McKeith; SSG Wiley W. Gray; SSG Ronald T Terry (MIA); SFC Cecil Joe Hodgson (MIA) and SSG Frank N Badolati (KIA) At 0930 on the 28th, Team One made contact resulting in 1 VC killed, 2 VC wounded, 1 American wounded (Norman C. Dupuis).

Team Three also made contact on the 28th at 0930 and again at 1205, when SSG Badolati was struck in the upper left arm by a bullet that severely mangled, and nearly severed, his arm. SFC Hodgson immediately applied a tourniquet just before the patrol broke contact. The Americans moved approximately 600 meters before stopping to treat Frank Badolati's arm. As soon as the patrol stopped, it was attacked again. The team immediately returned fire and then separated into two groups of three to attempt to evade the enemy. SFC Marcus L Huston and SSG Billy A. McKeith remained with SSG Badolati. Throughout the rest of the afternoon and night, they cared for Frank Badolati while painstakingly moving through the rugged terrain as they evaded the VC. Periodically they would stop to adjust SSG Badolati's tourniquet. When they would loosen it, the mangled arm began bleeding profusely again.

In the darkness, they came to a streambed that flowed westward from the Song An Lao River. The Americans entered the stream and used it to hide their trail. Finally SSG Badolati stated to the others that he "could not go any further" and for them to leave him behind. The other soldiers selected a position two to three feet up the bank that was well concealed with shrubs and boulders. The three men remained in place from

0300 hours to 0515 hours. During that time, both men administered medical attention to Frank Badolati's mangled arm, however, his condition continued to deteriorate. They believed he died in the early morning of 29 January 1966. After his death, they were forced to leave Frank Badolati's body hidden in the boulders and scrubs as they continued to evade the VC. Huston and McKeith were exfiltrated by helicopter later that day.

The second group of three, SSG Wiley W Gray, SFC Cecil A Hodgson and SSG Ronald T Terry, evaded for the rest of the day (28th). On January 29, they moved at first light into a defensive position, whereupon they encountered enemy forces and another firefight ensued. Terry indicated that he had been hit, and others thought he had been killed. When they looked for Hodgson, he was gone. He was last seen with 9mm pistol in tall grass within arm's reach of Gray and Terry, when they opened fire on a hostile element blocking their escape and became separated. Survivors heard additional shots, which they believed were shots fired at Hodgson, and they believed he also had been killed.

The team could not search for Hodgson because of the heavy enemy activity, and were forced to move to a rallying point. They evaded capture for the remainder of the day, and were ultimately picked up by helicopter. Searches for all three missing were conducted for the next 4 days with no results. Hodgson was classified Missing In Action. Badolati and Terry were classified Killed/Body Not Recovered.

Team 2 member Charles 'Chuck' Hiner tells the story of his team.

"The team was inserted into the An Lo Valley at last light on 27 January 1966. Two wet days later -- it was raining hard -- my six-man team was sitting down taking a break when we came under heavy fire from a large force of Viet Cong.

In the initial burst of fire Cook, Webber, and Hoaglund were hit, and I don't know, but I think Dotson and Hancock were hit then too. I don't know for sure because they were on flank security. When we got hit I went to the top of the hill to keep anybody from coming over the hill on top of us.

Cook (the radio man) was flank security on the left side and he couldn't get to the radio -- he was paralyzed. He called me back down and I cut the radio off him. There was a pile of rocks in the middle of this clearing so I took the radio in there and lay down on it and started calling. I called everybody and their mother who would answer. The enemy continued to fire on us.

After we got the FAC (Forward Air Controller, a Capt. Kenneth L. Kerr) on the radio and started doing our shit I started looking around. I could hear Dotson. He was hit through the chest and I could hear that death rattle. This other kid (Hancock) -- first trip in, first time on the ground, the whole nine yards -- he was dead. They had stitched him from the ankle to the top of his head. Hoaglund was more-or-less still alive. Cook lasted a long time in there but he finally died, I guess maybe about 1:00 or 2:00 o'clock that afternoon.

Webber had four bullets, all in the arm, from the first burst of fire and shortly after it started I (Hiner) was wounded when I was shot in the head by a VC firing an AK-47. The dude shot at me the same time I shot at him. I hit him first, though, and it caused him to jerk up. It (the round) went about a quarter of an inch in my scalp. It went down into the bone and just left a perfect groove.

I had called airstrikes in on top of our position to keep from getting overrun. It was either do that or get overrun so 'What the hell.'

We were fighting -- I would dare say the closest -- within 10 feet of each other. It was that tight. That's why, when I popped smoke and told the FAC to take it 360 degrees from the center of that, he said 'I can't do it because it will come in on you.' I said well it's either you or them. And that's the way it went. He didn't like it but I didn't like it either.

During a lull near the end of the battle, which lasted four hours, Hiner crawled down the slope to strip the dead -- Hoaglund, Dotson and Hancock -- of their ammo since he and Webber were almost out.

When I got back to check on Hoaglund, I found him on his back, beside a tree, with the rifle muzzle pointing toward his head. "He had one arm shot off, the other was hanging by a thread."

During the final minutes of the battle, two reaction forces moved frantically through the thick bush toward Hiner's position. One was from the 1st Air Cav., the other, that was first on the ground, was a Reaction Force from Project Delta commanded by a Lt. Holland and led by Sgt Maj. Walt Shumate, who later became an SF legend in his role as the Sgt. Maj. for "Charging" Charlie Beckwith in many SF-commands.

Statement by Don Valentine, B-52 Vet: 1st LT. Guy H. Holland was the Delta Project Recon OIC at the time. After exhausting efforts to get the 1st Cav to react to the RT's in distress, he asked for volunteers to go in and get Team Two out. 21 or so of us (don't know why that number sticks in my mind) grabbed our weapons and web gear and bailed onto 3 Hueys and headed out. There were several Nungs included in this force. And, here we go again, regarding the valor of the Nungs. I remember the one that was on my chopper, real young, and didn't have a clue as to what was going on. He only saw us running toward the choppers in a state of emergency, armed to the teeth, and he reacted the way most of them did, entering whatever lay ahead beside their American friends.

"You know when I knew I had made it?" asked Hiner, who recounted that he and Webber, down to just a few rounds between them were crouched down behind a log. "I looked up and saw Walt's bare ass coming over the top of that log. Walt told me later he was busting bush so hard and fast coming up that hill, he had busted out his pants."

KIA SFC Marlin Curtis Cook, was native of Vernon, Alabama and at the time of his loss he was a resident of Fayetteville, North Carolina. An 18 year veteran of the Army, he was 37 years old and was married with children. SFC Cook is on panel 04E, Line 106 of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. His awards included a Silver Star for his actions during the attack.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Sergeant First Class Marlin Curtis Cook (ASN: RA-14265805), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. On 29 January 1966, Sergeant Cook, a member of Detachment B-52, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, was part of a six-man reconnaissance team which infiltrated the northern sector of the

An Lao Valley. While stopped to listen for sounds of an unusual nature, they were suddenly subjected to hostile fire from insurgents in well-fortified positions. Despite the fact that he had been seriously wounded, SFC Cook, realizing that total annihilation was threatened, immediately began firing at insurgent positions. Unable to move because of his wounds, Sergeant Cook directed a comrade in the use of his radio and called in air strikes upon the Viet Cong positions. He continued to render support to surviving team members by continuously placing effective small arms fire on known and suspected insurgent positions. Sergeant Cook succumbed to his wounds after two hours of continuous fighting. Sergeant Cook's extraordinary heroism and gallantry in action were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the military service. “

He was the son of Mr and Mrs Marlin Cook, and father to Steven and Marlin D Cook. He is buried in Lafayette Memorial Park, Fayetteville, NC.

KIA SSG Donald Luther Dotson was 27 years old and his wife Blanche C Dotson was living in Fayetteville, NC at the time of his loss. A native of Tennessee, SSG Dotson was buried in his hometown at Sherwood Memorial Gardens, Alcoa, Blount County, TN. His name appears on the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial at Panel 4E, Line 107.

KIA SFC Jesse Leroy Hancock, 33 years old and came from El Paso, Texas. He had been married for 10 years to Miriam Marcia (Trousdale) Hancock. Jesse was buried at the Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, CA and his name appears on Panel 04E; Row: 109 on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

KIA SSG George Appleton Hoagland III was 30 years old and from Phoenix, AZ. He was unmarried. SSG Hoagland is buried at Section 51, Site 122 of Arlington National Cemetery.

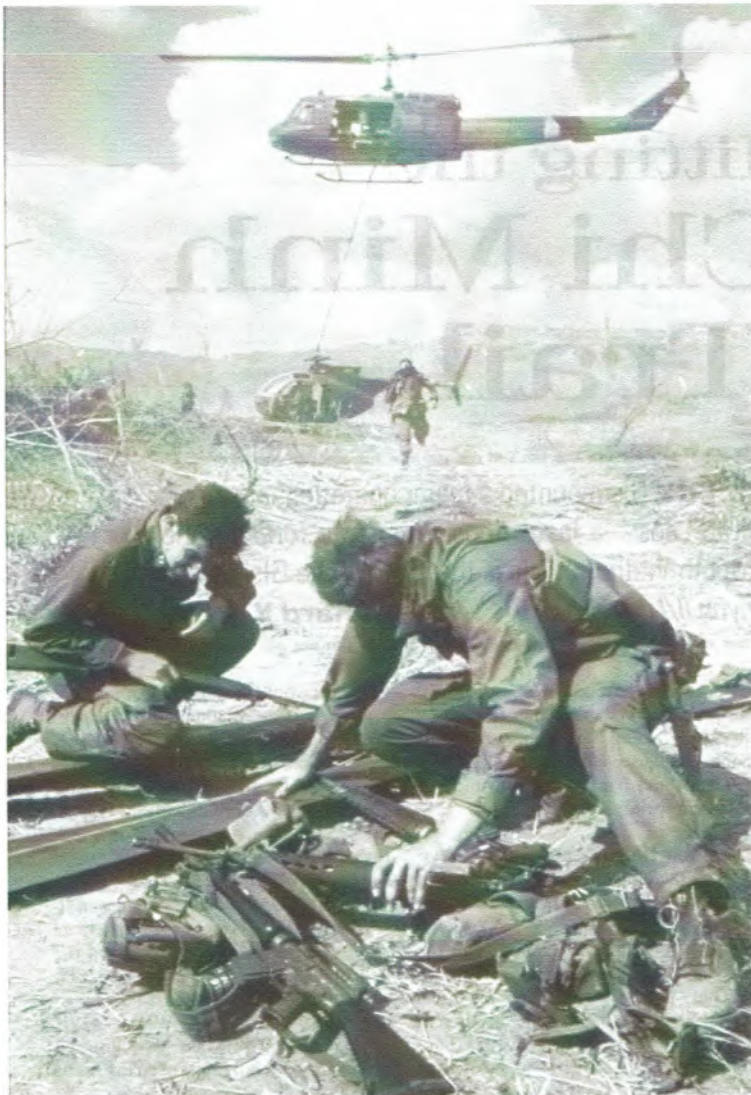
MIA (Killed/Body Not Recovered) SSG Ronald Terrance Terry was 28 years old at the time of his death. He was born and raised in Niagara Falls, NY. It is believed, according to DSC researcher Bruce Swander, that Terry was one of the few POW/MIAs to earn the DSC before capture. On 30 March 66 the U.S. Army issued General Orders Number 73, award of the Distinguished Service Cross, to Ronald Terry for action 9-14 December 1964 while serving as one of two Special Forces advisors to an eight man recon team. Several actions occurred that resulted in the DSC for extraordinary heroism in helping the wounded after multiple contacts with the enemy in this timeframe. SSG Terry has a memorial stone placed at Riverdale Cemetery, Lewiston, NY. His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

(MIA) SFC Cecil Joe “Jo” Hodgson, age 28, was born and raised in Greenville, Texas. He was married to Nelda Gayne Dunn and they had five children. Cecil has a military marker in his memory at Sullivan Cemetery, Hunt County, TX and his name is on the Tablets of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

Hitting the Ho Chi Minh Trail continued from last issue

1/28/2020

VFW Magazine February 2011



Two members of a helicopter recovery team at Firebase A Luoi turn their backs to dust whipped up as a Huey "slick" hoists a light observation helicopter, which had been shot down by NVA anti-aircraft fire. Although U.S. ground troops were forbidden from entering Laos, American pilots flew in support of *Lam Son 719*.

and 426th Supply & Service battalions. A task force of the 834th Air Division, 7th Air Force, operated out of Quang Tri, and the Navy flew missions from carriers stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin.

U.S. helicopter crews and ARVN troops who actually entered Laos faced a formidable foe. Preparing for the invasion since October 1970, the NVA

eventually fielded a modern, conventional force of 36,000 men. That figure included 10,000 members of *binh trams* (logistical units), as well as 5,000 allied Communist *Pathet Lao*. Two NVA armored regiments were equipped with Soviet T-34 tanks.

Arrayed against incoming choppers were 20 anti-aircraft battalions bristling

with a deadly arsenal of 23mm, 37mm and 57mm guns. Standard 12.7mm machine guns were placed in multiple, mutual supporting positions. Crews endured the heaviest concentration of fire—WWII-style flak barrages—of the entire Vietnam War.

Every GI in the operation played a crucial role, whether he was a helicopter crewman, air cavalryman, artillery gunner, grunt, Air Force or Navy pilot, Marine advisor, trucker or engineer. Operations had to be conducted in sync.

Securing Route 9 and constructing a secondary pioneer road—"Red Devil Highway" that paralleled the main road into Laos—was the first step. A Company, 7th Engineers, spearheaded the column along Route 9.

Combat engineers earned well-deserved praise from Lt. Gen. James Sutherland, Jr., commanding general of XXIV Corps. "One of the many parts of *Dewey Canyon II* and *Lam Son 719* which I continue to recall with professional pride and admiration was the performance of the 45th Engineer Group with its two battalions, the 14th and 27th," he said.

"It was the most outstanding performance that I had observed in my 34 years of service... the sight on D-Day was magnificent to behold—a steady stream of helicopters moving engineer equipment, culvert and bridge sections from the rear areas to the front."

Moving materiel along the route was a Herculean, risky venture. All told, 1,163 U.S. convoys made the journey. "The support of the operation was one of the major logistical feats of the war," wrote Lt. Gen. William J. McCaffrey, deputy commander of U.S. Army, Vietnam. "The equivalent of more than four divisions received supplies that travelled, for the most part, over a single road and into a single airhead."

Keith W. Nolan, in his superb account—*Into Laos*—aptly described the perilous conditions: "Through it all, the truckers kept hauling the supplies, enduring bad driving conditions every inch of the way, and occasional bouts with rockets, snipers and ambushes. They drove in all conditions around the clock, fighting sun glare and veils of dust in the day, and fog banks at night."

Thomas M. Roche was then an MP

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GIs manned bases from Dong Ha to Lao Bao on the Laotian border in supporting ARVN's thrust into the crossroads of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in February/March 1971.

with the 23rd Military Police Company of the Americal Division. As a V-100 crew chief and driver, he escorted division units to Khe Sanh. "All along Route 9 we saw remnants of previous convoys," he recalled. "A truck-tractor cab was beside the road with a hole through the windshield about the size of a softball, and the area around it singed with extreme heat—courtesy of an RPG hit."

Thomas A. Love, a member of the 529th Quartermaster Company, drove a 2½-ton M-49C tank truck loaded with aviation fuel. Ambushed between Vandegrift and Khe Sanh on March 6, he was grazed in the head by an AK-47 round. "It felt like getting a knuckle sandwich from King Kong, and it bounced me two feet off the seat," he told a reporter.

Love was among many casualties sustained along Route 9. By operation's end, the Da Nang Support Command and the 504th MP Battalion had suffered 11 KIA, 55 WIA, 14 traffic fatalities and 68 serious injuries.

This entire clearing operation ultimately cost 55 GIs KIA and 431 WIA over a period of about a week.

'Tyranny of Terrain'

To carry out *Dewey Canyon II*, a network of bases had to be established. Dong Ha served as the logistical hub. Within easy reach of NVA artillery, GIs there could see the big red Communist flag that flew just across the DMZ. Covering the eastern DMZ were firebases Charlie 2 and Alpha Four.

Vandegrift served as Forward Sup-

port Area-I and Khe Sanh as FSA-II. Both bases were subjected to 122mm rocket barrages, as well as sapper attacks. Nearby terrain features were occupied by grunts. The "Rockpile" was a piece of jungle-covered granite north of Vandegrift. Hill 400 was situated near

"A truck-tractor cab was beside the road with a hole through the windshield about the size of a softball, and the area around it singed with extreme heat—courtesy of an RPG hit."

—Thomas M. Rocha, 23rd MP Co.

Lang Vei. The valley between "Emerald City" and the Rockpile was nicknamed the "Punchbowl."

On the Laotian border itself, batteries of the 1st Bn., 44th Artillery, and 2nd Bn., 94th Artillery, for example, alternated duty at Lao Bao. During the operation, the two reinforced battalions of the 108th Artillery Group fired 208,962 rounds into Laos from such border positions and from Khe Sanh.

In the field, NVA infantrymen did not necessarily bring the greatest grief to the grunts. More often than not, it was the unforgiving hills, heat, stifling humidity, parasitic pests, jungle rot and immer-

Laos Operation Casualties, Feb. 4 - April 3*

UNIT	KIA	WIA
101st Abn. Div.	85	261
5th Inf. Div., 1st Bde.	58	431
Americal Div., 11th Bde.	54	256
Other Support Forces	47	125
XXIV Corps Artillery	9	76
Total	253	1,149

*Actual beginning and ending dates that U.S. KIAs were sustained. An additional 19 GIs were killed in air accidents and 14 in road accidents. Helicopter pilot and crew losses accounted for 89 KIA and 178 WIA of the total.

sion foot from constant sweating.

Nolan described the ordeal of the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf., 101st Airborne, northwest of Khe Sanh in March: "It was like being in an oven-hot green tunnel. Minute by minute, the landscape and sun were more of an enemy than any Vietnamese who might be lurking.

"Wait-a-minute' vines coiled around legs and canteen tops, thorns tore at arms and faces, jungle rot spread, clothes rotted in the humidity, mouths burned from thirst and bile, and leeches appeared seemingly from nowhere to attach themselves."

Exhaustion suffered in the boonies underscored Napoleon's dictum: "The first quality of a soldier is constancy in enduring fatigue and hardship. Courage is only the second. Pover-

ty, privation and want are the school of the good soldier."

Also there was a very real *armed* enemy. At a night defensive position on March 22, C Company sustained five KIA in close combat. The 3rd Battalion took out 48 NVA in firefights during the operation. But when it ended, the unit counted 19 helmets on rifles planted bayonet first in the earth at a solemn ceremony.

'Ernie Pyle Would've Loved 'Em'

Despite such losses and the constant battering by the elements, a comradeship of the bush was the glue that held

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PHOTO COURTESY ROGER RILEY

Roger Riley, a Huey slick pilot with the 158th Aviation Battalion's "Ghost Riders," braved the worst of NVA fire. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.



PHOTO BY COL. JAM NEWMAN, COURTESY OF WWW.VFWPAMUSEUM.ORG

An unidentified helicopter pilot of C Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav Regt., 101st Abn. Div., takes a break during *Lam Son 719*. The "Condors" played a pivotal role in providing life-saving air support for South Vietnamese forces.

prideful units together through thick and thin. The 101st fell into this category, according to many of its veterans.

Pfc. Bill Warren was a draftee who unhesitatingly expressed pride in being a "Screaming Eagle": "I would say morale was high and everyone had pride in the 101st. We never stayed in a safe position or faked coordinates. We never avoided contact and always fought our hardest when we encountered the enemy.

"As a matter of fact, we had a lot of men who were gung-ho and loved a good fight. I am still proud to this day that I served in this unit and with its gallant men."

Warren's feelings were shared by other GIs, too. Not surprisingly, members of P Co., 75th Inf. (Rangers), 5th Inf. Div., which fielded six-man teams for seven days at a time around Khe Sanh, Vandegrift and the Rockpile, were ingrained with a positive attitude.

Spec. 4 Henry E. Walters, Jr., was unequivocal in his views: "We never abandoned anyone in the field—dead or alive. If six went out, six came back—always. The leadership of P Company was superb; the morale, camaraderie, courage and dedication of our people were unqualified."

Some of the heaviest action for U.S. troops occurred during ARVN's withdrawal from Laos when the NVA was counter-attacking. Fighting intensified on both sides of the border. Capt. Gerald Downey, commander of C Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., 196th LIB, Americal



SFC FLAHR KUTZER, U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

Grunts of the 1st Brigade, 5th Mech. Inf. Div., take time out for some "C-rats" in February 1971. Route 9 and "Red Devil Road" were the areas of operation for the 5th's men, 58 of whom died making them secure for the invasion of Laos.

Division, remembered:

"The guys from the 5th Mech and the other armored cav outfits were a brave and tough bunch of men. They fought their way up that road every day, sometimes several times a day, and each time they went they knew what to expect. They behaved in a way that would have made the original General Patton proud. If it had been World War II, someone would have written stories about them. Ernie Pyle would have loved 'em."

However, quite the contrary occurred. Lt. Col. Richard Meyer, commander of the 1st Bn., 77th Armor, 5th Mech, attempted to get correspondents, who could never measure up to Pyle, to take notice. "I had reporters seek out other units than mine because my troops were just doing their duty without any of the race and dope problems that made stateside headlines. They went looking for problems elsewhere."

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Fighting Along the 'Yellow Brick Road'

Five days into *Dewey Canyon II*, on Feb. 5, the first U.S. casualties were sustained. A Cobra of D Trp., 3rd Sqdn., 5th Cav, accidentally crashed northwest of Khe Sanh, killing both pilots. The following evening, A Btry., 1st Bn., 82nd Arty, Americal, near the Rockpile, was hit by 122mm rockets, killing one GI and wounding four. The first American blood of the operation had been spilled.

That morning, gunships from the 2nd Sqdn., 17th Air Cav, confirmed six NVA KIA along the border. Casualties climbed on both sides as contacts intensified. The 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., Americal, occupied the Rockpile on Feb. 10. The hilltop hosting the command post was dubbed "Purple Heart Hill." The 4th's A Company went in with 122 men and left with 88 effectives. Battalion kills, though, totalled 122 NVA.

On Feb. 19, five men of 3rd Plt., D Co., 1st Bn., 11th Inf. Regt., were KIA in a firefight west of Hill 926 after they were cut off from their company.

During a minesweeping operation on Red Devil Road near the Rockpile on Feb. 23, Spec. 4 Terry J. Johnson, a forward observer with 2nd Plt., C Trp., 3rd Sqdn., 5th Cav, had a close call. He told an Associated Press reporter, "That dink would have blown me away if he hadn't had a misfire. Instead, I cut him in half with my machine gun." For preventing his unit from being ambushed, Johnson earned a Silver Star.

As the operation drew down, the ground pounders achieved perhaps their greatest single victory on April 2. Off the Yellow Brick Road, a 20-man NVA unit was sighted. A Sheridan tank and 81mm-mortar crew quickly swung into action: the tank's 152mm main gun ripped the Communist patrol apart.

Khe Sanh: Ring of Fire

Meanwhile, NVA rockets and sappers had been taking a toll along Route 9. Around QL-9 on March 14, an NVA barrage claimed the lives of five engineers of the 59th Eng. Co., 39th Eng. Bn.

Khe Sanh, famous for the 1968 siege, was hit hardest. The prospect of sappers penetrating the perimeter wire was not a pleasant one, but it became a reality.

Khe Sanh was defended by 650 troops—350 of them ground combat. On perimeter guard were men of the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav, and 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Rocket Regiment.

March 15 saw 200 122mm rocket rounds hit the base. A peak of 500 NVA artillery rounds hit it on March 19. Some 20 rounds an hour—all day long—rained in on the GIs.

Yet life had to go on. While repairing the airstrip on March 22, Staff Sgt. Donald Briggs of 1st Plt., A Co., 27th

Continued on page 38

Heroism on Display: Laos Operation, 1971

Medal of Honor

Recipient	Unit	Date	Location	MOS
Fitzmaurice, Spec. 4 Michael	D Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav, 101st Div.	March 23	Khe Sanh	Infantryman

Air Force Cross

Carter, Capt. William R.	23rd Tac. Air Support Sqdn. (Thailand)	March 6-7	Laos	FAC*
Funderburk, Capt. Leonard J.	23rd Tac. Air Support Sqdn. (Thailand)	March 22	Laos	FAC*

Distinguished Service Cross

Barker, Maj. Jack L.	B Co., 101st Avn. Bn., 101st Div.	March 20	FSB Brown, Laos	Helicopter Pilot
Bowers, Capt. Charles J.	1st Bn., 42nd Regt., 22nd ARVN Div.	Feb. 27-Mar. 5	Kontum Province	Senior Advisor
Chapman, Staff Sgt. Leslie A.	TF 1 Adv. Element, 5th SFG	Feb. 16-18	FSB Thor, A Chau	Advisor
Fujii, Spec. 5 Dennis M.	237th Med. Det., 61st Med. Bn.	Feb. 18-22	Laos, Ranger North	Crew Chief
Green, Chief WO Gerald D.	A Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav, 101st Div.	Feb. 18	Laos	Helicopter Pilot
Newman, Maj. James T.	C Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav, 101st Div.	Feb. 18	Laos	Helicopter Pilot
Pederson, Spec. 4 Roger A.	3rd Sqdn., 5th Cav, 1st Bde., 5th Inf. Div.	March 29	Punch Bowl, Route 9	Medic

Presidential Unit Citation

Unit	Date	Location	Mission
158th Avn. Bn., 101st Avn. Grp.	Feb. 8-March 24	Laos	Multitude of missions through barrages of enemy fire

Valorous Unit Award

4th Bn., 77th Aerial Arty, 101st Div.	Feb. 8-April 8	Laos	Deployed consistent aerial rocket artillery fire
101st Avn. Bn., 101st Div.	March 3-20	Laos	Battle for Tchepone
223rd Avn. Bn., 1st Avn. Bde.	Feb. 8-March 24	Laos	52 combat assaults along Ho Chi Minh Trail
Trp. C, 7th Sqdn., 17th Cav	Feb. 8-March 24	Laos	Assaults on Ho Chi Minh Trail
Trp. B, 7th Sqdn., 1st Cav	Feb. 8-March 24	Laos	Assaults on Ho Chi Minh Trail

Note: The air cav troops operated with the 223rd. *FAC=Forward Air Controller

The Nam A Marvel Magazine continued from last issue:





A FEW MINUTES LATER, SAFELY AWAY FROM THE BELEAGUERED AIRSTRIP..







HEY, ROB, TAKE PFC MARKS HERE TO SGT. POLKOW. HE NEEDS A REPLACEMENT.

WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, SMARTEN HIM UP.

THIS WAY, MARKS.

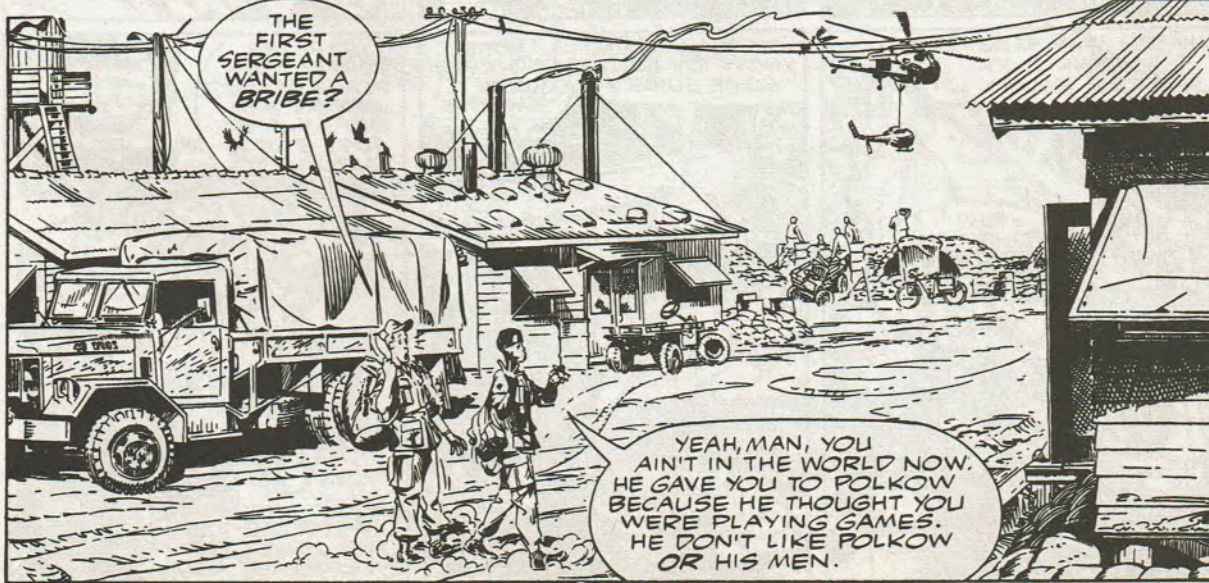


YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WANTED, DID YOU?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



DIG IT, TOP'S ON THE TAKE. HE WANTED A LITTLE SQUEEZE TO GIVE YOU A CUSHY ASSIGNMENT.



THE FIRST SERGEANT WANTED A BRIBE?

YEAH, MAN, YOU AIN'T IN THE WORLD NOW. HE GAVE YOU TO POLKOW BECAUSE HE THOUGHT YOU WERE PLAYING GAMES. HE DON'T LIKE POLKOW OR HIS MEN.



GUYS, HERE'S A PRESENT FOR YOU, A NEW GREENIE, WITH TOP'S COMPLIMENTS.



HERE YOU GO. ANOTHER GIFT FROM TOP-- THOUGH HE'LL NEVER KNOW.



I'M ED MARKS. GUESS I'M HERE BECAUSE I WAS TOO STUPID TO REALIZE I MIGHT HAVE TO BRIBE A FIRST SERGEANT.



HI I'M MIKE ALBERGO. THAT BUNK OVER THERE'S EMPTY.

WHY DON'T YOU DROP YOUR BAG BEFORE YOUR SHOULDER FALLS OFF?



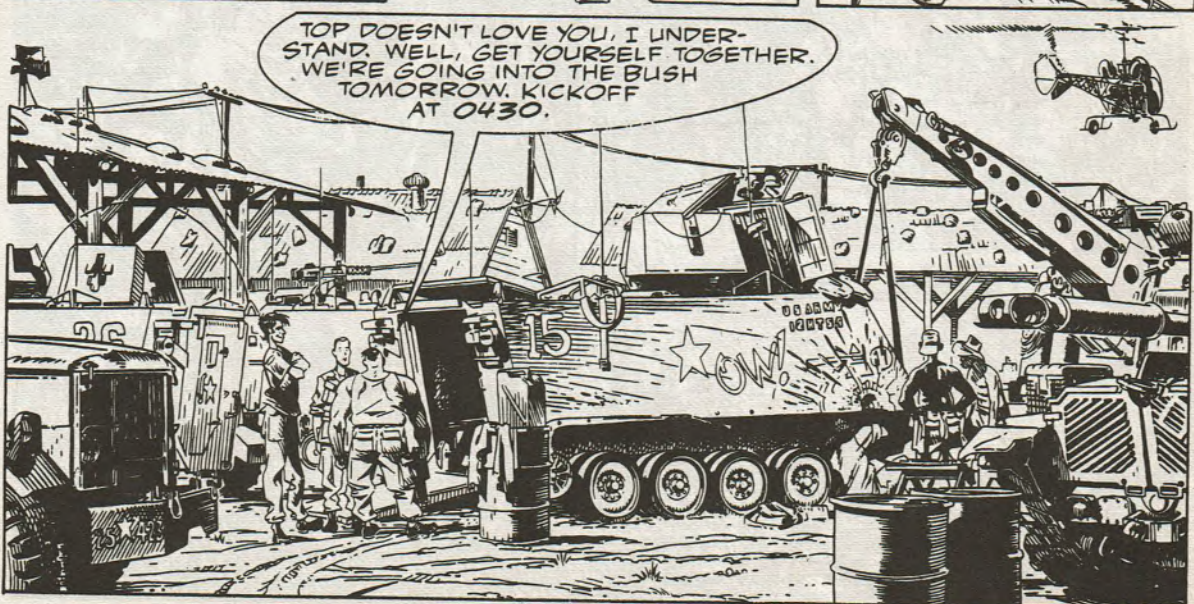
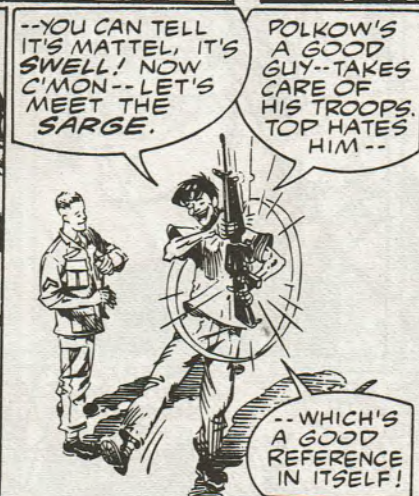
YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW TOP WANTED SOME JUICE?

NOPE, DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT WAS DONE.



YEAH, THE PERFECT REPLACEMENT. GREEN AS GRASS AND JUST STUPID ENOUGH TO FIT IN.

WELCOME TO THE JEWEL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.



A page from the Red Devil Brigade Newspaper December 1970

A Day in the Life...Part 2

PFC RANDY HENDRICKS

As the staccato clatter reverberated off the motor pool walls, the mechanics continued on with beaver-like dedication to the tasks at hand, unconcerned with the noise and activities around them.

A day in the life of a mechanic is a long one and many times can be a boring one, with duties ranging from changing a tire to changing engines. The number of duties performed by these men is infinitive and their repertoire must include knowledge of the integral parts of numerous vehicles.

It takes no budding genius to figure out that the monsoon season is upon us. And it is at this time that the soggy Red Devils are up to their tails in mud—the scourge of the motor pool.

“When vehicles travel over roads as much as ours do, and are constantly exposed to this hazzard nothing on the undercarriage is safe from it,” said the Delta 75th Spt, Bn. motor sergeant, SFC Charles L. Swift, Wellsville, Ohio. He

continued, “All parts underneath the vehicles are constantly covered by mud and water, which penetrate everywhere to drastically cut the life of the exposed engine parts,” he said.

Out of 16 vehicles scheduled to come in to be worked on, half of them are here to have the brakes replaced. Weather is the cause of all of the headaches encountered here. Because of the penetrating ability of the mud and slop on the roads, these integral parts may last for only as much as a month, whereas in more ideal circumstances they may last for a normal lifetime.

A stroll through the motor pool showed that jobs of the mechanic are indeed wide and varied. One man was replacing old and worn bearings with new ones, while another was changing brake shoes. Some men were fixing tires, others were greasing and lubricating engines and others were performing various engine repairs.

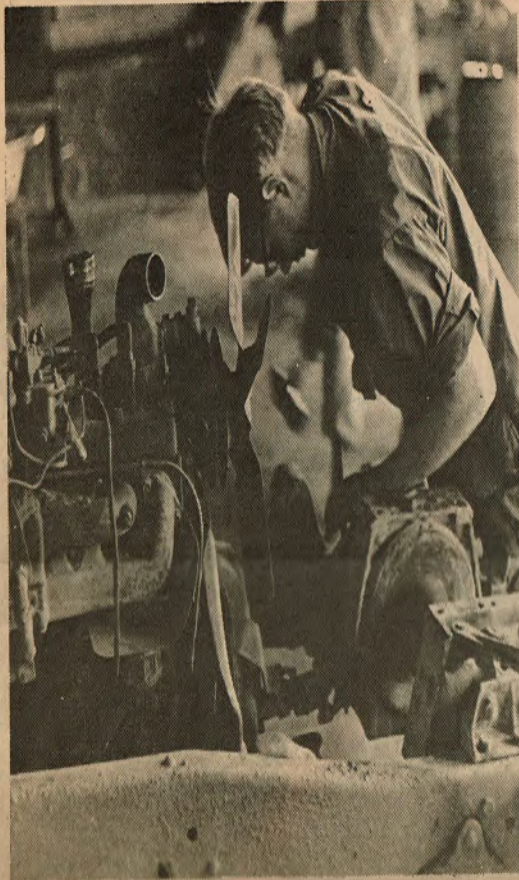
“My men work on the vehicles from Delta Company, B

Med, and Headquarters Company, but I would have to say that no matter how long you work at this job you can never know all there is to know about your work,” the sergeant said.

Most of the damages and failures to engine parts of the vehicles are more or less weather-induced. And as a result with each coming season and each new type, different solutions crop up periodically that add a little variety in the life of the mechanic if nothing else.

A majority of the men would agree that it is a hard job and may be a boring job, but it is definitely a rewarding job. The men take a certain amount of pride in their work that can be found in not many other areas. The work is hard and the hours may be long but the results are satisfying, knowing that they did a job well-done.

Sgt. Swift added a final note, “The men do a helluva job, and in my opinion they don’t get near the credit they deserve.”





Some guys just take their work laying down.



It's a lucky mechanic that can make a minor adjustment without having to take the faulty piece of equipment. Off the vehicles.



Often the job requires the knowledge and experience to operate other sophisticated tools of the trade. This man has to employ an acetylen torch to properly perform his job.

(Photo by Sp4 Gary Holbrook)

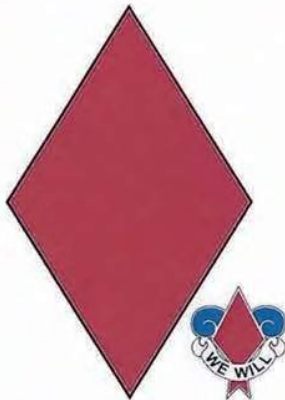


"Look ma, no hands, as a matter of fact not too much of anything except legs."

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