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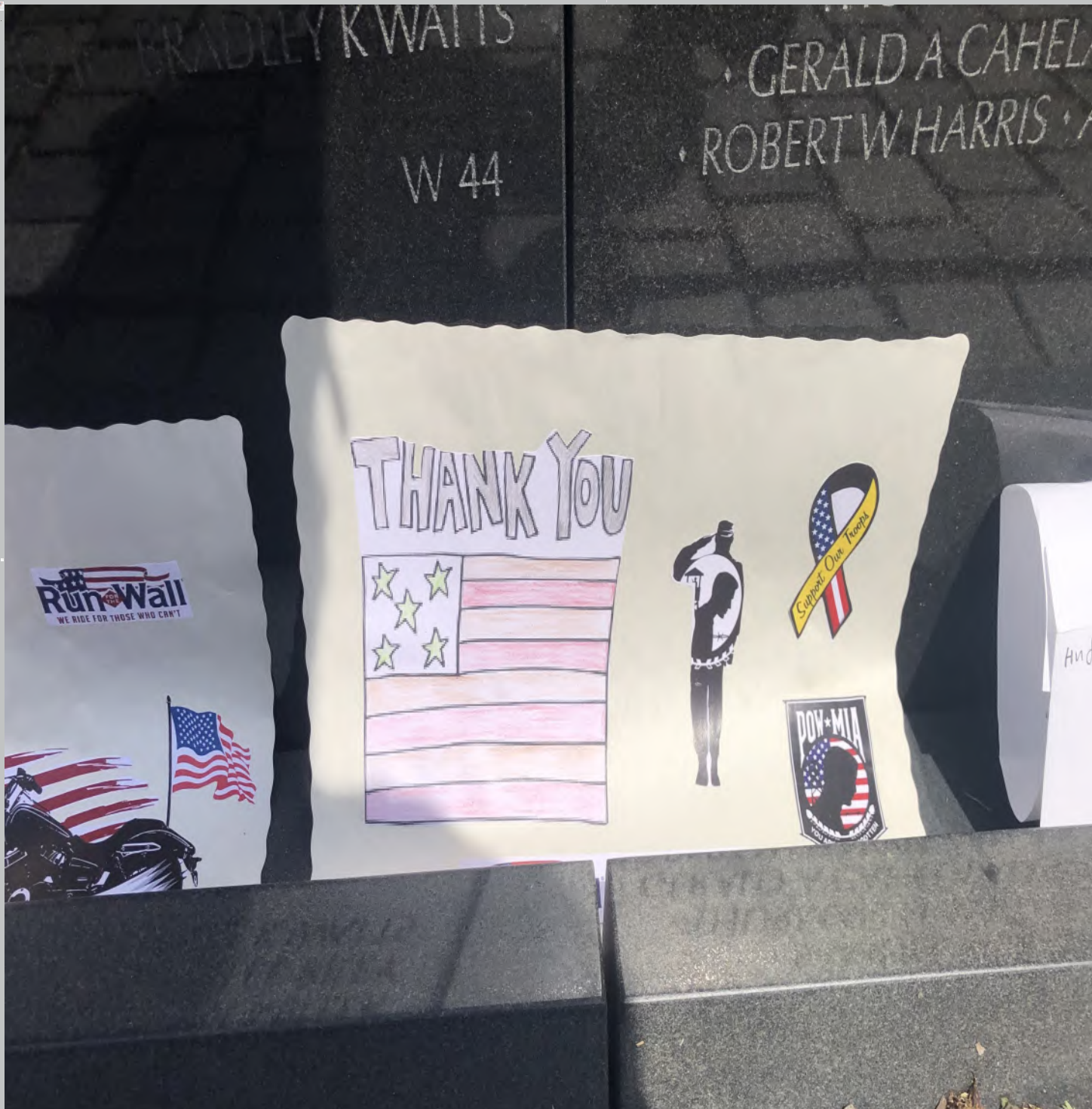
# RED 5 DIAMOND

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**“WE WILL”**

Deadline for submission of articles for the next Edition:

October 10 2023

# 2020-2021 Society of the Fifth Division Officers – Roster

## PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENTS

\*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 Healey (1934-35)  
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 \*A. Lincoln Bradbury (1941-45)  
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 \*Walter R. Stout (1955-57)  
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 \*Edward Pivovar (1958-59)  
 \*T. Earl McNaney (1956-60)  
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 \*John J. Madison (1963-65)  
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 \*Victor Dunneback (1967-68)  
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 \*Aubrey Prewitt (1971-72)  
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 \*Kenneth Anderson (1975-76)  
 \*Howard Singer (1976-77)  
 \*Robert Young (1977-78)  
 \*Stanley Piotrowski (1978-79)  
 \*George Bachman (1979-80)  
 \*Harry Arquette (1980-81)  
 \*William Stanfield (1981-82)  
 \*Guido Bemasconi (1982-83)  
 \*Msgr. Harold Prudell (1983-84)  
 \*Chester Ball (1984-85)  
 \*William Colon (1985-86)  
 \*Robert Graves (1986-87)  
 \*Herman Schell (1987-88)  
 \*William Stanfield (1988-89)  
 \*John Goodman (1989-90)  
 \*William Upham (1990-91)  
 \*Bradley Brewer (1991-92)  
 \*Harry Arquette (1992-93)  
 \*Robert Rochon (1993-94)  
 \*Charles Coco (1994-95)  
 \*Michael Giannini (1995-96)  
 \*Don Brown (1996-97)  
 \*Cullen Stone (1997-98)  
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 \*Robert M. Rochell (2002-03)  
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 \*Steve Wheat (2012-13)  
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 \*Robb Robetson (2015-2016)  
 \*Bob Dudley (2016-2017)  
 \*Dennis Thompson (2017-2018)  
 \*Alex Candelaria/Steve Wheat (2018-2019)  
 \*Hal Roller (2019-2020)  
 \*Louis Pepi (2020-2021)  
 \*Gary Haverman (2021-2022)

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### All Active Past Presidents

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 James "JJ" Jackson – Karen P.O. Box 1845 • Cold  
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## A Note from the President Hal Roller

If you have not registered and made a hotel reservation for our Reunion September 7-11, 2023 do it today! The deadline is August 9!

When we install the new executive board on September 10, 2023, it will be the end of my second term as president. My first term was during that tumultuous time of the pandemic. A progressive shift took place during this period. The Society of the Fifth Division moved from mail to electronic communications. I also made progress in my personal life when I removed my telephone landline and went entirely to a mobile phone. When I told my son what I had done he replied, "Welcome to the 21st century." Neither the Society's shift to electronic communications nor my change to only a cell phone was without bumps because bumps are part of change. I am a believer that not all change is improvement but these transitions for the Society and me were improvements.

The biggest improvement for the Society came with the Red Diamond in costs and time. It costs a lot of money and takes a great deal of someone's time to publish and mail a magazine. What a tremendous savings the Society incurred by putting the Red Diamond on the website! Likewise during the pandemic because we did not have a Reunion, there was no general meeting to voting in the new executive board. Computers saved the day for us. We held the vote electronically and moved forward. Another electronic change was executive board meetings being held via Zoom. Now along with the old landline voice, executive board members can see each other. Well in my case, seeing my face may not be such a good thing for the other board members. But Zoom has improved the efficiency of our meetings.

None of this transition would have been possible without the fantastic leadership of three people: Steve Wheat, who at the time was editor of the Red Diamond, initiated the idea of electronic communications; David Kocan, current editor of the Red Diamond, made it happen; and Joe Boman, our webmaster, provided the electronic infrastructure. Kudos to these three patriots for bringing us into the 21st century. This does not mean those who are "technically challenged" are left out. David Kocan maintains a list of members who want a hard copy of the Red Diamond and ensures they get one. Thank you, David.





## A Message from our First Vice President Bud Wagner

Summer is flying by at a rapid pace!! Hard to believe we are in the middle of July already. I've been busy working on building a cabin in Monroe Virginia and I am very close to the finish line!! My goal is to have the cabin done before our upcoming reunion.

Hal Roller and the rest of the Executive Committee have been working hard on our behalf to make sure the upcoming Reunion is a success. Please, please consider making it this year. We are meeting in beautiful San Antonio Texas and the dates are September 7-10, 2023.

I look forward to spending time with my brothers who I met in Vietnam so many years ago. It was a very difficult time in our lives and that experience shaped us into who we are today. Please consider making the 5th Mechanized Reunion a priority this year.

I attended my first reunion in 2016, and now regret not getting involved much sooner. I find the reunions to be a lot of fun, along with visiting some very scenic places in this beautiful country. But for me personally, I find the reunions to be very healing in so many ways.

Hope to see you there this year in San Antonio Texas!!

Bud Wagner, 1st Vice President





# Hello from our 2nd Vice President Larry Burnett

As always hope everyone is doing fine and in good health for our age. Spring chickens are a thing of the past. At least for me. Yesterday was 105\*, so yes we are having some warm weather. Unusual for June but surprise. Like most areas around us. We need rain.

We finally have a signed contract for the 2025 Reunion. It will again be in Kansas City, Mo. at the same Hotel as in 2017. As they pretty much honored the same contract as the 2017 with exception of the room rates being a little higher as would be expected after 6 years. Again I thank the Society board members for all their help and input. Bob Dudley set a very high standard in 2017 so I hope I can just come close and I will feel successful.

Am looking forward to Hal's reunion in San Antonio as it is sure to be a great one. Hope more 5th Div. Members from the southern Midwest can find a way to make it this year. One day or every day. It's your choice, but please try.

As I said in my last report. Wife and I was planning to make a trip to Louisiana this year. Well we made it happen. Went as far as Lafayette. Did a swamp tour and saw a few alligators. Being a country boy growing up I probably enjoyed it the most. I grew up next to a creek and a lot of timber but we did have to worry about gators.

Tried to get my wife to pet one but she wasn't having none of it. I never stood up in the boat. Was afraid she would try and get even. Met some nice and interesting people, [they talk funny down there], they thought I did but I knew better. Wife mentioned New Orleans but I said to big of a city and way to many people for me and a motorcycle. Oh did I mention Humidity!! You could cut it with a knife. Wow.

Larry Burnett  
2nd VP



## From the Editor of your Red Diamond Thoughts and Opinion

This month my wife, father-in-law, grandson, and I attended a Baltimore Oriole's baseball game. Up on the one part of the stadium, there was a sign stating, " If you have a problem or assistance, text your seat # and problem to this phone number" Since I paid good honest money for the seats to enjoy the game and was unhappy with something I did just that. The thing that I was unhappy with is the in the middle of the center field along with banners on the warehouse wall was the Pride flag and symbol. Let me make it perfectly clear, I have nothing against what you do in your home. You can have a parade, but I will attend what i want to attend. The decorating of the ballpark for what is not a holiday offended me. I text my complaint to the phone # and to my surprise they answered by explaining they were there to show equality to any and all. I asked when would they decorate the ballpark and honor the Polish and Irish, the Disabled American Veterans, the Christians and the Jews. Their answer was that they would pass on my complaint to their supervisor. File 13 here i go. If you don't complain and express your feelings they will continue to operate and shove it in your face and down your throat. Tell someone you don't like it.

thank you to all those who can read English



## Christian Chaplain Message

### Jesus Feeding the 5000

The poor, common people of Israel had just heard the terrible news, that John the Baptist, the first Prophet, that God had sent to Israel in 400 years, had just been beheaded, by King Herod. With such an horrific, unexpected, devastating event, Obviously the common people were in shock, bewildered beyond measure, trying to comprehend how that their esteemed Prophet, could have been killed by Israel's leaders, and was dead, at such an early age of 30 years old. The common people had had such high hopes for John the Baptist, and now he was dead. You can get some idea of their shock, in that they instinctively went to Jesus, to get some comfort, and to maintain a sense of normality. They naturally clung to the Person Whom John the Baptist had specifically pointed out to them to follow, for He was the Son of God, The Messiah. John was gone; Jesus was left and their hearts were no right with God.

What a huge hole had suddenly come into their life. Now, Typical, when in shock the people often do irrational things, so much so, that now on that day, these people's emotions got the best of them, and they even forgot to bring food, for themselves and their family, during their journey. Internally, Their hearts were in turmoil, their affections violated, their emotions were savaged, and their only thoughts were to get close to Jesus. They had forgotten food, one of the most essential part of any journey. Now it doesn't even seem they noticed they had no food as they listen to Jesus preach throughout the day. Never man spoke as Jesus Spoke and they might have comfort from His Voice and Presence. Indeed they had food from God, Himself, a meal in the desert.

But now the evening was coming and the Apostles grew concerned, for around them were probably 10,000 people, who were without food, and it was going to be night soon. They suggested to Jesus to send the people to the surrounding villages to buy food, but Jesus said, let them stay, and we will feed them. Now the Apostles checked how much food they had in the crowd, and they found that y had only 2 fish, and 5 loaves, that was it. The incredulous Apostles presented this fact, and asked how Jesus was going to feed this many people with such a small amount of food. Jesus said, let them, come near, let them come close to Me, and tell them to sit down. Jesus then, looking up to Heaven, Blessed the 2 fish and 5 loaves, and then began breaking pieces off from that food. Miraculously, As He brake piece off the fish and the loaves, the part He broke off, miraculously grew back again. Jesus was Creating food, just like He provided manna to the children of Israel, in the wilderness. Over and over, Jesus multiplied this food, and fed all of these 10,000. Actually more was gathered up in baskets, than what they had started with. All of those 10,000 people saw a great Miracle from God's Hand, that Proved again, that Jesus was The God/man. Only Divinity could Create something from nothing. Divinity was on open display but the crowd missed this vital point. The Apostles who distributed the food; saw this Miracle firsthand. Sadly, this crowd recognized only a part of this Miracle, and they followed Jesus to be entertained, and possibly see another Miracle, instead of submitting as sinners, in need of His Blood Covering for their sins, from Jesus, as the Son of God. As soon as this Miracle is finished Jesus immediately sends His Apostles, back to their home town, on their boat. Yes, we read that He constrains them. Perhaps they went reluctantly, but they obeyed because they knew all things that must be according to God's Plan. They did not know that this was a testing time for them, and their faith would be exercised, while saints everywhere in the world throughout the ages would be able to read of this event, and have their faith strengthened. Where God Gives a Command, even though we don't know the reason, we must obey. Meanwhile, Jesus remains behind and finished instructing the crowd in correct and True Christian Theology, that the Pharisee Christian Church Leaders in Jerusalem, had so radically distorted. Finishing that final instruction to the people, and He must have had much to say, about John the Baptist, and his ministry. He reminded them, of all that John had spoke to them, that Jesus was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, and that everyone must obey and follow Jesus. Sadly, all of Jesus Instruction fell on stony ground faith, where it died. Jesus tells us that they only followed Him to see more Miracles, not have their sins forgiven. Then, He went up to a mountain to pray, and spend time alone with His Father. HE Knew that man must not live by bread alone. Spiritual food was His Daily food.



## TAPS

Raymond Rowe	died Nov. 15, 2023	5th Division – A-1/61
Ken Taggart	died Feb. 4, 2023	5th Division – D-1/11
Christian Dethloff Support	died April 15, 2023	5th Division-75th
Bernie Whitt	died April 19, 2023	5th Division – 1/61

## TAPS

Raymond Rowe died Nov. 15, 2023 5th Div. – A-1/61  
 Ken Taggart died Feb. 4, 2023 5th Div. – D-1/11  
 Christian Dethloff died April 15, 2023 75th Support  
 Bernie Whitt died April 16, 2023 5th Div. – 1/61  
 Charles L. Kruse died Dec. 14, 2021 5th Div. – 1/61  
 Brian Health died April 20, 2023 5th Div. – Lt. 1/61  
 John Thomas Craven IV died May 15, 2023 5th Div.

S/Sgt. Casimir R. Lobacz Killed Sept. 27, 1944 5th Div. 11th Inf., Co. E  
 at Lorraine Cemetery of Saint Avoird, in the square for unknown strangers.

Killed near Drient, identified

## Lieut. Gen. John Wilson “Iron Mike” O’Daniel

One of the United States Army’s greatest divisional commanders of world war two, General O’Daniel, was born in Oxford, Pennsylvania, on 15 February 1894. His father was a dairy farmer, and his mother’s parents ran a hotel in nearby Newark, Delaware. His mother died when he was 16 years old, and he and his younger brother moved to Newark, to live with their grandmother and two aunts. Athletic, O Daniel play baseball and football while attending Delaware College, now the University of Delaware. He was also a member of the Delaware military company in Newark, company E. It was while he was in college that he received the nickname, Mike, but no one is exactly sure why. In the mid-1916, O’Daniel’s company was federalized, and along with its parent unit, the first Delaware, was sent to the South West for six months, to secure the border near Deming, New Mexico, during the punitive expedition. He returned to Delaware in the late 1916 and headed back to school at Delaware College. In May 1917 after the United States declared war on Germany, the previous month, O’Daniel was selected to attend the officers training camp at Fort Meyer, Virginia, in the United States Army’s rapid buildup for World War I. He completed training in August, and received a reserve commission. In October he received a regular Army commission, and was assigned to the 11th infantry Regiment, fifth division, at Forest in Georgia, where he would serve in company K, under company commander first Lieut. Mark W Clark. The fifth division was deployed to France in early 1918, as part of the American expeditionary forces, and was undergoing training and light combat scrimmaging in the Vosges mountains, until the Saint Michael offensive in September. During that operation, O’Daniel served as acting company commander, after Clark had been wounded. Leading the company in the attack, O’Daniel was wounded in the head by a machine gun bullet, but continued spurring his men forward, until he passed out from blood loss. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, DSC, for this action. After spending time in the hospital, he returned to the company, to lead it in the Meuse-Argonne campaign, and continued in this role, up until the end of hostilities on 11 November, 1919. While on occupation duty in Belgium, O’Daniel was selected to serve in the Provincial Regiment as a company commander. This Regiment participated in many parades and ceremonies held to celebrate the allies great victory, with its last ceremony the victory parade in Washington DC, 10 September 1919. In view of his toughness, which O’Daniel displayed in his DSC action, iron, was added to the name, Mike, and from then on he was known as, iron Mike. After the war he served as a company commander, with the black 25th infantry Regiment; in Nogales, Arizona, as an instructor with the New Jersey National Guard 114th infantry Regiment, as a company commander, and then military police detachment commander in Hawaii, with the civilian conservation Corps in Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Alabama. His duties included being the Army liaison officer to the Tennessee Valley Authority, as Prof. of military science and tactics, at the Academy of Richmond County in Augusta Georgia, as commander of the black second Battalion 24th infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia, and in several training capacities with the third Army, serving under Lieut. Gen. Walter Krueger, in Texas before the outbreak of World War II. (O’Daniel’s service in WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, will be continued in the next issues.)

This page is dedicated to those who may need prayers, cards and maybe a phone call. If you know of anyone who should be listed please email the names, thank you.

Ken Magnett 29 East Ridge Rd. Eddyville, Ky., 42038

765-210-1513 Multiple cancer from Agent Orange

Tom Owens 3728 Davis Ford RD. Maryville, Tenn., 37804

404-984-7005 hospice care

The Sperling's 14503 NE 257th Ave., Brush Prairie, Wa.,

98606 360-798-7111

Robert Rochell 1129 Castle Bluff Circle Waco , Texas, 76712

254-723-3280

Chaplain Message, (Christian) - The Maccabee Revival

In the year 143 BC, King Antiochus, marched with a great Greek army against Jerusalem, and conquered the city and the Temple. This king outlawed all things Christian. He forced all the Christian leaders to bow to idols, or be killed. Sadly, most bowed to idols. He outlawed the reading of God's word, forbade the sacrifices and the worship in God's Temple, and he even personally entered the Holy Temple, to sacrifice a pig, upon the sacred altar in God's Temple, yes, defiling even the holy of holies with this idolatry. Anyone caught with the Bible was murdered, Sundays were outlawed, prayer was forbidden, they were not allowed to circumcise their children anymore, or such parents would be killed. Yes, All the Power of King Antiochus was dedicated against The Christian distinction, or separation from the world, being totally extinguished. In his determination to wipe out all Jehovah influence, he also insisted that every Jewish Christian, had to personally sacrifice to the Greek God, Jupiter. The penalty of disobedience, was immediate death. How God's Remnant mourned as it seemed as if the devil had won, on earth. His devastation against Christendom was so great, that many throughout history, including a high percentage today, have considered Antiochus, the Anti-christ. Amazingly, he was helped by the Hellenistic Christian Jews, who were secretly ashamed of Jehovah worship, and worked hand in hand, to advance this wickedness. O who can fathom, that such a gross personal betrayal, to Jehovah God, as so many, many of these Jewish Christians now willingly sacrificed to the Greek idol gods, turning their backs upon Jehovah. Beginning at Jerusalem, the high priest, the priests, the leaders of Christianity, led the way into Israel's apostasy, by bowing to Greek Idols, as an example before the common people. Yes almost all of Israel apostatized, and it seemed impossible to stop this madness and evil, until the king's soldiers came to a little town 13 miles north of Jerusalem, named Modine, there, at that spot, they were met by a defiance priest named Matthias, with his five sons, dressed in sackcloth and ashes, and weeping over the sins, of Christendom, that were being forced upon Israel. Yes, When commanded to sacrifice, they not only refused, but they killed the king's messenger, who had commanded such an apostasy. No, they were not grieved in the first place, of the sins done, which was great, or what this did to their land, which was great, but they fought in the Name of The Lord of Hosts. Like David of a thousand years earlier, who said to Goliath, 1 Sam. 17:45b, I come to thee, in the Name of The Lord of Hosts, Whom thou hast defied. The Macabees also fought in the Name of The Lord of Hosts, and they went through the land, blowing the trumpet of war, calling all the people of Israel to arms, to rebellion against this great Greek apostasy, which defied God. Great was the mourning of The land, as their eyes were opened to see, their sins and corruption. Bowing down at His Feet they confessed their sins, acknowledging God would be righteous to cast them away, but pleading forgiveness in Christ's Blood. Saying, we have sinned against God; and He has sent this evil upon us. Then God Gave Israel a Great Victory of Freedom.



As you can see our unit tribute plaque was installed this week. I had hoped to attend, but they didn't know what date the installation was going to happen. I couldn't have attended anyway since I've been sick for 3 weeks.

Good picture attached of our plaque.

Bob  
Sir,

I have great news - your Unit Tribute was installed! I am attaching a picture for your reference. It is located in Section 4 of our Unit Tribute wall. Regarding your question about holding a ceremony, some groups do choose to have a gathering / small ceremony at their Unit Tribute. These ceremonies can be up to 25 minutes long and must be coordinated in advance with the Foundation. No flags may be used during the ceremony.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Warm regards,  
Leah

Sir,

I received an update that our goal is to have the installation team arrive on 16 May around 1030 hours. I do not know exactly what time they will begin working on installing the Unit Tributes, as they have numerous donor items to install throughout the Museum and campus. Also, this date is weather dependent, and should we have unpleasant weather, the installation could happen on 17, 18, or 19 May.

Thank you,  
Leah



## National Museum of the US Army Unit Tribute Plaques

As published in the February issue of the Red Diamond, the National Museum of the United States Army is the official museum for the history of the United States Army and is located at Fort Belvoir, VA just outside Washington, DC. Fortunately, the museum is located adjacent to the fort so you do not have to go through security to access it. It opened on November 11, 2020. The objectives of the museum are to honor America's soldiers, preserve Army history, and educate the public about the Army's role in American history.

The museum has a Path of Remembrance leading to the museum that incorporates 12" x 18" Unit Tribute plaques that line the path. A motion was passed at the national business meeting during the Springfield reunion to explore purchasing a plaque for the 5th Division. A four-man committee was established to develop a design for the plaque:

- Mike Cooper
- Jim Donivan
- Bob Dudley
- George Shoener

The approved design was submitted to the Army Historical Foundation on 28 November 2022. The design was approved by the museum and the plaque was installed along the Path of Remembrance the week of May 15th and is located in Section 4 of the Unit Tribute Wall.

Hello all.

After our board meeting last night I sent Nhon The a message stating that the society had voted unanimously to appropriate money for binoculars. I told him also that the full membership would have the opportunity to make a donation to this gift at our reunion in San Antonio, Texas this September and that the binoculars would be hand carried to him by one of the guides of Vietnam battlefield tours at their next opportunity to travel to Quang Tri.

His response:

Currently, I am the President of the Veterans Association of Cam Tuyen Commune, Cam Lo District, Quang Tri Province and am participating in Project 515 surveying, locating, and exhuming the remains of North Vietnamese soldiers who sacrificed themselves in the war and It's very touching that you have come to such a far away place to do a very meaningful job for the Vietnamese people in general and helping us identify a mass grave. Let's leave the past in war and as you said You and your friends were just soldiers of war, war is now just a memory and we see each other as friends. I would like to thank you and your friends and wish you and your friends good health and happiness. May God bless and protect you. Thank you so much! See you again



He refers to me as Uncle Louis and wishes, me hard feet on soft stones.

Gentlemen,

After our meeting last night I found the 407th Radio Research reunion notice, it was in the VVA Veteran magazine.

I emailed the listed contact and got the following reply.

In a series of back-and-forth messages I urged his comrades to register and take advantage of the Society reunion. He said that he and his wife would, and that they had never been to one of our reunions before. He is a Society member by the way - I checked the roster.

Can whoever makes up the unit sign in sheets do one for the 407th Radio Research? This is a good chance to recruit for membership. They wore the Red Diamond too!!

Hi Roger,

Great to hear from you. I was in Vietnam from July '70 to July '71.

I started my tour at Hqs of 509th RR Group, the "parent" of all the various Radio Research (Army Security Agency) companies and detachments around the country. My duties took me to virtually all of our subordinate units including the 407th on Con Thien. ASA was driving me crazy in Saigon. I wanted out. COL Clark Trainer who was XO to BG Hill, CO of 1st of the 5th was able to get me a transfer up there. Because of the level and type of my security clearance, I became a Brigade Intelligence Operations Officer. The 407th provided invaluable intel to the 1st of the 5th. Because I had visited them during my Radio Research stint and because I received their intel when I became a Red Devil, I am sort of an honorary member of the 407th.

I am a member of The Society of The Fifth and am aware of the reunion in San Antonio in September. I suggested to the 407th guys that we have our reunion the same time and place and they agreed. I expect a number of us will visit the Red Devil reunion. I will encourage them to do so.

Just curious-how many folks do you expect at the reunion? Our unit is small and we will probably have 15 veterans and a number of spouses.

Hope I see you in San Antonio.

Best wishes,  
Bob

Bob,

I saw your reunion notice in the VVA Veteran.

The 407th was attached to the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division in Vietnam, and the Society of the Fifth Division is having our annual reunion that weekend in San Antonio.

Are you going to be joining us? That would be wonderful if y'all do. Anyone who wore the Red Diamond is welcome to attend our reunion, whether they are members of the Society or not.

I'm the National Historian for the Society and sit on the Executive Board.

[www.societyofthefifthdivision.com](http://www.societyofthefifthdivision.com)

Roger Allen

Co A, 75th Support Battalion

A little history most people will never know.

Interesting Veterans Statistics off the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 57 years since the first casualty.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. Listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.

8,283 were just 19 years old.

The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old.

12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.

5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.

One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam ..

1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam

**31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.**

**Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons**

54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia . I wonder why so many from one school.

**8 Women are on the Wall, Nursing the wounded**

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.

Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest . And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths

**The most casualty deaths for a single month was May**

**1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.**



The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam . In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.

Please pass this on to those who served during this time, and those who DO Care.  
I've also sent this to those I KNOW do care very much, and I thank you for caring as you do.

Mr. Roller-

Please allow me to introduce myself as the director of the book program for the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), a non-profit organization devoted to supporting the Army and its Soldiers.

AUSA is proud to announce the release of its latest entry in the Medal of Honor graphic novel series: Medal of Honor: Samuel Woodfill.

I invite you to share this complimentary digital graphic novel with the membership and your colleagues. Those interested can view the work or download a free copy at [www.ausa.org/woodfill](http://www.ausa.org/woodfill).

General John Pershing recognized Samuel Woodfill as the most outstanding soldier of the First World War. When his company came under fire during a battle of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Woodfill took out several machine-gun nests with a rifle, a pistol, and a nearby pick-axe. Pershing personally presented Woodfill with the Medal of Honor and later handpicked him to dedicate the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Medal of Honor: Samuel Woodfill was created by a team of professional comic book veterans:

Script: Chuck Dixon (Batman, The Punisher, The 'Nam)

Pencils, Inks, Cover: Geof Isherwood (The 'Nam, G.I. Joe, Conan the Barbarian)

Colors: Peter Pantazis (Justice League, Superman, Black Panther)

Lettering: Troy Peteri (Spider-Man, Iron Man, X-Men)

American soldiers have always displayed heroism on the battlefield. But only a select few are recognized with the nation's highest military decoration: the Medal of Honor.

The Association of the United States Army celebrates their valor with the Medal of Honor graphic novel series. These full-color digital books are created by a talented team of professionals drawn from the comic book industry, and the details are vetted by professional historians. Each eight-page issue profiles a true American hero, bringing to life the daring deeds that distinguished themselves by gallantry in action "above and beyond the call of duty."

The series started in October 2018 with the release of Medal of Honor: Alvin York to commemorate the centennial of York's heroic actions in World War I. To date, seventeen issues have been published, commemorating such heroes as Audie Murphy, Mary Walker, Daniel Inouye, Henry Johnson, and Roy Benavidez.

AUSA is producing four new issues in 2023, along with a paperback collection for the fall:

Medal of Honor: Edward Carter Jr. – for the African American infantryman who took on a German warehouse in World War II

Medal of Honor: Samuel Woodfill – to celebrate the doughboy that General John Pershing called the most outstanding soldier of World War I

Medal of Honor: Bruce Crandall – for the helicopter pilot who flew over and over again into enemy fire during the first major battle of Vietnam

Medal of Honor: Alwyn Cashe – to recognize the Iraq War soldier who pulled six others from a burning Bradley Fighting Vehicle

Information and links to all of the graphic novels are available on AUSA's Medal of Honor series page at [www.ausa.org/moh](http://www.ausa.org/moh).

To read Medal of Honor: Samuel Woodfill online or download a free copy, please visit [www.ausa.org/woodfill](http://www.ausa.org/woodfill).

Please feel free to share this material; I do request that you let me know about any posts or reviews.

You can contact me with any questions at [jcraig@ausa.org](mailto:jcraig@ausa.org)

Thanks for your time and attention.

Very truly yours-

Joseph Craig

Director, AUSA Book Program

Association of the United States Army

2425 Wilson Boulevard

Arlington, VA 22201

703-907-2653

[jcraig@ausa.org](mailto:jcraig@ausa.org)

[www.AUSA.org](http://www.AUSA.org)

To the board,

As an update to the board voting unanimously to purchase a set of binoculars to present to Nhơn Thế and his team; the director of the United States Institute for Peace, Andrew Wells-Dang, will be travelling to Hue Vietnam in mid-July and will hand carry the binoculars, a Society of the 5th challenge coin, and the attached letter with him. Nhơn Thế will travel by vehicle to the hotel that Andrew will be at to receive these items, and there is high probability that Vietnam TV cameramen and journalists will record the event.

In the attached letter, the phrase—"Chân cứng đá mềm"—translates to: Hard legs on soft stones. I am in total agreement with our president, Hal Roller, that this is a good thing we are doing.

Regards,

Lou



Thursday, June 24, 2023

From:  
The Society of the Fifth Infantry Division

To:  
Nhơn Thế  
and  
The Veterans Association of Cam Tuyen Commune

Dear friend, Nhơn Thế,

The Society of the Fifth Infantry Division has voted unanimously to present to you this gift of a pair of Zeiss binoculars in a heartfelt demonstration of “rapprochement” to be used by you and your teammates of the Veterans Association of Cam Tuyen Commune, Cam Lo District, Quang Tri Province to aid you in your search to find and record the remains of your teammates who gave their lives and fell during the Vietnam/American war of 1964-1973. Your affiliation with Project 515 and your surveying, finding, and exhuming the remains of North Vietnamese soldiers who sacrificed themselves in the war, parallels closely, the work of a similar American venture called Operation Rescue to find the remains of American MIAs in Southeast Asia.

Our country's National League of Families of American Prisoners & Missing in Southeast Asia also parallels closely the Vietnam Martyrs' Family Support Association in your country. As more of these equivalents between our countries transpire, it is evident that the “rapprochement” which I spoke of above, and the normalization of relations between our countries is already moving forward. I hope this gift from me and my division's organization to you and your veterans group takes this trend another small, but important step forward, as a sign of “rapprochement” between individual people of our two countries and harmonious interactions between humans. The soldiers of both of our countries have suffered the horrors and difficulties of war. Let us let those feelings evaporate and just be friends.

In closing, there is an old Irish proverb that goes like this: “May the road rise to meet you and may the wind be at your back” in your persistence of this difficult search and I wish you: Chân cứng đá mềm

On behalf of our president, Hal Roller, the Board of Directors, and the Society of the Fifth membership,

Kind regards,  
Hal Roller, President  
Bud Wagner, 1st Vice President  
Larry Burnett, 2nd vice President  
Scott Murrah, Secretary  
George Shoener, Treasurer  
Roger Allen, Historian  
Ron Van Beek, Chaplain  
Phil Maniscalco, Judge Advocate  
Dave Kocan, Editor  
Gary Haverman, 1st Past President  
Louis “Lou” Pepi, 2nd Past President  
Dennis Coulter, Quartermaster  
Joe Boman, Webmaster

## Vietnam Battlefield Tours

In 2020, Dennis Coulter and I booked a return trip to Vietnam, after having been soldiers in Vietnam War over fifty years earlier. That trip was doomed due to Covid, but we did customize the tour to include at least six specific places that we needed to revisit—Charlie-2 Firebase, Con Thien Firebase, Hill 162, Gallagher Ridge, and the scene of a specific friendly fire incident my squad was involved in. Dave Macedonia, Bill Stilwagen, and Edgar (Tex) Stiteler, our tour guides, were very accommodating. The stops were added to the tour. Dennis was an MP while in Vietnam and he wanted to revisit several places he had patrolled while with the Military Police and the sight of the devastating rocket attack at Firebase Charlie-2 that occurred on May 21, 1971 added as well. The cancelled 16-day trip was also rescheduled for early March of 2023.

### Prelude To My Return

In December of 2022, I was made aware of a quasi-political organization—The United States Institute for Peace. USIP—in existence since 1984—which was established to promote world peace. Having a well-intentioned ideal, USIP's mission statement has not generated much traction in its 39-year existence. Recently though, they have teamed up with a Vietnam group—The Vietnam Martyrs' Families Support Association. The VMFSA, which was formed to recover the remains—in most cases the residual DNA—of missing NVA (North Vietnam Army a.k.a. People's Army of Vietnam "PAVN") and Viet Cong—which still number better than 300,000—down from as many as 600,000. This partnership has formed a new mission of mutual aid in recovering Vietnam's MIAs—both those of the United States' and the former North Vietnam's military. Noticeably absent from the equation are an extensive number of missing soldiers from the former South Vietnam Army (ARVN). Vietnamese that sympathized with the South Vietnamese Regimes back in the 1950s and 60s—or were members of the south's military are still ostracized and have been separated from normal productive society, relegated to the lowest of menial tasks and are prevented from any advancement in Vietnamese mainstream society. Relegated also into this 'untouchable' caste, are the subsequent three generations of this excluded group. It is apparent that the present government of Vietnam has no intention to include this third group of missing soldiers, nor does the United States government have the moral will to suggest this inclusion.

On January 4, 2023, I was invited to a Zoom meeting of these two groups, comprised of veterans, media, and government officials from both countries. Approximately thirty individuals attended. The meeting was complete with audio, video, and simultaneous translation. After both groups made introductory statements, an individual from the Vietnamese contingent spoke first. To my surprise, I was called to speak first for the American delegation. My statement was brief and to the point. I told the group that I was in a unit—A Company, 1st of the 61st Infantry Regiment, attached to the 5th Mechanized Infantry Division—that was attacked on a night perimeter by NVA soldiers on November 13, 1969 in the western hills of Quang Tri Province, close to the DMZ. Additionally, I told them that I witnessed a mass grave being excavated by a bulldozer where approximately 200 NVA "martyrs" were buried. I used the word purposely, because that is the way that the Vietnamese describe their missing soldiers. As a backup, I introduced three documents—a portion of a USGS 1:50000 map, an Army after-action battle map showing coordinates, and its subsequent corroboration in the index of another book—Where We Were in Vietnam—written by Michael Kelly. In closing, I stated that I would be in Vietnam with a tour group—Vietnam Battlefield Tours—in March, and would be available to show anyone interested the location of the mass-grave.

When I reflect on my motives for participating in this enterprise, my thoughts center around giving back a small piece of what we (I) have taken from those families who are yet to have final closure for the loss of their loved ones. I say "I" because at least nine of those martyrs in that mass grave, died at my hand, directly in front of my position. One of those nine, was but 25 feet away—close enough for me to gaze into his eyes. I looked squarely into those eyes and killed him. In fact, the number is most likely greater than nine, because there were at least a dozen blood-soaked drag marks indicating wounded and dead had been dragged away by their teammates. I use the word "teammates" because—while we refer to our fellow soldiers as brothers—the Vietnamese refer to them as such.

As I further reflect, this is certainly an extension of survivor's guilt coupled with a dose of culpability. The question is: "How can my survivor's guilt for Dave Nicholson and Bobby Vandergriff—two young men...my brothers, that literally died in my arms on November 30, 1969—be genuine and have any legitimate meaning, if I have no remorse for the nine (or more) enemy lives I took on a night defensive perimeter in the wee hours of the morning of November 13, 1969. These were men and soldiers just like me, which I have come to believe, that I may have more in common with than some people that I may know in everyday life or those I might nod to and pass by at the local grocery store.

## Ho Dai Dong

From that zoom meeting on January 4th, I befriended several people—Chuck Searcy, Richard Magner, Phoung Vu, Nhon The, Anh Tho Nguyen, Lam Hong Tien, and finally, Ho Dai Dong. Phoung started an email string to put me in contact with the Vietnamese in Quang Tri that were members of the team searching for MIAs in that Province. There were engineers, archeologists, veterans, fact finders, and document researchers that would be involved with me on Gallagher Ridge when I got to Vietnam. Chuck and Richard—both Vietnam Veterans—were part of this email string and they helped as well. Specifically, Richard put me in contact with two individuals. One of them was Ho Dai Dong. Down from Hanoi, he would oversee the project, as I would find out first hand when I met him on March 10th. He was affectionately known to his countrymen as Chu Dong (Uncle Dong), a title of great respect. It would eventually be a great honor that they would refer to me as “Chu Louis Pepi.” Through Dong, I would meet Anh Tho Nguyen—a newspaper journalist, Phan Tan Lam—a photographer, author, and journalist; Lang Hong Tien—a researcher supreme, and Nhon The—the leader of the Quang Tri team. There were many others that are too numerous to mention that are now friends. Dong and I conversed for several weeks on messenger and it was decided that we would meet on the morning of March 10th at the Sai Gon Hotel, Dong Ha where our tour group was staying, and then meet us on Gallagher Ridge—a hill known to them as Hill 88 at coordinates 48QYD094642. The hill and the surrounding area were now the sight of a terraced tree farm—7 kilometers from the now paved service road near the old sallyport leading to Firebase Charlie-2.

## The flight.

On March 4, 2023, I departed Boston’s Logan Airport for a non-stop flight to Los Angeles. The airport shuttle had picked me up at my home and drove me to the airport. There was a three hour wait as the flight was late getting into the air. To compound the delay, there were strong headwinds and the flight took seven hours. At the hotel, many of others in the tour group had arrived, and Dennis and I met all but four, included the guides, Bill Stilwagen and Edgar “Tex” Stiteler. Those of you attending the San Antonio ruin this September will meet Tex at the Sunday banquet. He will be the guest speaker. They were both marine veterans, as were seven others in the tour group. There were three Navy veterans, one Air Force veterans, three Army veterans—including myself, and one British Royal Navy veteran. Bill brought his adult daughter, Malia Jarrett, and one of the marines, Jim Pief, brought his wife Sandy.

Just before midnight the next night, we boarded an Eva Airlines Boeing 777 for the 15-hour flight to Taipei with 433 other passengers. The flight was long and uncomfortable—too much so to get any appreciable sleep. It was early morning two days later—due to crossing the International Dateline—when we arrived in Taipei. That is where we met the final four of the group. Two had flown from Houston—Col John Bates (Ret Marine) & CSM Joe Taylor, and two had flown from Seattle—Larry Hill & Stan Daly. After another three-hour holdover, our full contingent of nineteen boarded another Eva airliner for the five-hour flight to Danang. We arrived in Danang at midday, breezed through customs with our electronic tourist visas, and boarded a 60-foot-long tour bus.

## The Tour Crew

The tour began and we made our way through the intense midday traffic of Danang—tour buses, commercial vehicles, thousands of motorcars, and tens of thousands of motorbikes. Many of these motorbikes carried whole families—infants, older children, and adults. To compound the traffic situation, yellow centerlines do not exist and white hashed lines are infringed upon by every type of vehicle from every possible direction. Police do not bother with traffic control and motorcycles park on sidewalks, leaving pedestrians to walk in the street. We witnessed several fatal accidents, and still, it was of no concern to the police. Somehow, we managed to get through sixteen days of travel with no mishaps—due mostly to our exceptional driver, Long. Our tour guide and interpreter, Phuoc Yau, was extremely knowledgeable and entertaining—greeting us on the bus every morning with a rousing: “Good morning, Vietnam!” Our bus boy was Tsnas. He extended his guiding hand to everyone getting off and back on the bus. In the evening, Tsnas cleaned and waxed the exterior of the bus and vacuumed and cleaned the interior—including windows, inside and out. Tsnas is the descendant of a South Vietnamese soldier, and has been relegated to menial and laborious jobs—never being able to advance his lot in the social order. Tsnas—as with all descendants of the old South Vietnamese regime—remain sentenced to a life of degrading jobs with no hope of advancement in society. Three generations have passed, and the government rule still delegates them to lowly jobs. Even so, he always displayed a friendly disposition with a constant smile on his face.

continued on page 25

102nd Reunion of the Society of the Fifth Division  
San Antonio Riverwalk Holiday Inn  
San Antonio, Texas  
September 7 through 11, 2023

For information on registration and hotel reservations go to the Society of the Fifth Division website, click on "Reunion 2023 San Antonio, TX" and after you choose a subject with a click, scroll down for the information. Here's the website:

[societyofthefifthdivision.com](http://societyofthefifthdivision.com)

Breakfast for two is included with the room. The hotel is right on the famous Riverwalk. Plenty of restaurants, shops, museums, and fun things to see and do. The tours will be to Fredericksburg for the National Museum of the Pacific War and the old Spanish Missions of San Antonio. Saturday evening dinner includes entertainment by Los Soberanos mariachi band. Sunday evening dinner is a presentation by Ed Stiteler of Vietnam Battlefield Tours on "The DMZ Today".

# **Society of the Fifth Division**

## **102<sup>nd</sup> Reunion**

**In San Antonio, Texas**

**September 7 – 10, 2023**

**In the Holiday Inn Riverwalk Hotel**

**This is Going to be an**

**Entertaining and Fun Reunion**

**Continue to Scroll Down to**

**Register and**

**Make Hotel Reservations**

## SOCIETY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION REUNION HOLIDAY INN RIVERWALK | SAN ANTONIO, TX

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

7:00pm - 9:00pm	Executive Board Meeting	Bolero 1
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#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

2:00pm - 7:00pm	<b>Reunion Registration Open</b> <i>Hospitality Room and Quarter Master Store to be open throughout reunion, hours to be posted.</i>	Skyline Atrium Foyer
4:00pm - 11:00pm	Hospitality Open	Rumba/Skyline Atrium

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

9:00am - 4:00pm	Fredericksburg/National Museum of the Pacific War	
3:00pm - 6:00pm	<b>Reunion Registration Open</b>	Skyline Atrium Foyer
4:00pm - 11:00pm	Hospitality Open	Rumba/Skyline Atrium

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

9:00am - 12:30pm	Missions Tour	
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Cash Bar Reception	Tango Ballroom Foyer
6:00pm - 9:00pm	Dinner Banquet	Tango Ballroom 2-4
9:00pm - 11:00pm	Hospitality Open	Rumba/Skyline Atrium

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

9:00am - 10:00am	Non-denominational Worship Service	Tango Ballroom 1
10:00am - 11:00am	Memorial Service	Tango Ballroom 1
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Society General Membership Meeting	Tango Ballroom 1
2:00pm - 4:00pm	KIA Photo Presentation	Tango Ballroom 1
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Cash Bar Reception	Tango Ballroom Foyer
6:00pm - 9:00pm	Dinner Banquet	Tango Ballroom 2-4
9:00pm - 11:00pm	Hospitality Open	Rumba/Skyline Atrium

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Farewells and Departures

#### **CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, August 9, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$10 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.



## **SOCIETY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION REUNION TOURS HOLIDAY INN RIVERWALK | SAN ANTONIO, TX**

**Friday, September 8, 2023**

### **FREDERICKSBURG/NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

Enjoy a scenic ride to Fredericksburg, the boyhood home of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Tour the National Museum of the Pacific War, which is dedicated to everyone who served in the Pacific under Admiral Nimitz. Nimitz served as CinCPAC, commander in chief, United States Pacific Fleet, and was soon afterward named commander in chief, Pacific Ocean Areas, during World War II. The Museum, once a hotel owned by Nimitz's grandfather, now includes over 34,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space including the George Bush Gallery, Admiral Nimitz Museum, Plaza of Presidents, Veterans' Walk of Honor, Japanese Garden of Peace, Pacific Combat Zone, and the Nimitz Education and Research Center. A 43,000 square foot expansion was added in 2010, where you can explore the impressive display of Allied and Japanese aircraft, tanks, guns and other artifacts made famous during the Pacific War campaigns. Enjoy lunch at one of several restaurants or delis located on Fredericksburg's downtown Main Street. There is shopping nearby on Main Street for those interested.

**9:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel**

**\$61/Person includes bus, guide, and admission. Lunch on your own.**

**Saturday, September 9, 2023**

### **MISSIONS TOUR**

In San Antonio they celebrate heritage and they hold their city's true history in the highest regard. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was named the first World Heritage Site in Texas by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), and includes the city's four southernmost Spanish colonial missions – Concepción, San José, San Juan and Espada. In the 18th century, Spanish priests established these five Catholic missions along the San Antonio River to serve as the center of an ethnically diverse society. Today, the missions – walled compounds encompassing a church and buildings where the priests and local Native Americans lived – represent the largest concentration of Spanish colonial missions in North America. We'll visit Mission San Jose and Mission Concepcion, and also drive by and hear the history of Mission San Juan and Mission Espada, along with their famous aqueduct. One of the many beautiful aspects of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park is that though it is a site steeped in history, it is still very much a thriving, active community today. Enjoy exploring what is old while discovering what is new.

**9:00am board bus, 12:30pm back at hotel**

**\$37/Person includes bus and guide**

***35 Person Minimum Per Bus***

**Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices. Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time. All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.**

**SCOTTER POLICY FOR PROGRAMS:** If you use a scooter but can climb the steps to board the bus, either you and/or a person traveling with you must be able to put the scooter in the bus's luggage compartment. Due to liability issues, drivers and tour guides cannot assist with scooters.

**SOCIETY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM**

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$35 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at <http://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/society2023> (3.5% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 9, 2023. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**  
**322 Madison Mews**  
**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: SOCIETY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inputted \_\_\_\_\_ Nametag Completed \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/9/23</b>	<b>Price Per</b>	<b># of People</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>TOURS</u></b>			
FRIDAY 9/8: Fredericksburg/National Museum of the Pacific War	\$61	#	\$
SATURDAY 9/9: Missions Tour	\$37	#	\$
<b><u>MEAL OPTIONS (Please select your entrée for each day)</u></b>			
<b><u>SATURDAY 9/9:</u></b>			
Chicken Picatta	\$61	#	\$
Seared Salmon	\$61	#	\$
Fire Grilled Sirloin	\$69	#	\$
Vegetable Wellington	\$61	#	\$
<b><u>SUNDAY 9/10:</u></b>			
Chicken Roulade with Fire Roasted Peppers, Feta Cheese and Spinach	\$61	#	\$
Tilapia	\$61	#	\$
Fire Grilled Sirloin	\$69	#	\$
Garden Vegetable Ravioli	\$61	#	\$
		#	\$
<b><u>PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE</u></b>			
Covers various reunion expenses.	\$20	#	\$
DONATION FOR HOSPITALITY ROOM EXPENSES	\$		\$
Total Amount Payable to <b><u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u></b>			\$

**PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ**

FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) OR GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT INFORMATION (ex. D CO/1<sup>st</sup> BN/11<sup>th</sup> Infantry): \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS SERVED W/ 5ID(ex. 1965-66): \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE (CIRCLE ONE): WWII FT CARSON VIETNAM FT POLK OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT & PAST SOCIETY OFFICE HELD (ex. NATIONAL FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, PAST PRESIDENT, ETC.): \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS OF MAIN ATTENDEE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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**Group Name:** Society of the Fifth Division

**Reunion Dates:** September 5-11, 2023

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**Reunion Registration**

To register for the reunion please re-visit <https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/SocietyFifth23>

## Day 1—Red Beach, Hai Van Pass and Phubai Airstrip

Our first stop, Red Beach—a beautiful white sand beach—was the site of the landing of the 9th Marine Regiment, the first US combat troops deployed to South Vietnam on 8 March 1965. The area became a complex of bases—Camp JK Books, Camp Haskins, Camp Viking, Paddock Compound, and Red Beach Camp—occupied by the U.S. Marines, Navy, Army and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)—all northwest of Danang. Two of our group, Colonel John Bates (Ret) and Command Sergeant Major Joe Taylor (Ret), described the landing as a night long artillery bombardment of H & Is (Harassment & Interdiction), before an uneventful landing the following morning.

Our second stop, the Hải Vân Pass—Đèo Hải Vân... "ocean cloud pass"—is at the top of 21-kilometer-long mountain traverse on National Route 1. It crosses a spur of the larger Annamite Range that juts into the East Sea of Viet Nam, on the border of Thừa Thiên and Huế Provinces. Its name refers to the mists that rise from the sea, reducing visibility. Historically, the pass was a physical division between the kingdoms of Champa and Đại Việt. The road leading through the pass has been the scene of many horrific traffic accidents, one train derailment and a Marine helicopter crash during the Vietnam War. Through a joint venture with Japan and Vietnam, a seven-kilometer tunnel was built in 2005 for passenger vehicle traffic only. Today, the road over Hai Van is traveled only by motorcycles, gasoline trucks and tourist buses. Motorcycles and gasoline trucks are banned from using the tunnel. At the top of the pass is a series of gift shops where gold, jade and pearls can be bought for pennies on the dollar.

Our last stop on the first day, was Phubai airstrip, a US Marine and Army airfield during the Vietnam War, now a major civilian airport. We toured several old French bunkers at the end of the runway, before heading to our first hotel in Hue.

## Day 2 &amp; 3—Tet of 1968 and the Battle of Hue

Two days were spent touring key areas during the battle of Tet of 1968—and the Battle of Hue in particular. The celebration of Tet—the Vietnamese Lunar New Year—is usually celebrated for three days, January 30 to February 1. For all the previous years of the war, dating back to the French colonial war in the 1950s, a countrywide truce was always called to celebrate the holiday and 1968 was no different. The only significant difference in 1968, was that the People's Army of Vietnam and the Viet Cong celebrated the holiday one day early, before breaking the cease-fire. The next day on January 30th, 7,000 PAVN and VC forces snuck into the city of Hue and raided the houses of government officials and known families that were South Vietnamese sympathizers. Viet Cong soldiers conducted house-to-house searches, arresting civil servants, religious leaders, teachers, and other civilians connected with American forces or with the South Vietnamese regime. They executed all these so-called counter-revolutionaries in their homes, then they took up offensive positions in these structures. In the course of the siege, these raiding forces also destroyed many of the city's grand temples, palaces, and other monuments.

The Army and Marines—caught off guard—were attacked from every direction. The assassination units remained in the residences and the battle was initially turned into door-to-door fighting. Simultaneously, tens of thousands of sappers attacked the city from all directions, preceded by enemy rocket and artillery fire. Eventually the Marines and Army regrouped but the siege lasted three weeks. MACV headquarters on Tran Cao Van Street was overrun as was an Air Force headquarters a few blocks away. Marines eventually rescued the Americans at both installations. The Hue municipal building was overrun and all the government officials and their families were executed on the spot. Our tour visited these two landmarks as well as the location of engagements fought by units commanded by Chuck Meadows and Captain George Christmas, both from Golf Company 2nd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment. The Marines today call one of the entrances to the Citadel and the Ancient City, Chuck Meadows Gate.

## Lance Corporal Jim Pief and the Church of the Redemptress.

Along on our tour was Jim Pief and his wife Sandy. As we neared the Church of the Redemptress, Jim spoke to the group. Jim, a Marine in the 2nd Battalion of the 26th Regiment, began his story. As his convey neared the church, he spotted a priest standing at the entrance waving. They pulled up to the steps and the priest related that over two thousand parishioners and citizens were in the cathedral seeking refuge from the PAVN and Viet Cong that already executed thousands of civilians. Jim and part of the force, walked into the church to cheers. They had been rescued and felt safe enough to point out several PAVN spies that were also in the church

## Paul Trailkill—Civilian Graves Registration

Paul Trailkill, another Marine that was touring with us, was assigned to graves registration of the 7000 slain civilians of Hue. It was a monumental and nearly impossible task due to the hugely horrific nature of the assignment. The bodies were set out in rows in 105° heat in a park between the western wall of the Citadel and the banks of the Perfume River. The bodies were sprayed down with chemicals to keep them from bursting and decomposing. As we all stood in that park, we collectively shed tears as Paul related the story.

## Outcome of the Battle of Hue

Although completely surprised when the PAVN broke the cease fire, U S forces regrouped and won a resounding victory, killing over 6,000 PAVN and VC forces in the next three weeks. The same outcome was realized in 100 other cities across South Vietnam, killing over 45,000 of the enemy. From then on, the Viet Cong ceased to exist as a viable unit. Even so, news of the battle shocked the American public, due mainly to the news media reporting that the battle and Vietnam was lost and that 150 Marines were killed. From then on, the alliance between the US and the South Vietnamese regime was tenuous at best and signaled the slow withdrawal of America from Southeast Asia.

## Day 4 &amp; 5—Quang Tri Province

Quang Tri Province and the DMZ were placed under the operational control of the 5th Infantry Division shortly after I arrived in Vietnam in 1969. These were my stomping grounds. The tour briefly crossed the old DMZ after circling the former Qua Viet Naval Base, and stopped at the small fishing village of Bai Tam Gio Hai. On the beach, some of the fisherman worked on their Sampans and Basket boats, while others repaired nets on the pristine white-sand beach. Our next stop was the Vin Moc tunnels. Accessed by long subterranean stairways forty feet below the surface, they once offered the only protection from the massive B-52 strikes during the war. They are pitch-black-dark, musty, short on oxygen, and the walls and five-foot ceilings shake like Jell-O when you touch them, but they have held for fifty years. The only confusing thing is that an Arc Light strike—as they were called—rained down from 50,000 feet, affording very little warning. A Boeing Superfortress—aka BUFF or Big Ugly Fat Fucker—holds 70,000 pounds of ordinance and a squadron of eleven can drop 770,000 pounds of ordinance simultaneously with no warning. The devastation above was always complete and total.

Recrossing the demilitarized zone, our next stop was Con Thien (Vietnamese: Hill of Angels). During the war, my company resided there for three-day-stand-downs for rest, resupply and to service our weapons; before returning to the bush for another thirty-day stint. We were met there by Ho Dai Dong, Nhon The, and Phoung Vu. With them were engineers, archeologists, cameramen, and journalists to interview us, as well as, document our meeting at Gallagher Ridge later in the day. Dong presented me with a bouquet of flowers. Before leaving the old firebase, I collected some soil samples. Con Thien is in the process of being bulldozed and prepped for a terraced tree farm. Gone are the mine fields, bomb craters and the elephant grass around the periphery. The only structure remaining from the war is the old French bunker at the summit (Hill 158) that served as the command post.

Our next stop was the scene of my squad's friendly-fire incident—1500 meters southeast of Con Thien where two of my platoon brothers—David Nicholson and Bobby Vandergriff, were killed by an errant mortar, while our lieutenant was teaching a green lieutenant adjustment of mortar-fire. They both literally died in my arms. I braced to keep my emotions in check.

As we neared the location—GPS in my hand—the spot seemed to be in a gravel driveway, bordered by houses on either side. After pulling off the road, 23 of us filed out of our 60-foot-long tour bus. To our amazement, there was a wedding reception going on under a large tent in front of one of the neighboring houses. As I buried a 5th Infantry challenge coin, the rest of the tour group gathered to take photographs. Meanwhile, the whole wedding reception immediately gravitated to our group, and asked our interpreter, Phuoc what I was burying. It was explained and they all huddled closer. The groom, whose eyes were welled up, shook my hand, and apologized for my loss. It was one of those surreal moments. This spot, once the horrific site of death and tragedy, was at that moment, transformed into a place of love and happiness, with the likelihood of new life. After fifty-three years of survivor's guilt, there seemed at that juncture, to be good cause to come to terms, let it go and move on. I also collected some soil for the Vandergriff and Nicholson families. The area, once twisted broken trees, bomb craters, and a destroyed enemy bunker system, now contains a modest row of clean housing. The elephant grass is still there beyond the back yards.



From there we moved on to Firebase Charlie 2. Organized by Dennis Coulter, the plan was for Dennis and I to hold a small ceremony there for the thirty men—18 from my own Alpha 1/61—that died in a recreational bunker from a single 122 rocket with a delayed fuse that collapsed the 6-foot-thick reinforced roof. Thirty-three others were buried but were dug out. Dennis and I know quite a few of the survivors and a good number of those who dug them out. Flowers were again extended to us—this time from Bill Stilwagen—and the entire contingent of veterans formed in front of Dennis and I, were brought to attention with the command of Attention, then prompted for a slow hand-salute with Present Arms, followed by Parade Rest. More soil was collected. Charlie 2 was also being bulldozed and prepped to be another tree farm which was about half complete.

Our next stop, the last of the day, was Gallagher Ridge. Phuoc inquired to Ho Dai Dong and his group to find a route to get the tour bus as close as possible. After several unsuccessful attempts, we doubled back to the entrance to Firebase Charlie 2 where we all exited the bus and prepared for a 7-kilometer trek through—what looked like—thick brush. Only the driver and the bus boy remained as we started out, laden with full backpacks and 2 liters of water each. The two lead men hacked a trail through the dense brush with machetes. Not too far in, the brush cleared and there was a landfill dump afire in front of us, exuding toxic fumes and smoke. This would have a negative impact on some of the group later in the tour with respiratory issues.

At the dump, our interpreter spoke to several workers who pointed us to a muddy road heading due west. The road was a quagmire for about a kilometer—a thick pasty orange mud that I remembered so well from 50 years earlier. Eventually, the road dried out as it rose out of a low area to the rolling foothills leading to the western mountains. Newly planted trees, terraced to accommodate the contour of the land, were visible now for miles in every direction. Gallagher Ridge and the immediately surrounding hills—including Hill 162—had recently been prepped for more trees. Eventually, the road was very passable, and we walked four more kilometers effortlessly. Reaching a promontory, several SUVs and motorbikes were visible on the next hilltop—about 2 kilometers away. It was Dong and his team waiting for our arrival on Gallagher Ridge.

Captain Robert P Gallagher was our company commander and he died on that hill at 0354 in the morning of November 13, 1969. Also, slain along with him were Ralph Evilsizor, Norman Benedik, Dennis Ross, Mark Rose, Tom Landrum, and Ken Caswell—all Alpha Company troopers. Sixty-seven of us had been choppered out in the dark, to reinforce a perimeter of thirty men of Bravo and Charlie Company's mortar platoons. We were attacked at 0200 with a massive artillery and mortar barrage, followed by an assault of 1500-2000 NVA from three sides. As I looked at the hill, memories came back.

Along with Dong, was a contingent of the Veteran's Association of Cam Tuyen Commune, Cam Lo District, Quang Tri Province, led by association president, Nhón Thẽ. Thẽ, under the direction of veterans like Ho Dai Dong and the Vietnam Martyrs' Families Support Association (VMSFA), is participating in Project 515, with a mission of surveying, locating, and exhuming the remains of Vietnamese soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the American War.

Spotting us as well, the group waiting on Hill 88 mobilized and headed toward us to transport us to the hill. Reaching us, we climbed into two SUVs and onto the rear seats of three motorbikes. Traveling down the gravel road, an arm of the road split north and dead-ended at the crest of Hill 88.

Getting out of Nhón Thẽ's SUV, I immediately recognized several landforms in the terrain and found my way to the approximate spot of my position. Somehow, the hill seemed smaller. It had been scrapped bare by a bulldozer a week or two earlier, otherwise I might have found the remnants of foxholes—maybe even my own. That was not to be, and we were also unable to find any spent or abandoned ordinance which would be a common occurrence on any former battlefield. As I stood alone to gather my thoughts, I pictured the first man that I killed, staring at me from 25 feet—his rifle at rest—as I shot him down. My legs felt weak. I saw him again in the same way. I hoped that finding his DNA in the mass grave would help his family get closure.

After waiting what they felt was an appropriate amount of time, Ho Dai Dong and Phoung Vu approached, and I turned toward the crest of the hill and pointed to the spot where I thought that the mass grave was, thirty meters directly behind my position. The hill was very small and the crest was a flat narrow spine—curved in nature, but not fully L-shaped. It would not require an extended search. Then the journalists and cameramen closed in and asked me questions about taking souvenirs from dead bodies. I told them I did not and that one man, Kenny Barrett, was wounded with shrapnel from a bobby-trapped body. Unfortunately, they would not let it go, probably because it would be the main subject of the next two days with Del Candelaria due to return an NVA diary to the soldier's family. I wanted to say that it was common practice, and that both sides did it to gather intelligence, but I let that go. I collected more soil—more than at any other site from that day.

The sun was now setting and we needed to start our trek back to the bus. Again, the SUVs and motorbikes transported us—this time—the entire distance to the tour bus, which was now in a more accessible location further south on Route 1. It was well after dark when we reached the bus. Six of our group did not get out until two hours after dark.

My return to Gallagher Ridge was not as emotional as I thought it would be, probably due to my mission of helping to find the mass grave that desensitized my emotions. As we rode back to the hotel in Dong Ha, I thought about what I had seen in our area of operation—AO Orange. This was my day. This was my area of operation. I thought about the boy that I was in 1969—young, naïve—and probably a little stupid. I am not that boy any more—and hell, he is yet to come home. I visualized him on that hill—the adrenaline completely drained out of him the next morning—his youth and naivety taken from him as well. He should come home now.

## 2. Malia Jarrett and Mike Wahl



1. Doug Woolverton, Del Candelaria, Terry Woolsey and Joe Taylor at the airport at Taipei.

4. Terry Woolsey on his iPad, Stan Daly Paul Thraitkill, and Bill Stilwagen facing away



3. Dennis Coulter and Larry Hill

6. Bill Stilwagen, guide and ex-Marine



5. Tex Stiteler, Guide and ex-Marine

8. Our bus driver Long



7. Ed Tex Stiteler, guide and ex-Marine





9. Our interpreter Phuoc (pronunciation fuc-yo). In the background, Quoc Hoc Hue—school for the gifted that he attended—the same school Ho Chi Minh and General Giap attended



10. Tsnas our bus boy, descendant of S Vietnam sympathizers which puts him in the lowest Vietnam caste still today.



11. Colonel John Bates Ret. with Dennis Coulter and Lou Pepi on Red Beach outside Danang. Hai Van Pass in the background



14. Souvenir shop atop Hai Van Pass.

Jade, pearls, gold and turquoise for pennies on the dollar



13. The Annamite Range leading to Hai Van Pass





15. One of two old French bunkers at the end of the runway at Phu Bai



16. Hue Tu Do Stadium, home of Vietnam's national soccer team and the initial destination of all Medivacs for triage in the Battle of Hue.

17. Our two favorite beers during the tour were Tiger for \$1 and Huda Beer.



18. The DMZ Bar. From left, Dan Hixon Tex, Sandy Pief, Neil Jones, Stan Daly and Larry Hill

19. View of the Perfume River, and wall of Ancient Hue from Chuck Meadows Gate



20. The MACV Compound on Hung Vuong Street, second floor





## 21. The Church of the Redemptress

Several thousand Vietnamese took asylum there in Tet of '68. Jim Pief and his column on their way to Dong Ha, stopped here briefly



23. Paul Thrailkill, worked in Civilian Grave Registration for Hue, Perfume River behind. 7000 thousand bodies filled this field for identification after the battle in 105° heat.



25. Nhon The, Nguyen Xuan Thang, Phoung Vu, and Ho Dai Dong posing for a photo at Con Thien

## 22. The interior of the church of the Redemptress



## 24. The old French Bunker atop Hill 158 at the summit of Con Thien

We remember it as encapsulated in rows of sandbags



26. Lou Pepi burying a 5th Infantry Challenge Coin at the location where two of my squad-mates were killed by an errant U S mortar during a practice session 1500 meters southeast of Con Thien





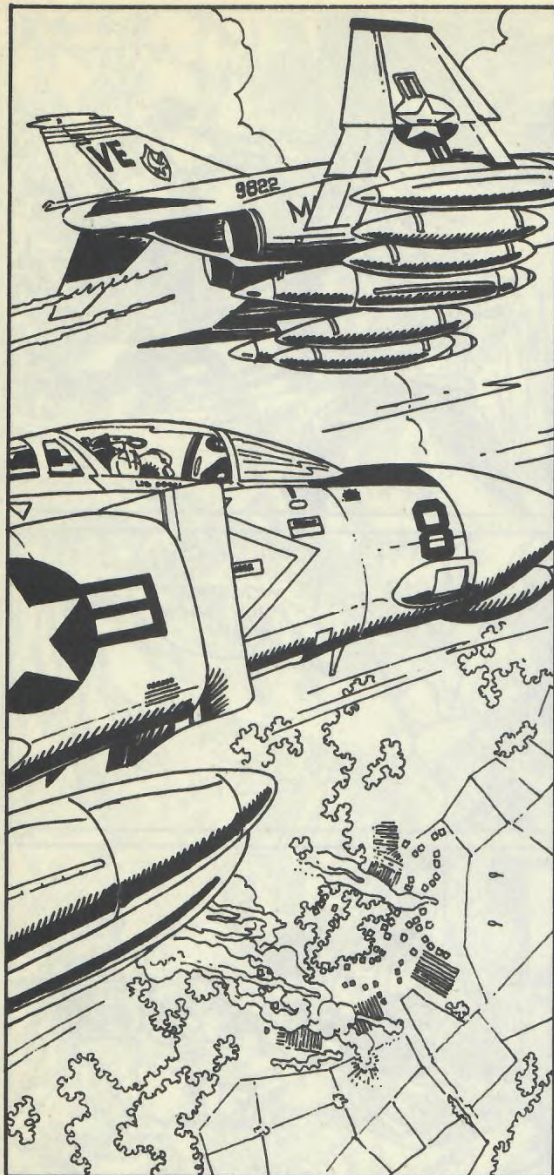




BACK AT THE  
VILLAGE...







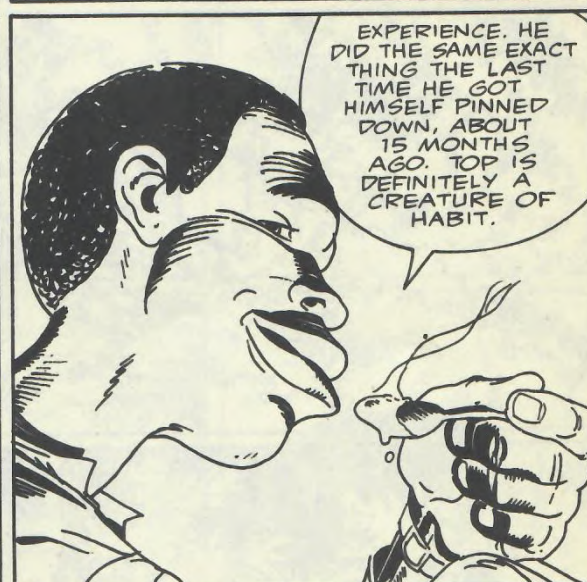










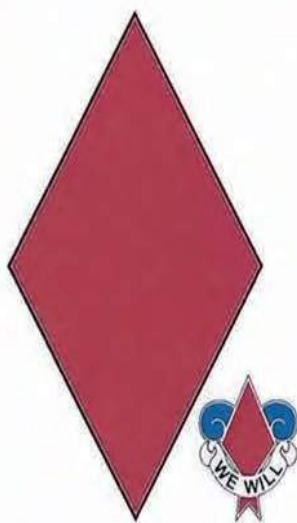




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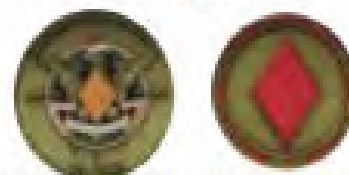
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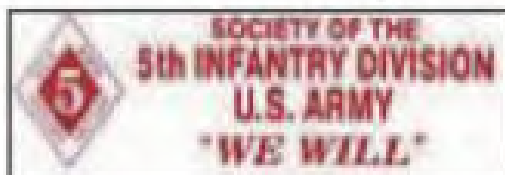
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