

THE

RED 5 DIAMOND

The official publication of The Society of the Fifth Division, United States Army.

Volume MMXX Ed.4

November 2020

Annual Dues: \$15



**GOD BLESS ALL VETERANS
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

“WE WILL”

Deadline for submission of articles for the next Edition: **January 10, 2021**

2020-2021 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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- *Dr. E. C. Morton (1925-28)
- *Maj. Gen. Paul B. Malone (1929-30)
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- Dennis Thompson (2017-2018)
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* Deceased

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

Executive Board Member &
National 1st 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 & 2nd Vice President
Hal Roller-Sheryl
15517 Woodward St., Overland Park, K.S.
66223, Phone 913-681-4915
hal.roller@sbcglobal.net

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 - Linda
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

Louis Pepi

Greetings to my fellow Red Devils. It is with a great sense of duty and a humble heart that I except your vote of confidence in me as this year's president. I promise to do my best in the coming months—that is all that anyone can do.

This year's installation of officers was quite different than those of past years. It was chronicled in a Zoom Meeting on September 8th. I would like to congratulate the new slate of officers and look forward to working with them throughout my tenure over the next eleven months.

Concerning the 100th reunion—actually the 101st year of our Society—we move forward with cautious expectation in the face of the Pandemic. As previously stated, the hotel is reserved and under contract and we are in a period of limbo until the 1st of the new year when planning will resume in earnest. The reunion is at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island from September 9-13, 2021. Mark that on your calendar.

There are several new items of note. It appears that a larger number of our brothers in the Steel Tigers (77th Armor) will be attending our Society Reunion this coming year as it will not conflict with their reunion in Gettysburg. Also, I am working on a surprise guest speaker. More on that later.

In closing, I wish all Society members and their families a happy holiday season and a safe and healthful new year.

Lou Pepi



From the 1st Vice President: Gary Haverman

Hello again everyone, my, how time does fly sometimes. Well maybe not so much this year, but it seems it wasn't that long ago I was writing my first article for the Red Diamond as your newly elected 2nd Vice President. A year has passed and elections were held and I want to thank you for your vote of confidence in me, it is truly my honor to serve in this position. I have been told that it was one of the most participated election we ever had. That is what you get when you get two brilliant and computer savvy minds together. May thanks to our web master, Joe Boman and Past President Bob Dudly

Another big thank you has to go to our newly elected President, Lou Pepi, who brought us into the Zoom world. Speaking for myself, as the new guy on the Executive Board, I appreciate being able to put a face with a name. Next time, I should wear a hat so my bald head doesn't stand out as much when zooming with you all.

As I stated in my last article, I have been very impressed with the leadership of Past President Hal Roller who has done a great job of guiding us through this interesting year. We will have to wait a few years before we can enjoy his hard work at our reunion in San Antonio, TX.

I have really enjoyed being a part of the Executive Board this past year, as I was told I would. I will be looking forward to seeing you all in person at our next reunion in Rhode Island around a board room table or having a beer in the hospitality room.

I do not have a lot to report on the reunion in Springfield, MO 2022, but my wife Jeanne and I have plans to meet with Carrie Chavez of the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau on the 12th of October. We will be looking at all the possible tours that are available in the area and other forms of entertainment that will make your time in Springfield and at the reunion very memorable. To add to the fun we will be getting together with Dennis Coulter and his wife who live in town. I'm sure they will keep us from getting lost and show us the town. We will be coming down in our motorhome and plan to stay at a nearby RV park so will get that vacation feeling we love.

That's about all I have for now, wishing you all the best of health and happiness one could ask for.

PS. I thought you'd enjoy some photos from Lam Som 719.



Left: This is me unwrapping the packaging from our new gun barrel.

Right: Crew of Gun 1; the Combat Cadillac along the Laotian border.

Members of the Society Board,

dear friend and Vietnam Platoon Leader, George O. Baldwin on Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

I was informed and saddened to learn from Tom Grafton (A Company, 7th Engineers) of the passing of his

George's visitation hours are today in Landing, NJ and his obituary can be found in the link below.

<https://leberlakeside.com/tribute/details/1749/George-Baldwin-Jr/obituary.html#tribute-start>

May I ask the National Chaplain and National Secretary to reflect George's passing in their files. Thank you.

Phil Maniscalco

National Judge Advocate



Second Vice President's Message: Hal Roller

Hal has been busy and wishes you all a very Blessed Veterans Day

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 .

Chaplain's Message: Ron Van Beek

A day in Vietnam

50 years ago on April 10, 1970 my platoon had its second tragedy when the sixth member of the platoon was killed.

After the river bathing each platoon pushed out on its own. My platoon went up a fairly steep mountain eventually all the way to the top. On the way, we came across a hootch with a tin roof in very good condition. It was unusual to see hootches of any kind in the boonies, let alone one in such good condition. Consequently, we got cautious about this one. Rather than just walk in, one of my squad leaders and I did reconnaissance by fire; that is, we fired off about 40 rounds of M-16 ammo into the hootch before we went in. It turned out the hootch was empty but its presence suggested that bad guys were in the area. That turned out to be a correct conclusion.

About an hour after firing up the hootch, I went on a squad sweep. We came upon some deep man-made holes. While we were looking around a Dink popped up and was shot dead by a nice FNG, Michael Farley, who was paying attention. He had a nice SKS rifle which we tagged and took with us. We called the company commander to report what had happened and he said we were doing a great job.

The next day we did a search of a small valley not far from where we found the hootch. When we started into the valley we took some sniper fire. One round came a few feet from my head and landed in the rucksack of the guy in front of me. Fortunately, it did not hit the M-60 ammo he was carrying. We lined up to return fire but the sniper was long gone.

The next day, April 10, 1970, we set up the platoon perimeter on the side of the mountain not far from the top. It was a stupid place to setup because it had lots of bushes which partially blocked our view and because there was high ground above it. The LT was reluctant, however, to force the guys all the way to the top of the mountain because we were so fatigued from humping all day in the heat. We would pay a price for that decision. Just as night fell some Dink lobbed a big ugly Chicom grenade into our perimeter. It landed almost on top of the nice FNG, who had killed the Dink the day before, and killed him; another KIA.

A Chicom grenade was similar to the German "Potato Masher" grenade. It usually had a bamboo handle with a wooden screw cap on the end attached to a friction fuse running down the middle. They were manufactured in China and they were crude, but effective.

Michael Farley was a draftee from Tipton, Indiana who was 21 when he died in Binh Dinh province. His location on the Vietnam Memorial Wall is Panel 12W, Row 117. The only good news was that Michael was almost asleep because of humping all day so he never knew what hit him. A few other guys got some shrapnel including Lt. Troester. One guy got shrapnel in his face and eye. The guy who got shrapnel in the eye was a Brother named Poole who was a bad malingerer and had already been a personnel problem for me. We opened up with a Mad Minute, and did not take much return fire. After the brief firefight we medivaced Poole. It was at night so it was a bit hairy.

The LT then called the company commander, who was with the mortar platoon on a small hill, a couple of kilometers from us. I found out later, that Lt. Troester got in trouble with the company commander because of this night medivac from a "hot" zone. Actually, the LT was just following the advice of our medic. The good news was that our mortar platoon had their mortars and were set up on a very small fire base a couple of clicks from us. Mortar guys typically just humped the boonies with the rest of us, however, in this instance, they were set up with their 81-millimeter mortars. They did a great job as did my LT who directed the mortar fire within approximately 25 meters of our position. I believe the bad guys left with that barrage.

As luck would have it, however, our company commander got in touch with either "Spooky" or "Shadow", I am not certain which. Both were old transport planes that had been retrofitted with cannons and machine guns and their mission was ground support. Their machine gun could put a round in every square inch of a football field. I believe they were C-130s. Apparently, the night medivac justified calling for these guys. In a fairly short while, the gun ship guys were talking to my LT. He explained that he had no experience directing fire support from a gun ship and they calmly said they would walk him through it. I believe these were Air Force guys and they were great. They talked so calmly you would have thought they were just having a couple of beers and a B.S. session.

The first thing we had to do before they could provide us fire support was mark our position. Because of the foliage, that was not easy, since light from a flashlight would be diffused in the trees. I had a creative idea and suggested that we set off trip flares at the four corners of our perimeter, which we did. That worked and the pilots said they could mark our position and were ready to fire up the area around us. It was impressive. Again, the fire came within 25 meters of our position and they brought tremendous fire power for about a half hour. When it was over, my LT said thanks a bunch and the pilots said they were glad to help and to call them up any time we needed them. Then they flew off. The next day a Medivac bird came in and we put Michael Farley's body on it so he went on to his final resting place.

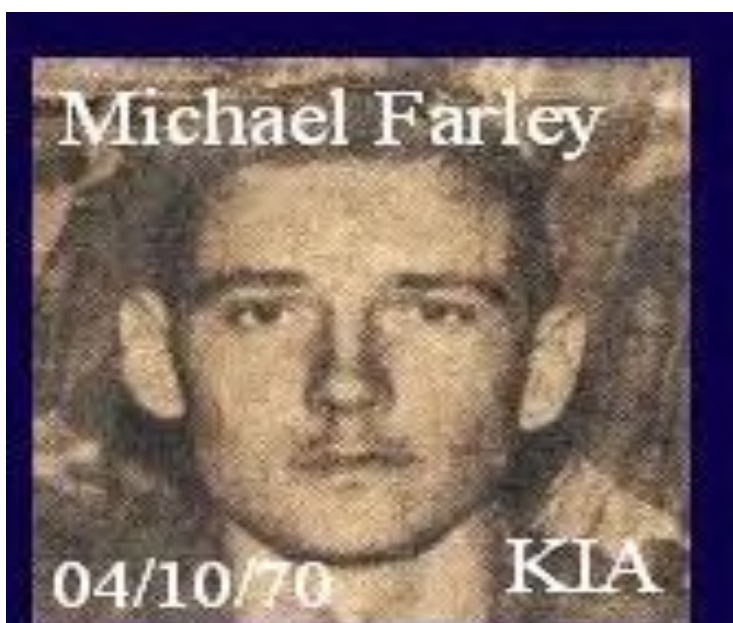
Later I heard that a guy in George Keener's platoon had been shot the day before, apparently by sniper fire. As I recall, he was not killed. As I thought about my experiences up to this point it all seemed so pointless. During the 6 or 7 months I spent in Vietnam so far, we had very few battles or even skirmishes. Never-the-less, we kept losing guys one or two at a time to snipers. When I later talked to guys who served in other parts of Vietnam, their stories were very similar. The guys in the South, however, lost guys one by one to booby traps. The result was the same. We never won anything or actually occupied territory toward some tactical objective. You owned the circle you stood on for as long as you were there, and then you gave it up when you left. I later read about fierce battles for some hills where the GIs took heavy casualties taking the hill only to give it up the next day. Then, in some cases they were ordered to retake the same hill and pay the same sacrifice again; all for nothing.

The next day we humped to the top of the mountain and encountered Pungi Sticks just below the trail that ran the ridgeline. Fortunately, no one got stuck. A Pungi Staick was a sharpened bamboo stick about three feet long which was generally placed in grass so you did not see them before they stuck you. The end was very sharp and was usually covered with human or water buffalo feces to cause infection when

they dug into you. Punji Sticks are usually deployed in substantial numbers. A couple of months later I saw a Scout Dog impale himself on a Pungi Stick when he ran forward. They were nasty business.

Once we got around the Pungi Sticks and to the top of the mountain, we headed out on the trail that ran the entire length of the ridgeline. Generally, walking on trails is a bad idea because it sets you up for ambush, however, in this case there was really no option because the sides of the ridgeline were so steep. We humped this trail for about a kilometer when the LT caused his own demise. I was walking second man back from the point man. We came to a vine which went across the trail. The point man bent down and scooted under it, as did the slack man and I. My LT, however, had a different approach. He pulled out his hunting knife and hacked on the vine. It turned out the vine was part of a pig trap. When the LT yanked on it a spear about four feet long came swooshing out of the bushes and lodged in the cheek of his buttocks at least an inch deep. There he was standing there holding the spear still stuck in his butt and we were on the ground laughing ourselves silly. He pulled the spear out and the medic looked at the wound. It was fairly substantial, at least an inch deep, about a half inch across and bleeding profusely. The medic wrapped a field bandage around it and we called the company commander to report our circumstance. A short while later a medivac bird came over. This time it was able to almost land on the ridgeline so we just hoisted the LT inside.

This was one of three times when I was the acting platoon leader. Based on guidance from the company commander we humped to the little firebase with him and the mortar guys and took over perimeter security. The setting was picturesque, mountainous and we could see for a couple of miles. We could see the river we had crossed several days before way down in the valley below.



First Combat Day

54 years ago today, 24 February 1966, I was a SGT E-5 assigned to Detachment A-412, 5th Special Forces Group in South Vietnam. I went on my first combat patrol the day after I arrived, 24 February.

MY FIRST COMBAT PATROL

“Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.” - Sir Winston Churchill.

We departed camp, heading south on a trail alongside the Cai Cai River, in single file, over terrain that hadn't seen American or VN troops in over a year, and was VC territory. We had to use the trail, because the only other choice would have been in the open, sitting ducks for a VC ambush.

We were in the open for a couple hundred yards south of camp. At that point we entered a trail that had vegetation on both sides of it. I was near the rear of the patrol. We didn't have any of our soldiers on the flanks because that would have put them out in the open flatland, easy for any enemy to spot, and know, well in advance, that we were coming. In fact, the left flank was the river itself.

On both sides of the river, the banks were overgrown with Tram trees. Tram trees were heavy leafed, thirty to sixty feet high shade trees, affording cover to both us and the enemy. The trees could be found along river banks throughout the Mekong Delta. We crossed many feeder streams, doing so on bridges made from small trees and branches. Crossing them was a balancing act, since there were no handrails to hold on to, on most of the bridges. We crossed in single file, one at a time on the “bridge.”

At one point we crossed the river at a narrow point, continuing our patrol, single file, southward along the river on the east side. I kept my eyes moving left and right, looking for signs of any enemy activity. I didn't bother looking at the trail ahead, as twenty-plus men, teammates and CIDG, were in front of me. I considered the trail to be safe, as long as they were not spotting anything unsafe about it.

Shortly after beginning our patrolling along the east side of the river, a VN CIDG soldier who had been behind me, ran up to me, tapped me on my back, said “trung si” (pronounced thung shi, Vietnamese for sergeant), and pointed back on the trail. He led me back a few yards, then showed me where my boot had bridged a mine in the trail. I had unknowingly stepped on a mine emplacement. Thankfully Charlie (aka VC) had screwed up and planted it too deep in the trail, so my boot bridged over it. WHEW!

The patrol stopped, while I proceeded to shakily blow up the mine with a small explosive charge. The mine was what we called a “leg popper.” Had

I detonated it, it would have done major damage to my leg, probably blowing a good part, if not all, of it off. That was a wake-up call! I placed a small amount of C-4 on the booby-trap, and blew it up, knowing that trying to remove the mine could have resulted in detonating a secondary booby-trap connected to the main one.

What I thought was strange was, since I was near the end of the patrol, almost the whole patrol had already passed the mine without seeing it. We three Americans in the patrol were spread out throughout the patrol, as we always were. The ranking American was nearest the front of the patrol, the other one was near the center, and I was near the end. We never congregated during patrols because it made us too good of a target. “It sometimes helps if you sort out in your mind the very real difference between being brave and being fearless. Being brave means doing or facing something frightening. . . . Being fearless means being without fear.” —Penelope Leach.

Shortly thereafter we were fired upon by an unknown sized VC unit. I was almost immediately called upon to return fire with my grenade launcher. During the fire fights I was kept busy running from position to position to fire my grenade launcher. I tried to stay as low as possible, while moving as quickly as possible. There were times I was half running, half crawling. Every time I reached a firing station I rolled onto my side so that I could open the hinged weapon, remove the spent cartridge, place a round in the barrel, snap the weapon back to locked position, aim, and fire. As the 40mm grenade flew out of the barrel it made a bloop sound, followed by a “thump,” and “boom” upon detonation. I was the only one on our patrol with the launcher.

During the ambush we had been pinned down. Every time I ran to fire the grenade launcher I could hear “cracks.” I believed at the time, that the “cracks” I heard were the sounds of the bullets hitting and snapping off tree branches, near my head. It made sense to me, because I was in terrain that was basically covered with brush and small trees. I had never heard the cracking sound before. All I knew was that it was a sound that was annoying, especially given the realization that each “crack” was meant for me.

When we returned to camp I was told that you could tell the bullets were close to your head when you heard them “crack.” That bothered me even more. The crack, I learned, was the sound of the sound barrier being broken by the projectile, a mini sonic boom. The speed of sound (sound barrier) is 1,125 feet per second, or 770 miles per hour. I had been hearing a hell of a lot of those mini sonic booms!

Their machine gunner kept trying to get me, but thankfully he, and the rest of his gang, needed more target practice. Our patrol leader contacted our main camp with our radio, requesting supporting fire. Shortly thereafter came the joyful sound of 4.2" mortar rounds exploding in the vicinity of the enemy forces. That was enough for the VC. They retreated shortly after the rounds began raining down upon them.

The Special Operations Association has a creed. It comes from the Studies and Observation Group (SOG) in Vietnam, and states: "You have never lived until you have almost died. For those who have fought for it, life has special flavor the protected will never know." What a true statement. I had just lived through it in person. That had been one hell of an introduction into combat.

My training had prepared me well. My reflexes had worked well, and I had reacted well, with little time spent on thought, no negative emotions, and some adrenalin rush. I was purposely trying to avoid the bullets meant for me, but I wasn't dwelling on the danger, or being scared. I had gone through some emotions during and after that firefight that I had never experienced before. I'd had my baptism of fire. I also learned that I loved the thrill of the hunt and the adrenalin of the firefight. I was addicted!

"Brave rifles, veterans, you have been baptized in fire and blood and have come out steel." —General Winfield Scott, 1812.

I had earned my CIB (Combat Infantry Badge), and could now wear it on my dress uniform as a badge of distinction. The CIB had been established in 1943. Famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle followed our troops in World War II, both in the European and Pacific fronts. He totally respected the frontline troops, with whom he spent almost all his time, living in foxholes with them and wearing his helmet. He even went on patrols with them. He suggested that a special award be given, only to combat infantrymen. And so it came to be.

As soon as we returned from the patrol, we gathered together for an after-action briefing. We went over all the details of the patrol with CPT Donker (CO), MSG Kerr (Operations Sergeant), and SFC Allard (Intelligence Sergeant). We first gave each of our impressions of what happened during the patrol, and our actions. Then we were asked questions by Donker, Kerr, and Allard. We had been involved in three fire fights during that patrol (the first one for me), one of which was a poorly executed, hastily set up, VC ambush, the other two being unplanned enemy contacts.

After taking care of business with the after-action meeting, we were able to finally relax, and unwind. The after-action briefings were held after each patrol we went on whether, or not, there was enemy contact. Before being

involved in that first fire fight (especially before arriving in Vietnam), I wondered how I would react to my first instance under fire.

I think most military personnel, facing that scenario, wonders if they will be paralyzed by fear, cringe in terror, unable to react, or react properly, like a warrior should. Training is an indicator, but there is nothing like the real thing to test a person. There is nothing I can think of that is as challenging and intense, as being in a firefight with the enemy. When in combat you forget everything that might trouble you on a normal day. The mind and body is completely focused on the matter at hand.

At the end of the day I felt a little nervous, upon realizing what I had been through, and how close I had come to "buying the farm." I felt, however, that it was a healthy nervousness. I always trusted my fellow SF team members. Between that, and the excellent training I had received over the years, I didn't have any "fear," to speak of, only a healthy knowledge that I was in a dangerous situation. In fact, my feelings almost bordered on invincibility. We had kicked ass! It was a proud feeling, and it's what drives men in dangerous situations.

PHOTOS: My First Patrol (my photos)

SLURP SENDS!

Base Camp Preparation

Vietnam 1966 It wasn't yet noon and the temperature hovered at 100 degrees . I was stretching coils of concertina wire around the hill . Staking them down to the ground with steel stakes driven down into the rocky earth. I had to leave my t-shirt on to protect against getting sunburned. My shirt was soaked with sweat . We had brush piles burning around the hill from clearing firing lanes. Not much breeze today , the smoke hanging around the hill in pockets , my eyes burning . I picked up another section of wire and tied it in and stretched it across the hill. The wire had priority right now, we needed to get it up in place to be more secure at night . We had a crew working on wire , I was running one row and behind me another row was being run next to mine and tied together with it . A little further back they were putting a row of wire on top of the other two and tying them together . Above us looking down on the scene was Alonzo Walker sitting in a small dugout bunker . He sat there with a M -60 machine gun laying on the sandbags in front of him. He was watching in case we needed help . We all had our weapons with us . Just on the other side of the wire about twenty yards away was a wall of jungle. It was so thick you had to cut a path through it. While clearing brush on the hill we

had seen our share of snakes , centipedes , and rock apes. As I worked the gnats flew around my face , irritating me . I stopped and wiped insect repellent on my face and arms . When we got too close to the wall of jungle working the mosquitos would attack us drawing blood. We worked through the day getting as much wire up as possible. As evening approached a breeze sprang up coming off the ocean . I stopped swinging my sledgehammer and looked down toward the sea. The breeze felt so good on my sweaty body. As night fell we called it a day and pulled back to our bunkers for the night. We set claymores mines around us out in front of our bunkers . I sat in the bunker and warmed my c-rats with a little C-4 crumbled in a can. Time to eat .



The Opinion of the Editor of the Red Diamond: Dave Kocan

Opinions are like a*%&+#@s everyone has one. What a timeless expression, but now a days it seems like you are not allowed to express an opinion without it offending someone. If you wear a red shirt someone tells you to wear blue. If you change and wear a blue shirt someone tells to wear a black one. You put a sign in your yard and someone defaces it or removes it. Has the Covid 19 effected the brain so we do not hear or allow the other person the right to express their opinion. Has this virus shut our eyes and let us see only what is in the mirror? Who was the given the power to tell you what you should believe. As Veterans we should voice our opinion and should also listen to those other opinions. I hope you all voiced your own opinion and VOTED this year.



Obesity, Race/Ethnicity, and COVID-19

Obesity is a common, serious, and costly chronic disease. Having obesity puts people at risk for many other serious chronic diseases and increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Everyone has a role to play in turning the tide against obesity and its disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minority groups.

Adult Obesity is Increasing

The [2019 CDC Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps](#)¹ show that obesity remains high – twelve states now have an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35 percent: Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. [This is up from nine states in 2018.](#)

Obesity Worsens Outcomes from COVID-19

Adults with obesity are at even greater risk during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- [Having obesity increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19.](#)
- [Having obesity may triple the risk of hospitalization due to a COVID-19 infection.](#)
- Obesity is linked to impaired immune function.^{2, 3}
- Obesity decreases lung capacity and reserve and can make ventilation more difficult.⁴
- As [BMI](#) increases, the risk of death from COVID-19 increases.⁵
- Studies have demonstrated that obesity may be linked to lower vaccine responses for numerous diseases (influenza⁶, Hepatitis B^{7, 8, 9}, tetanus¹⁰).

Obesity Disproportionately Impacts Some Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups

[Combined data from 2017-2019](#) show notable racial and ethnic disparities:

- Non-Hispanic Black adults had the highest prevalence of self-reported obesity (39.8%), followed by Hispanic adults (33.8%), and non-Hispanic White adults (29.9%).
- 6 states had an obesity prevalence of 35 percent or higher among non-Hispanic White adults.
- 15 states had an obesity prevalence of 35 percent or higher among Hispanic adults.
- 34 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) had an obesity prevalence of 35 percent or higher among non-Hispanic Black adults.

Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black adults [have a higher prevalence of obesity](#) and are [more likely to suffer worse outcomes from COVID-19](#). Racial and ethnic minority groups have historically not had fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health, and these inequities have increased the risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19 for some groups. Many of these same factors are contributing to the higher level of obesity in some racial and ethnic minority groups.

What Can be Done

Obesity is a complex disease with many contributing factors. Neighborhood design, access to healthy, affordable foods and beverages, and access to safe and convenient places for physical activity can all impact obesity. The racial and ethnic disparities in obesity underscore the need to address social determinants of health such as poverty, education, housing to remove barriers to health. This will take action at the policy and

systems level to ensure that [obesity prevention and management starts early](#), and that everyone has access to [good nutrition](#) and [safe places to be physically active](#). Policy makers and community leaders must work to ensure that their communities, environments, and systems support a healthy, active lifestyle for all.

Steps to Take Now

Systemic change takes time, as does long-term weight loss. In addition to [the steps everyone should take to slow the spread of COVID-19](#), individuals can help protect themselves and their families during this pandemic by:

Eating a healthy diet

Eating a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains as well as the appropriate amount of calories is important for your health, and can help with weight loss and preventing weight gain.¹¹ Good nutrition can help support optimal immune function.^{12, 13} A healthy diet can help prevent or support self-management of diseases such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes¹¹, [which also increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#).

Being active

Regular physical activity helps you feel better, sleep better, and reduce anxiety. It can also help with preventing weight gain and when combined with calorie reduction, helps with weight loss.¹⁴ It can also help boost immune function^{15, 16} and help prevent diseases that also increase a person's chances of having severe illness from COVID-19 such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Getting enough sleep

[Insufficient sleep](#) has been linked to depression, as well as chronic diseases¹⁷ that may increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

Coping with stress

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause [changes in sleep or eating patterns, increased use of alcohol and tobacco, or worsening of chronic health problems](#).

Over time, these actions can help individuals with obesity improve their overall health. And if they result in even modest weight loss, there are health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugars.¹⁸ And with a [lower BMI](#), the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 is reduced.⁵

What CDC, Partners, States, and Communities are Doing

Our [work with partners, states, and communities](#) makes it easier for everyone to move more and eat a healthy diet where they live, learn, work, and play. Together, we work to remove barriers and promote health and wellness for all by:

- Bringing communities together to plan and carry-out local, culturally tailored interventions to address poor nutrition, and physical inactivity and tobacco use
- Promoting healthier food and beverage choices in schools, workplaces, hospitals, and public venues
- Making healthy foods more available by connecting local producers with retailers and organizations such as schools, hospitals, and food hubs
- Promoting nutrition standards in early care and education settings, food pantries, and faith-based organizations
- Designing communities that connect sidewalks, bicycle routes, and public transportation with homes, early care and education settings, schools, parks, and workplaces

- Ensuring screening for obesity and access to healthy lifestyle programs for children and their families

The epidemic of obesity is impacting the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the added risks associated with COVID-19, we need to support all individuals, especially members of racial and ethnic minority groups, to live active healthy lives.

Resources:

- [Food assistance](#) programs and food system guidance during COVID-19
- [Policy resources](#) to support social determinants of health
- [Health Equity Resource Toolkit for State Practitioners Addressing Obesity Disparities](#)
- [COVID-19: Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups – What We Can Do](#)
- Strategies to support [healthy food systems](#), create [activity-friendly environments](#), and [prevent obesity](#).
- [Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight](#)
- [Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight](#)
- [Adult BMI Calculator](#)
- [CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity \(DNPAO\)](#)
- [DNPAO's State and Local Programs](#)

¹ The 2019 CDC Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps show the prevalence of self-reported adult obesity using data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Data is available for 49 states (New Jersey data unavailable), the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

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³ Alwarawrah, Y., Kiernan, K., & MacIver, N. J. (2018). Changes in nutritional status impact immune cell metabolism and function. *Frontiers in immunology*, 9, 1055.

⁴ Simonnet, A., Chetboun, M., Poissy, J., Raverdy, V., Noulette, J., Duhamel, A., ... & LICORN and the Lille COVID-19 and Obesity study group. (2020). High prevalence of obesity in severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) requiring invasive mechanical ventilation. *Obesity*.

⁵ Tartof, S. Y., Qian, L., Hong, V., Wei, R., Nadjafi, R. F., Fischer, H., ... & Saxena, T. (2020). Obesity and mortality among patients diagnosed with COVID-19: results from an integrated health care organization. *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

⁶ Neidich, S. D., Green, W. D., Rebeles, J., Karlsson, E. A., Schultz-Cherry, S., Noah, T. L., Chakladar, S., Hudgens, M. G., Weir, S. S., & Beck, M. A. (2017). Increased risk of influenza among vaccinated adults who are obese. *International journal of obesity* (2005), 41(9), 1324–1330.

⁷ Weber DJ, Rutala WA, Samsa GP, Santimaw JE, Lemon SM (1985) Obesity as a predictor of poor antibody response to hepatitis B plasma vaccine. *JAMA* 254: 3187-3189

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⁹ Young MD, Gooch WM 3rd, Zuckerman AJ, Du W, Dickson B, et al. (2001) Comparison of a triple antigen and a single antigen recombinant vaccine for adult hepatitis B vaccination. *J Med Virol* 64: 290-298.

¹⁰ Eliakim A, Schwindt C, Zaldivar F, Casali P, Cooper DM (2006) Reduced tetanus antibody titers in overweight children. *Autoimmunity* 39: 137-141.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <https://health.gov/our-work/food-and-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/>.

¹² Childs, C. E., Calder, P. C., & Miles, E. A. (2019). Diet and immune function.

¹³ Christ, A., Lauterbach, M., & Latz, E. (2019). Western diet and the immune system: an inflammatory connection. *Immunity*, 51(5), 794-811. ¹³ Blackburn G. (1995). Effect of degree of weight loss on health benefits. *Obesity Research* 3: 211S-216S.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018.

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¹⁸ National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. *Managing Overweight and Obesity in Adults: Systematic Evidence Review from the Obesity Expert Panel*, 2013. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/managing-overweight-obesity-in-adults>. Accessed May 7, 2019.

David, Roger,

I got an email from Bob last night. I then called Bob. He had gone thru the original photo and found on the back of the photo, he had written the names/nicknames of the guys.

The Fourth KIA SGT was called in the Security Platoon Sgt Willie or Sgt Willy (I forgot to ask Bob how he spelled it on the back of the photo you have previously seen). I don't know if that was part of a first or second name or nickname.

I know I am sending you emails that probably you don't want to get involved in, but I can't go forward yet in requesting official government documents about the 4th KIA without knowing his name. It won't be acceptable as creditable and it won't have any priority to start an investigation.

I am going forward in asking the DaNang Mortuary about the three questions I have stated in another email, but I really need his name as they won't take me seriously.

The Receiving and Processing of Remains was fluid at a Collection Point because they are the first step of the journey of our Fallen back home. Many times not much information is available at first. Sometimes we get a call with the names coming and sometimes we don't because the choppers are bringing in Dead & Wounded at the same time. We at Graves Registration at times were also stretcher bearers for the wounded and the Wounded was always a priority. Our Fallen stayed on the pad until we could bring them in to our structure to be processed, which was perpendicular to the 18th Surgical Mash structure.

I am providing as much information as I can about what happens at the Collection Point, and what I know what happens at the DaNang Mortuary based on trips to their location. I'm doing this to help understand the situation and the process which again can be very fluid at times.

We need to find out the identity of who is this SGT. I would like to believe somehow he is accounted for and we just aren't aware of it. This is why I need your help. We need at least some other confirmations this is the SGT who was a Security Platoon KIA on June 1, 1970. Bob and I are saying there were Four KIA's, but that's not enough confirmations until we at least can find out who he is.

The possibility that we are missing a KIA would be sickening! I don't want to go there.

Bob was the only Squad Leader left when this all happened and he called it in to the HHC area.

The PLT LT & PLT SGT & 2 SQ LDRs were all blown to bits. This adds to the confusion. Bob would have been in shock, whether he realizes it or not. Also he was focused on putting the platoon from a line defensive position to 360 degree perimeter defensive position. Bob called in four KIA'S. You never say any individual name on a Com Radio because the NVA Is listening in on our frequency's, so Bob gave them their position within the Platoon (Bob, if I didn't say this part correctly, let me know).

It didn't help when only three body bags instead of four arrived with the new PLT LT (could have been that's all they had in the HHC area as the LT replacement was there in less than an hour at the scene).

I am standing by that Graves Registration took the 3 body bags out and all had minimal Partial Remains, put them into 4 body bags. We identified /tagged some of the Partial Remains as Believed To Be (BTB). I don't remember if we made any of the body bags tagged as Unknows.

At the Brigade HHC in front of the Brigade Tactical Operations Command (TOC). I also remember Four Helmets/Rifle/Boots at the Security Platoon Memorial Service

Please call me. I would like to discuss this with you. (727) 585-5318 Home; (850) 933-9733 Cell.

If I don't answer, it's because I don't recognize the number on my Caller ID. Leave a message and your phone number and I will call you back.

Bob, can you provide David & Roger your phone number?

Jerry

Bob,

The phone number for Fifth Division Secretary is in the Red Diamond. I would ask him for Malcomb phone number and or email address.

Until we identify who is the missing KIA, I am reluctant to raise a flag to the MIA/KIA Casualty sources.

You are I are both on the same page we remember Four KIA's in the Explosion and not Three; nothing has changed our memories yet.

Like I have stated to all above, we need help from 5th Division in locating Security Platoon Members who were there June 1, 1970.

I forgot to add my email address and phone number in the August Red Diamond . Everyone has permission to pass it on to others.

Jcollman@verizon.net (850) 933-9733 Cell

Jerry

John,

Bob sent me a copy on his email to you.

I know this was over 50 years ago when this Event happen with the Security Platoon, but my memory has always been Four KIA's with four names provided to Graves Registration from the Brigade HHC. I'm reasonably sure there was three body bags as it didn't make much different to Graves Registration people since it was multiple pieces of Body Remains and at the initial bagging no one knew who was who. Many times we received Remains without body bags or and some mixed in with other Remains.

Since I was a friend of Lt Howard (one of the four KIA's), I was focused on identifying what few pieces they were as part of him. It didn't matter at this point because some of the parts were unidentifiable and Da Nang Mortuary would run more detail inspection and tests than we were capable of doing at a Collection Point. I had never thought any differently all these years, but 4 KIA's, until an Article in the Red Diamond mentioned three KIA's, and not four. I didn't think much of it at the time because I remembered four, until Bob emailed me in reference to a message I had left about Lt Jim Howard in the virtual Washington D.C. Vietnam Memorial Wall. Bob had been a witness and saw the explosion set off by the NVA. When he told me he couldn't find the forth name on the Wall, it got my attention quickly. I do remember at least four helmets, rifles, boots for the Security Platoon at the HHC Brigade Memorial Service I attended a couple days later.

So now we are trying to reach out to others who might help us identify the fourth person or confirm three which I don't believe at this point. I still believe we will find the fourth person and more than likely already accounted for in some other Documents or day.

There's 2 steps, so far, Bob and I are focusing on.

Witnesses who could confirm four KIA's or not who were at the actual Event.

Confirmation of the Da Nang Mortuary Records of the KIA's from the 5th Division within one week of June 1, 1970; KIA confirmation from HHC Brigade (Security Platoon); Co C 75th Spt Bn Daily Log (Graves Registration was part of the Field Service Platoon), 75 Spt Bn Journal as to KIA's listed and provided to the Brigade to send to I Corp Commander.

There is one side note as to a Security Platoon KIA May 26, 1970 as to confirmation of his actual death time depending if he was declared KIA at 18th Surgical Hospital (perpendicular to Graves Registration) or on the Hospital Ship off shore of Quang Tri Province. The purpose of tracking his Casualty Records as to when he actually arrived at Da Nang Mortuary, might have added to confusion since it was another Security Platoon death in less than a week. Probably not likely, but it has to be verified.

I made a pledge to all our Vietnam Fallen I would never forget them. If there is a KIA that somehow got missed, I must follow thru to resolve the issue.

This is the reason why I am asking the Fifth Division for help in trying to locate witnesses at the June 1, 1970 Event; who at Brigade HHC or anyone else remembers the count of the KIA's given for the Explosion Event; who was present for the Security Platoon Memorial Service in front of the Brigade TOC.

This is why we are asking for your help for names/phone numbers/email addresses Bob is requesting; hopefully it will help to find others who remember the Event.

You have my permission to forward this email to anyone if it helps to resolve the issue.

Jerry Collman

jcollman@verizon.net

David, my name is Bob Gliemmo. I have been communicating with Jerry Collman about the missing GI from the Security Platoon. Jerry's email on September 12, 2020, explains the situation. I was in the Security Platoon from June 26, 1969 – June 24, 1970, and witnessed the IED exploding. I radioed HHC the situation since I was the ranking NCO remaining. I reported 4 KIA's, the platoon leader, Lt Howard, platoon sargeant Mossner, and two squad leaders, spc4 White, and sgt ????. I don't remember the fourth person's name because he had only been there a week. I knew him as sgt willy.

There was an article in the May, 2020 Red Diamond written by Malcomb Estrada, who had been a member of the security platoon prior to this incident. Malcomb also posted pictures of 3 of the KIA's but not the fourth one. He also posted a picture of himself and another GI. I did not know Malcomb or the GI beside him, but standing behind them were 2 people I did know that were in the security platoon when I was there. I would like to speak with Malcomb Estrada to see if he can help me remember the fourth KIA.

If you have Malcomb Estrada's contact info, can you give it to me, or can you give him my contact info?

Thanks for helping,

Bob Gliemmo

706 681-6818 cell

bobgliemmo@mindspring.com

SECURITY PLATOON – Follow Up

I want to follow my previous write up about the Security Platoon [Red Diamond May 2020] with some additional insights and to thank Jerry Collman for his insights into Lt. Howard's personal and professional struggles in his closing days.

As was mentioned, Bob Gliemmo served with the platoon (June '69, to June '70) and was an eyewitness to the event of June 1. Bob got in touch with me and we have conversed over the phone and via e-mail a good deal. He has put to rest a number of questions that have been in the back of my mind for fifty years. To say that I was pleased to hear from him is an understatement.

Apparently, also, at this writing, I am the only member of the unit that Bob has had contact with since country! We are hoping these conversations in the newsletter will bring the men together.

Bob forwarded photos of the Platoon in the field and, with his permission, I enclose them for publishing. The photos tell a story but can only document in sketch form the difficult days that the Platoon experienced in 1970, from monsoon to dry season and back.

(Quotations are used for nick names where individuals are not recognizable.)

This first photo shows the three men KIA on June 1 on patrol. Back to front: Larson, Lt. Howard, Sgt. Mossner, White and Rathman.



I wanted to feature this next photo as Bob Gliemmo is in it. Left to right: Collins, Ramirez, Gliemmo, "Cotton" and Hollister.



On February 5, a Platoon ambush killed VC infiltrators and gained possession of a number of ammo cans containing a pistol and various documents whose information proved to be valuable to S2. This photo shows (L to R) Martin, Sgt. Isaac and Lt. Howard loading the cans onto a LOCH for transportation to Brigade HHC.



This last photo is, in my view, most unnerving as it shows the May 26 Platoon patrol being passed by two Vietnamese women. Back to Front are: Spring, Lt. Howard (with his distinctive field cap) and "Thorn" (watching the women closely). See below for an explanation.



Bob Gliemmo was on the point for this patrol; the photo shows them 'taking five'. As Bob related to me, the women passing the patrol on the trail had been dogging them for only a short way. Minutes after they disappeared down the trail, Sgt. Will Isaac Jr., out of curiosity it would seem, alone followed them. An explosion and Sgt. Isaac was killed by a booby trap.

Those women had to have set that trap else they probably would have walked into it themselves. I believe that it was, most likely, a Chicom grenade; how else could they conceal it on their persons or rig it so quickly? We will never know for certain.

But here, in my view, is the unnerving part; look carefully at the women in the photo. I submit to you, as I did to Bob, that one or both of those women may be men. The individual on the left is the tallest Vietnamese female I have ever seen. Her square, broad shoulders and thick legs are another indication that something is very fishy. The shorter subject on the right is not so obvious, though, her hands are fairly large for someone of her size.

It was common practice for the VC and NVA to slip past security check points and other barriers in populous AOs dressed as women. This one act, though, would have been brazen ... audacious; behavior not uncommon with the enemy.

Six days later, Lt. Howard, Sgt. Mossner and Sp4 Don White would follow in death.

I conclude this narrative with a photo of SFC Will Isaac Jr. as shown on the Virtual Wall.



Many thanks to the Society and David Kocan for helping to bring us together after so many years.

Regards,

Malcolm Estrada
Harrison, Tennessee
October 2020

Of particular interest is the photo of the men KIA on patrol wadding through a stream.

In appreciation, I am,

Malcolm Estrada
Harrison, Tennessee

PS – I hope that the photo of SSgt. Armstead reads okay as something is happening to obscure it during attachment.

Dave, This is for the next newsletter if space permits:

Jim Serdy did a number one great job with his Vietnam Memorial. It definitely deserved to make the cover of the August newsletter. Again, one "bad a- -" of a job! Way to go, Jim!

5/4 Arty brother,
Stan Shaffer Dave, please let me know that you got this.





THIS HEAT!
I CAN SEE WHY
YOU CARRY TWO
CANTEENS!

HEY, MIKE.
HOW DO I
GET THIS
REFILLED?

I'LL SHOW YOU THE RIGHT
WAY TO DO THAT VERY
THING.



SEE, FIRST YOU BRUSH ALL
THE CRUD AT THE TOPSIDE
AND FILL THE
CANTEEN.



THEN
YOU PUT
THESE
IODINE
PILLS IN
AND SHAKE
IT REAL GOOD.
LET IT SETTLE
FOR A BIT AND
IT'LL BE O.K.
TO DRINK.

IT'LL TASTE
REALLY LOUSY
THOUGH.



WE SPREAD OUT THIS
WAY SO NO SINGLE
LINE OF FIRE CAN HIT
ALL OF THE COLUMN.

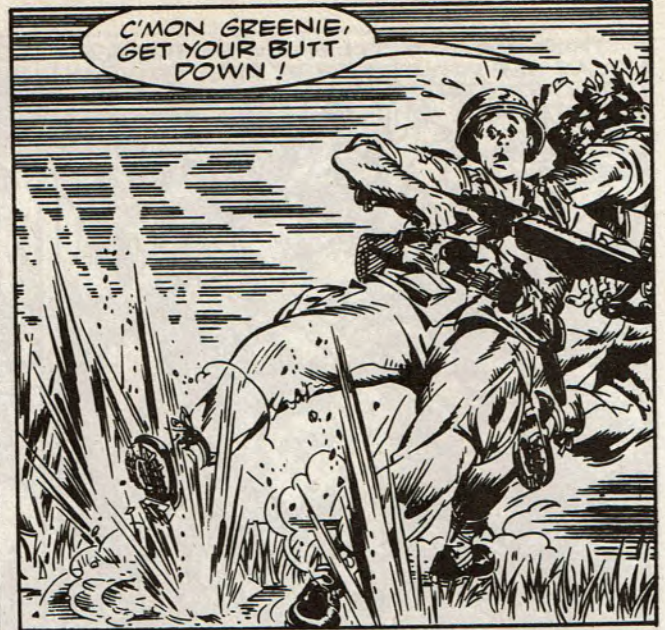
UH, OH.
LOOKS LIKE
TROUBLE.

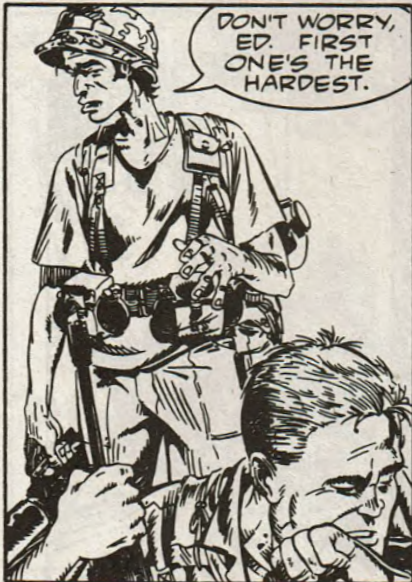
THE LOCALS
ARE BUGGING
OUT.

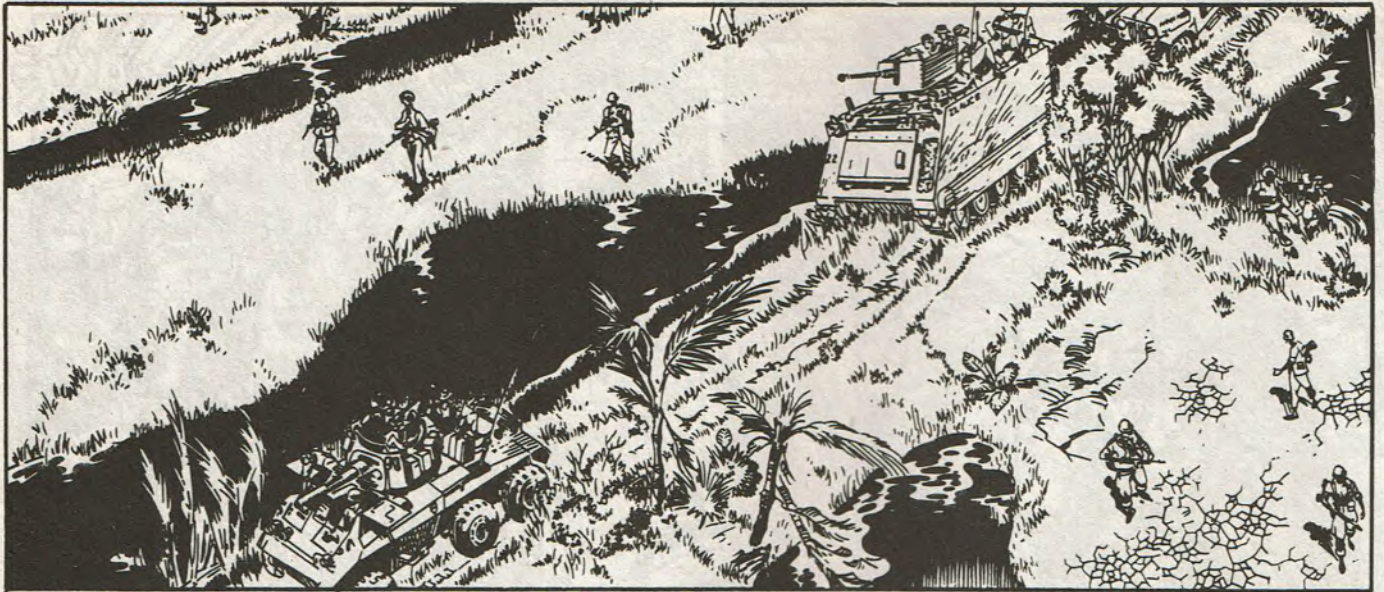


COVER!









HEY, MAN, IS IT ALWAYS THIS QUIET?

YOU MAY THINK YOU'RE JOKING, BUT, THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS IT IS QUIET. WHY ...



ANOTHER OF THOSE BOOBY-TRAPPED SHELLS.



SURE. LEAD THE ARMOR AND LOOK FOR TRAPS. WHAT ARE 11 BUSHES FOR ANYWAY?





HOLD IT UP HERE!
SGT., LOOK AT THIS!



WELL, WE'RE HERE. SPREAD OUT
AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ANY-
THING INTERESTING BEFORE
WE GO HOME!



WE'RE THERE, WHEREVER THERE
IS. DIDN'T FIND MUCH ON THE
SEARCH AND DESTROY,
DID WE?



TRAPDOOR! EVERY-
ONE HIT IT!



HOLD
YOUR
POSITIONS,
SEE IF
ANYONE
ELSE
POPS
OUT!



TUNNELS! FAN OUT,
LOOK FOR OTHER
OPENINGS, DROP
GRENADES
THROUGH
THEM!

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.

January 2020

Department of VA Fast Facts

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Sources: CNN

- ◆ There are 18.2 million veterans in the U.S., according to the most recent statistics from the US Census.
- ◆ More than nine million veterans are served each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ◆ Health care facilities are made up of 1,074 outpatient sites and 170 VA Medical Centers.
- ◆ US President Donald Trump requested an appropriation of \$220.2 billion for the department of the 2020 Budget, a 9.6% increase over 2019.

Short Timeline

1789– The US government passes legislation ensuring pensions for disabled Revolutionary War veterans.

1862– During the Civil War, Congress passes a bill allowing the president to purchase land for national cemeteries. Between 1865 and 1870, 70 national cemeteries open for burial of Union soldiers.

1912– Congress passes the Sherwood Act, guaranteeing pension for Union veterans of the Civil War and veterans of the Mexican-American War, regardless of their health.

June 22, 1944– During WWII, US President FDR signs into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the "G.I. Bill of Rights," a package of education benefits, federally guaranteed loans and unemployment compensation.

1984– US President Ronald Reagan signs a bill requiring the VA to pay benefits to Vietnam veterans suffering from chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda, possibly caused by Agent Orange exposure.

July 2010– The VA unveils new regulations making it easier for men and women who served in the armed forces to receive benefits for PTSD. Under the new rules a veteran only needs to demonstrate that he or she served in a war and performed a job during which events could have happened that could cause the disorder.

2014– Thousands of mistreatment to the veterans.

June 23, 2017– Trump signs into law the Department of VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

June 6, 2018– Trump signs the VA Mission Act.

August 21, 2019– Trump signs a Presidential Memoranda to automatically forgive federal student loan debt for totally and permanently disabled veterans.



Captain Joe Ronnie Hooper



Major Audie Murphy

Captain Joe Ronnie Hooper

1938-1979

After serving three years in the Navy, Joe Hooper enlisted in the Army, serving three tours in Vietnam.

Hooper has one of the most distinguished combat records in Army history, in spite of disciplinary issues that hurt his career.

Wounded in battle at least eight times, he is credited with 115 confirmed kills, including 22 that came on a single day during the Tet Offensive in 1968.

An excerpt of Hooper's Medal of Honor citation reads:

"With utter disregard for his own safety, he moved out under the intense fire again and pulled back the wounded, moving them to safety. During this act S/Sgt. Hooper was seriously wounded, but he refused medical aid and returned to his men. With the relentless enemy fire disrupting the attack, he single-handedly stormed 3 enemy bunkers ... and shot 2 enemy soldiers who had attacked and wounded the Chaplain ..."



Army Historical Foundation
www.armyhistory.org

Major Audie Murphy

1924-1971

Turned down by the Navy and the Marine Corps, this 5'5" Texan enlisted in the Army.

As a World War II soldier, Audie Murphy received every military combat award for valor available, including the Medal of Honor for his "indomitable courage and refusal to give an inch of ground" in a battle near Holtzwihr, France.

At the age of 19, Murphy single-handedly held off an entire company of German soldiers for an hour, then led a successful counterattack while wounded and out of ammunition.

He is credited with 240 enemy kills and was wounded three times in nine major campaigns across the European theater.

After WWII, Audie Murphy became a movie and television star appearing in over 30 movies, including *To Hell and Back*, where he played himself. He died in a plane crash in 1971.

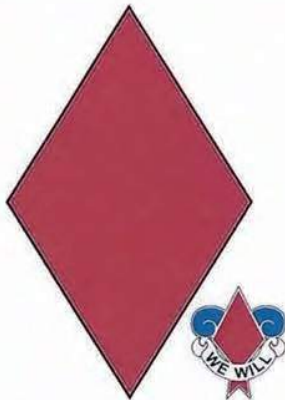


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