



Sponson BOX

*Voice of
the USMC
Vietnam Tankers
Association*

Ensuring Our Legacy Through Reunion, Renewal & Remembrance™

Forty Years Ago... The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.



Dedicated November 13, 1982.

Ground Breaking March 26, 1982

A Podcast Appeal

BY CAROL COLUCCI

I wanted to write to the Marine tankers to ask each one to do a telephone interview with Frank "Tree" Remkiewicz. It took me about a year to get my husband Ron to partake of Tree's offer. I can honestly say he was a little apprehensive of the whole process, but me being me I kept prodding him. Then Frank and Ron exchanged emails to get the rules of engagement (none) and what Ron wanted to talk about. When the day finally arrived Ron was ready. I think after his introduction he talked almost an hour. Frank only interjected to clarify nicknames, such as "beehive" and "bouncing Bettys," I guess so the wives and kids that listened to the podcast could envision the discussion. Ron's experiences were similar and totally different from Frank's own service experiences and you could tell he was an eager listener.

While Ron talked on the telephone, I sat next to him in awe listening, not that I haven't heard a lot of Ron's stories, but it was more about how it all just flowed on an afternoon without a room full of tankers at a reunion. I have listened to many stories with very little minor changes over the years at reunions. Thank God Frank is documenting them. Ron's son will get a flash drive with this as well as Bob Peavey's interview done in Seattle. Yes some is difficult to hear, but, maybe Ron's son will understand his father better.

Please reach out to Frank to possibly schedule an interview, you were there and you are the best one to share your personal experiences. I have listened to about 8 of Frank's podcast interviews so far and each one has given me so much more insight to the men I have met at the reunions.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have access to the Internet, we highly recommend that you visit the USMC VTA website (at www.usmcvta.org) and click on PODCASTS to review any or all of the 30 podcasts that are featured there. You can also access the 75 video taped personal interviews that are available to view by clicking on VIDEOS. We think that you will fully enjoy some of, if not all of the fantastic products from the USMC VTA History Project.

Letter from the President

ON THE COVER – I was told many years ago that having two photos on the cover of our magazine was not a good idea. I felt that since the contrast of the start and finish of The Wall is so stark, I am hoping that I will be forgiven for violating a cardinal rule of publication.

NEW MEMBERS – I have suggested this in the past: If every single VTA member sought out and found just one new member, we could go from nearly 500 members up to 1,000 members. Personally, over the years, I have found new guys on Facebook and other online "social media" venues; at the grocery store; at the hardware store and at meetings of various veteran organizations. All it really takes is asking a few questions like:

"Are you a Jarhead?"... "Were you in Vietnam?"... "What did you do in-country?" ... "Tanks? Do you belong to the USMC VTA?" "No? Do you want to become a member of the brotherhood?" ... "What is your home mailing address?"

Then you get hold of either Greg Martin or me and almost automatically a VTA Recruitment Package is mailed to the prospective member. The package contains a copy of the Sponson Box magazine, a VTA membership application and a letter of introduction. Bah-Dah Bing!!! Bah-Dah Boom!!!

In the NEW MEMBER portion of Page 4 of this issue, there are a number of new members who were recruited by current members. Good on you-all...!!!

2022 MINI- REUNION – I am writing this letter in the middle of August since the publication process dictates that it takes a bit over a month to produce the final piece that is in your hands. While the magazine is in production we will have held the mini-reunion in Wyoming and returned to our homes. We should have a mini-reunion recap for you in the following issue that will be in the mail around the first of the New Year.

2023 REUNION – We normally make a formal announcement of our regular biennial reunion in the January issue of the year that we conduct the gathering ... but we are going to be wild and crazy and say that our next reunion will be September 13 – 18, 2023 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We hope to see you there.

HUMOR: I read a meme the other day that made me laugh: "Don't worry about getting older. You are still going to do stupid stuff...only slower!"

SERIOUS: "Don't let LATER become NEVER!!!" Write your story now!!!



"I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me."

- Dudley Field Malone, Attorney and activist



Executive Directors

John Wear, President

16605 Forest Green Terrace, Elbert, CO 80106
719.495.5998 · E-mail: johnwear2@verizon.net

1st Sgt. Richard "Rick" Lewis, Vice President

4904 Mt. Hay Dr, San Diego, CA 92117-4820
858.735.1772 Email: ricklent@aol.com

MSgt Bruce Van Apeldoorn, USMC (Ret.)

Treasurer

99 Shoreline Drive, New Bern, NC 28562-9550
585.613.6564 Email: bvanapeldoornsr@gmail.com

Ronald C. Knight, Secretary

6665 Burnt Hickory Drive, Hoschton, GA 30548
678.828.7197 Email: rckusmcvta@att.net

Directors

Lt. General Martin R. Steele, USMC (Ret.)

16331 Ashington Park Drive, Tampa, FL 33647
E-mail: mrsteele46@aol.com

Fred Kellogg

15013 NE 16th St., Vancouver, WA 98684-3605
360.609.3404 E-mail: kelloggfc@comcast.net

Greg Martin

6514 - 81st Drive NE, Marysville, WA 98270-8010
Phone: 360.480.1206 Email: usmctanker@comcast.net

Col. William (Bill) J. Davis, USMC (ret)

518 Mowbray Arch, Norfolk, VA 23507
Phone: 757.622.6973 Email: billandjandavis@gmail.com

Jim Raasch

3116 1st Avenue NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405
Phone: 319.551.1675 Email: jraasch47@gmail.com

Committees & Chairmen

SgtMajor Bill "JJ" Carroll

Nominating Chair &
CRCS/CR Representative
Phone 651.342.0913 CST

Bruce Van Apeldoorn

Audit & Finance
Phone 585.613.6564 EST

CW04 Bob Embesi

CRCS/CR Representative
Phone 406.821.3075 MS

Joe Liu

Jerry Clark Memorial Buddy Fund
Phone 801.731.7591
Email: pjliu@hotmail.com

Ron Knight

Member Data Integrity
Phone 678.828.7197 EST

1st Sgt. Rick Lewis

VA Information VTA History Project
Phone 858.735.1772 PST

Bob Peavey

Fallen Heroes
Phone 770.365.3711 EST

Greg Martin

Webmaster National Recruiter
Phone 360.480.1206 PST
Email: usmctanker@comcast.net

Web Site: www.usmcvta.org

Copyright 2012. USMC Vietnam Tankers Association. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be republished, reproduced, copied, faxed, electronically transmitted or in any other manner duplicated without express written permission from both the USMVCVTA and the author or authors.

John Wear - Editor & Publisher - johnwear2@verizon.net

Proof reading - Craig Newberry

Tuyen Pham - Layout and Design

Printed in the USA

New Members

Ansan, Daniel C

PO Box 789
Superior, MT 59872-0789
Home Phone: 406.822.4935
Cell Phone: 406.214.9650
Email: damsan@icloud.com

MOS: 2141

H&S Co, 3rd Tanks, '65 - '66

DOB: 08/28/46

Wife: Barbara

Recruited by: John Wear

Berryhill, Lon J

PO Box 161

Las Vegas, NV 89125-0161

Cell Phone: 702.425.0165

Email: berryhillon@gmail.com

MOS: 1811

A Co, 3rd Tanks, 71-72

DOB: 01-08-52

Recruited by: "Hokey" Hokanson

Boylan, Douglas B

9447 Gant Road

Bozeman, MT 59718-9114

Home Phone: 406.586.1564

Cell Phone: 406.581.8836

Email: kboylanart@gmail.com

MOS: 1802

3rd MAF - 1969

DOB: 09-05-46

Wife: Karen

Recruited by: Richard Cecil

Cummings, Charles "Corky" V

7412 Davenport Ave

Ft Worth, TX 76116

Home Phone: 941.276.0560

Email: gusdabus1@gmail.com

MOS: 1811

C Co, 1st Tanks, 1969

DOB: 11-08-50

Recruited by: WELCOME BACK!!!

Howe, Thomas F

6000 San Jose Blvd (#103)

Jacksonville, FL 32217

Cell Phone: 904.404.6454

Email: Thowe727@gmail.com

MOS: 1802

S-3, 1st Tanks - 1969

DOB: 07-27-42

Recruited by: Website

Minch, Evelyn

1416 Ellis Road

Annapolis, MD 21403

Home Phone: 410.280.5196

Cell Phone: 443.254.2045

Email: evelyn1416@yahoo.com

Sister of Donald "Butch" Minch

A Co, 3rd Tanks, '67 - '68

DOB: 02-18-49

Recruited by: Ted Hildabrand

Pinnetti, Anthony W

PO Box 3902

Holiday, FL 34690

Home Phone: 727.510.6068

No email

MOS: 1811

A & C Co.'s, 3rd Tanks, '65

C Co, 1st Tanks, '66

Recruited by: Ken Zebal

Thompson, James B

1730 S Almond Street

Mesa, AZ 85204

Cell Phone: 602.751.9191

Email: jbthom1@cox.net

MOS: 1811

A&C Co.'s, '65

C Co, 1st Tanks, '66

Recruited by: Ken Zebal

Member Info Changes

Terrance C. Hunter

15248 W Pantano Dr, Surprise, AZ 85374-2082

Cell Phone: 612-703-5797

Roger "Blues" Unland

4279 Hamlin Way

Wimauma, FL 33598

Tom Colson

7917 Beneva Road

Milton, Florida 32583

ON THE COVER:



Ground Breaking March 26, 1982

Dedicated November 13, 1982.

Our Readers Write

(Formally known as "Letters to the Editor")



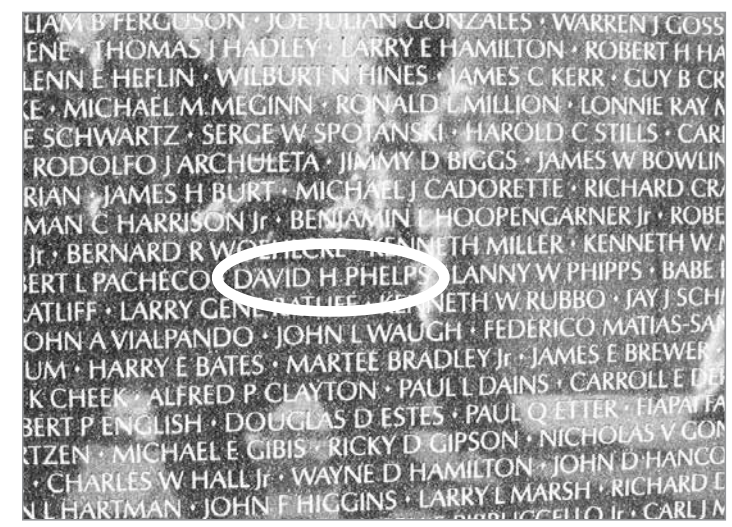
READING OF THE NAMES

Howard Blum writes: Thanks for mentioning the 40th Anniversary "Reading of the Names" program. I participated in the 1st Reading of the Names that happened 11/12/1982 at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. It was an experience that I've cherished ever since. I hope other VTA members can/will participate this year.

Reed Bolick adds: Thanks very much for this information! I have requested to read four names—Two tankers and a Corpsman from my (Tom Kelly's) company and my roommate from college who was in 1st Recon. According to their schedule all four names would be read on 10 November between 1042 and 1240.

This is a real tribute that the Vietnam Memorial is undertaking...one they have done several times before. Even though I am here in Virginia, I had known of only one other time that they had made such readings. Depending on how my requests are received, I may add the seven members of my Basic School Class to the list. Again, thanks for passing along this information!

THE WALL



Rest in Peace David H Phelps

My first experience with The Wall was in the early 90's at a town north of where I was living in Torrance, California. The Wall was one of the plastic replicas, "The Traveling Wall," that was set up at a little park in Hawthorne, California. I read in the local paper it would be there. I didn't know at the time I would visit the "real" Wall in Washington DC later in my life.

John Hunter

A READER COMPLAINS

Your letter that describes "...these are the same overly enthusiastic supportive TURDS are either the same ASS WIPES or the children of the f*ckin' anti-war ASS Wipes..."

I do not necessarily disagree with what you said, my point is whether one agrees or disagrees ... the language for our magazine was inappropriate and the intent was political. I thought we, as an organization, avoided the political.

The second is not so much political as just injudicious: That is, the editor's note to the Ontos Lt. who was rather nasty and petty about not wanting join the VTA in order to attend the mini-reunion. His comments were very rude, petty, and somewhat vindictive and standing alone would have been sufficient to get us all in an uproar ... but then you stooped to his level which, in my humble opinion, made the VTA look as petty as he was.

John, look, I love the magazine and you do a great job. With each issue you seem to top the last and this is no exception. Before you jump to conclusions, this is not what I believe or you believe, I make these comments hoping to add to the prestige of your great work.—Name Withheld to Protect the Innocent

READERS COMPLIMENTS

Hey John, I really appreciate your comment about the radio station announcer lavishing sympathy and support for the Ukraine people. I think these are the same f*ckers who \$hit on us when we came home from Vietnam. I remember having to have two different resumes when I got out and was looking for a job—one with military service and one without.

Semper Fi brother.

James Renforth

Richard Carmer writes: I am finally reading my latest copy of the Sponson Box and came upon a story on the etymology of the word f*ck (pg. 30). I heard that the word f*ck came into use during the crusades. In England many if not most of the young men were off fighting the Muslims and so as not to run out of citizens the king authorized certain young men and women to fornicate to ensure that >>

the population remained vibrant and healthy. The program was titled "Fornication under Consent of the King" and allowed unwed people to fornicate and keep the population healthy. I of course have no idea if this version is true but it is the best explanation I have heard so far. Who the f*ck knows? I do have to say that the most recent issue of our magazine was excellent again, thanks bunches for the good work you continue to do for us.

Ed Hiltz comments: I believe that I speak for all the members of the VTA and the readers of the Sponson Box. A big "Thank You" to all of the executive directors; board members and committee chairman that continue to contribute to our tanker's association and to the Sponson Box publication. It's much appreciated for all your time and effort that you put into this. Many stories are being told and passed on to our families. My older two sisters (78 and 76 years old), their children plus my own children never knew much about Vietnam until they read our stories published in the Sponson Box. I know that they all enjoy them and now they know some of our history.

Marcia Flak writes: It's an early morning here in NJ and you probably haven't greeted the day yet. I hope all is well. I have a few minutes before I move into the day so I'm reading the Sponson Box with coffee in hand. I love the connections you Marines have through it. It lifts my spirit and brightens my day. There's hope in this world because of men like you; real men, solid, true, strong and committed. God bless you all. I pray for you. Thank you, again, for your dedication to the VTA. I'm sure it's a lifeline to many.

Reference: LT Taylor's decision to pass on the Wyoming reunion

I continue to thank John Wear, the VTA Board and everyone else for keeping the candle burning, be it through the Sponson Box or through reunions. I have been a member of the VTA for some time and as a 0353 (Ontos crewmen) I feel a connectivity to the tanker community. How, I wish that Ontos crewmen were as united, connected, and had the history that Marine tankers have. But, aside of all that, USMC VTA has provided the Ontos community a voice in which we could tell our stories, share our pictures, and bring us together again. In the past, the Sponson Box had a printed edition totally dedicated to our beloved Ontos. How can you quibble about that? It isn't perfect, nothing is, and no matter what decisions we make, go or don't go. We must always be grateful that someone is doing the work, making shit happen, and getting very little recognition for it. In the attached picture, my wife and I attended the Seattle reunion, soon after this picture was taken Rick Lewis presented me with a Vietnam coin. It was heartfelt, it was emotional, and a gesture that cemented my place in this organization till the day I die.

Armando Moreno, 0353.

UPDATE: We are having to make a decision on an upcoming



ing surgery for my darling bride, Esther. She will have a six week recovery. There is a late August date for her surgery. I am canceling my reservations throughout and the Yellowstone Park visit will have to wait. It was going to be a three week road trip and we are getting old by the day and very heart sick about the way things have come about. But, Esther is only getting more and more uncomfortable. I am sorry we won't be able to attend the reunion. My best wishes to Rick and all the rest of the guys!

Armando

Saw This on Facebook



Can anyone ID the Marine sitting on the sponson box?

Coming Home



I say Welcome Home, We Thank You ALL, RESPECT. ... sr

Don Scott—Thank you

Hey John, as usual the latest Sponson Box is an excellent production. I read magazines mostly on the head in a methodical manner. This morning I was reading along and turned the leaf and did a double take. Ah-ha! I am published!

I am aware that my few contributions to date are not in line with the hard core mission of USMC VTA. So, I appreciate very much you're including my "Thoughts on Combat and Democracy" article in the publication. However, the philosophy and yes, opinion, I presented is very much part of me and why I ended up serving as a Marine at the particular time when the Country was calling for volunteers.

I promised Free last September that I would complete "my story" and submit it to you all for consideration. It will include some specific experiences and memories of my time in RVN. But it will also dwell on who I am, how I got there, why, and what happened after I came home. Rest assured when I was leading Tankers in RVN (even though they did not always think of me as "the leader"). I was full of piss, vim, and vigor. Embesi, Peavey, and my CO, B Company, 1st Tank Battalion when I was XO can all attest to that.

So much for the soliloquy. After I get that tome completed there may be more memories that flow from my memory that will be short and specific to particular incidents and combat actions.

Even though I do not know you well, I consider you very much a Brother in Arms, a friend, and especially a fellow Marine, which by definition indicates our character at least to members of the Corps.

Fred Kellogg Remembers

My best "Small World" happened in Vietnam: For some unknown reason the command staff thought my high school diploma gave me the knowledge to test soil density and weight bearing capability of Vietnamese soil. They said there was going to be a big push coming and they wanted to know if the ground would support the weight of a tank. So, they put me on a helicopter and I was flown where I had no-idea-where-I-was in some triple canopied jungle. Hell no! Tanks couldn't go there and neither could most lizards.

After working our way deeper into the jungle, we got mortared and I jumped in the closest hole I could find. Unfortunately, another grunt had the same idea and we hit helmet-to-helmet at a full run. About knocked us both unconscious. When we finally got a look at each other I said, "Steve?" He said, "Fred?" Turned out that he, too, was from Vancouver, Washington, and lived less than a mile from my house. He was dating the sister of one of my best friends.

What are the odds? Not only were we both on the opposite side of the world—we were in the same dang hole.

Radio Repair



Carson Bartels writes: My MOS was 2533 (comm.) and I was attached to the 7th Marines. We often worked on your



tanks. I've got a couple of pictures that I wanted to send so the guys in your group could see them. >>

Location was LZ Baldy. This tank came in to us one day (probably late-October, 1969) and his radios weren't working. He asked if I could fix them. (I knew nothing of radio repair; I was a radio operator.) But I had never seen the inside of a tank so I told him I'd take a look. We ended up finding the problem (broken connection) and I got to see the inside of a tank! A win-win situation for us both!

Bob Haller's Shipboard Sleeping Quarters



Thought to send you a pic of the sleeping quarters U.S.S. William Mitchell, a troop carrier from WWII. Note the clear plastic dry cleaning garment bags, we thought we were going to a nice place.

American "Tiger" Tank

We found the WW2 photo on the RIGHT online and it looked familiar. The photo on the LEFT was taken at the Collings Foundation Armor Museum last Sept during our 2021 reunion. ■



Tree's Welcome Home

I have an old Marine Corps lighter that I got in Viet Nam. The spring that opens and closes the lighter broke. I sent it to Zippo and the company replaced the entire insert at no charge!

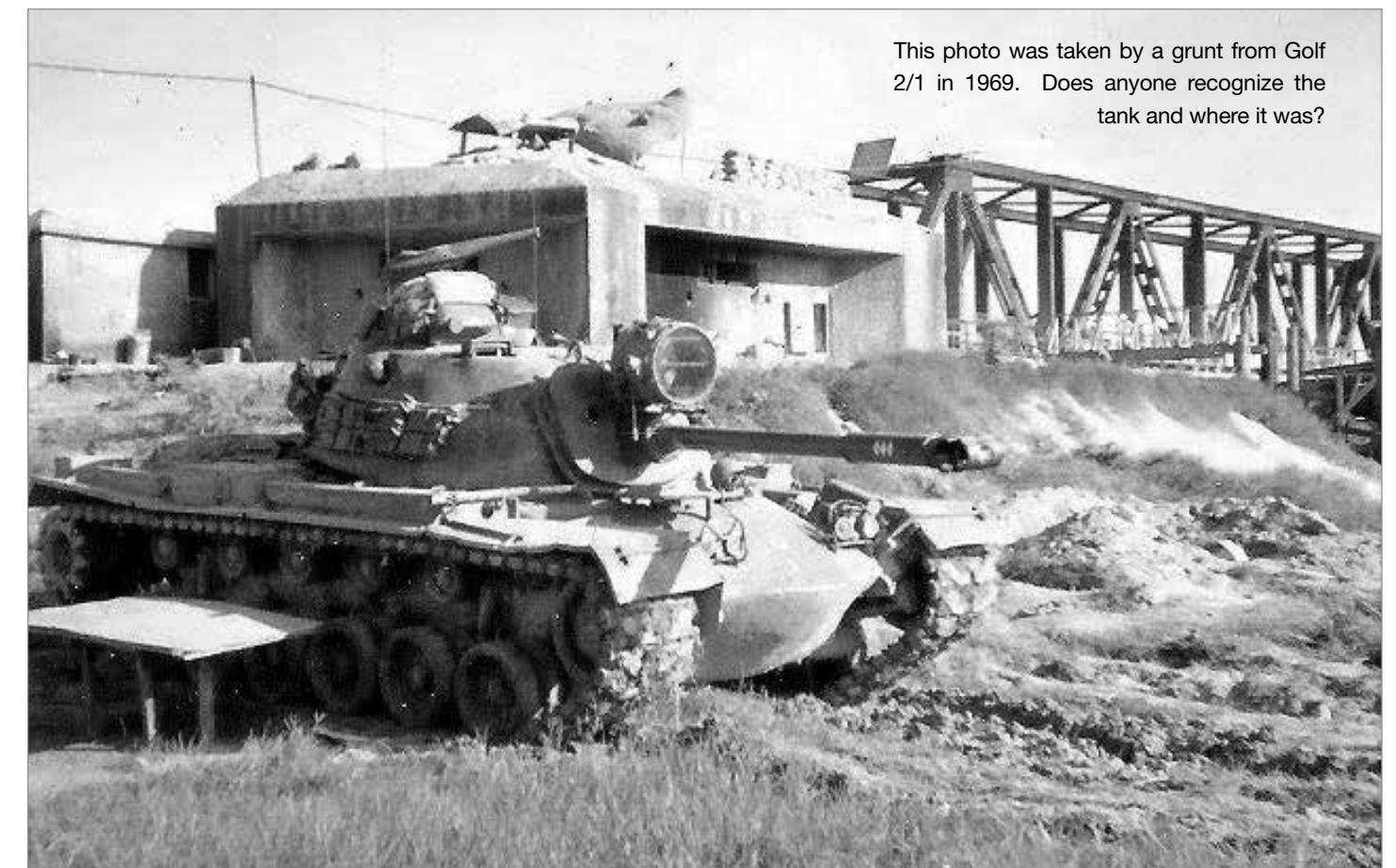
The other day I was standing in line to check out at the Rite Aid pharmacy. I was wearing my USMC hat and, of course, my tat showed. Out of the corner of my eye I catch this old lady walking in and moving toward me so I turn slightly. She said, "You are a Marine?" I replied "Yes ma'am, right out of Viet Nam!" She just stepped right up to me and gave me a huge hug, and said, "Thank you!" And smiled and moved right into the store. How's that for my first real welcome home?



Photo from Vietnam

I remember Operation Lone Eagle like it was yesterday. It was a complete reenactment of the WW2 D-Day, Normandy Landing. One can only wonder what it was like. It was a foggy, warm and humid day on Red Beach, Okinawa. There were close to a hundred US Navy ships off the shoreline. It was still pretty early in the morning and the fog was heavy. You can see in the photo (below) some of the LST and LSD ships just off the shore. I look back to my Marine Corps days and feel as it was one of the best choices that I ever made

PHOTO BY L/CPL JOHN MCCAULEY, USMC 1960-67. ■



To the Great Tank Park in the Sky

David Woodard 1949-2022



Dave was born in Myrtle Point, Oregon on April 15, 1949. Directly after high school he enlisted in the Marines. He went to boot camp at MCRD San Diego and then headed to Vietnam where he was a tanker. He served two tours in Vietnam and was there during the Tet offensive in 1968. He was a proud Marine to the end. When he got home from Vietnam, he married his high

school sweetheart and love of his life, Karen Garkow. They had a son Todd and moved from Coos Bay to Portland, Oregon. He passed away on April 13, 2022.

John this is Dave's wife Karen. I am writing to let you know Dave passed away April 13, 2022. He was diagnosed with metastasized lung cancer in late November. He tried everything but nothing helped. I am positive that it was caused from Agent Orange since he had no cancer in his family. He loved being a Marine and was very proud of that. I know you were Marine buddies and he would want you to know.

John Wear added: Dave and I served with C Co, 5th Tanks on Camp Pendleton in the mid-1960s and again with A Co, 3rd Tanks. Afterward I tried for years to get him to join the VTA and attend our reunions. He always gracefully declined. I am saddened that he passed away without knowing the joy of the USMC VTA fellowship.

Fred Medley

Fred Medley, 74, passed away on February 21, 2020 in Windsor Garden, Florida. Per his request, there will be no public service. Instead the family hopes that those who knew him celebrate his life together and share a memory on the memory wall and add pictures so family and friends can remember him together. He served with C Co, 3rd Tanks in 1965-66. He had been an active member of the USMC VTA.

John F. Holden

John, 73, passed away on June 6, 2019 in Soddy Daisy, TN. John was retired from the U.S. Coast Guard and was a Veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps after 20 years of active service and serving in Vietnam as a tank crewman with A Co, 3rd Tanks in 1968. Graveside services were held, with military honors, at Chattanooga National Cemetery. He had been an active member of the USMC VTA.

Edgar "Yonder" Preston Evans

November 19, 1946 – September 25, 2020

We are sad to announce that on September 25, 2020, at the

age of 73, Edgar Preston Evans of Sulphur, Oklahoma, passed away on September 25, 2020. He served in Vietnam as a tank crewman with B Co, 1st Tanks in 1965 – 66. He had been an active member of the USMC VTA.

Arthur N. Allen

SSgt. Arthur N. Allen, 85, passed away on February 12, 2022. He is survived by his wife Gail and two step-children, Robert and Lisa. He was very proud to have served 20 years in the U.S. Marines. During one of his two tours in Vietnam he was wounded and received a Purple Heart Medal. A private service will be held in a National Cemetery at a future date. He had been an active member of the MCTA.

James T. Dolan



James Timothy "Duce" Donlan, 83, of Largo, passed away quietly at home Dec. 12, 2013. He was originally from Norwood, MA. He was predeceased by his loving wife of 60 years, Eileen. Jim was a Marine, true to his Corps, his whole life serving with Honor, in Korea and Vietnam. He was past President of the Marine Corps. Tankers Association. He was Past Commander of both the

America Legion and the VFW. He was a member of the Marine Corps League, DAY, AMVETS, Army Navy Union and Elks, and supported all of these organizations whenever possible. He had been an active member of the MCTA.

John Perales

July 20, 1941-March 11, 2016



MGySgt John "JP" Perales Oceanside Born in Omaha NE, he passed away suddenly at the age of 74. As a fully decorated Vietnam Veteran he proudly served for 30 years in the United States Marine Corps with the distinguished rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant at his retirement. He is survived by wife of 45 years "Sam;" Being so proud to have been able to serve his country the

majority his time was spent helping others which included volunteering weekly at the Local VA Clinic. Honored to be the Commander of the Oceanside AGIF his goal was to continue to help local high school students obtain scholarships. He was an Executive Board Member of the American Legion Vista Post #365 and Proud Life Long Member of the following: American GI Forum Chapters Omaha NE, VFW Post #7041, USMC Tankers Association, and Veteran Association of North County, Vietnam Veterans of American, American Legion Vista Post #365, So Cal MAGA and many other wonderful organizations. He had been an active member of the MCTA.

Byron Patrick Connolly

1940-2018

Byron Patrick Connolly, best known as "Pat", was born May 4, 1940 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Arthur Byron and Marie Geraldine (Koch) Connolly. Pat was raised in Syracuse, Indiana and upon graduation from Syracuse High School in 1958, was willing and ready to join the U.S. Marine Corps. There is no denying Pat is proud of his 22-year career in the Marine Corps, which includes two tours in Vietnam as a track vehicle driver and mechanic. Upon retirement from the Corps, Pat took a job with Ford Aerospace as a Senior Field Technician to test the Sgt. York track vehicle. Once the program ended, he continued his Federal service as a civilian at Camp Pendleton. Pat loved the Marine Corps, riding his motorcycles, the race track (Indy cars and Sprint cars), dancing, and spending time with family and friends. He had been an active member of the MCTA.

William H. "Jake" Jacobs

February 18, 1944 – November 30, 2014

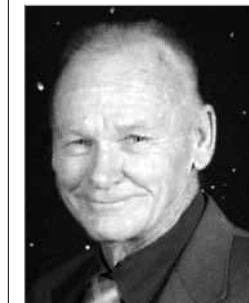


William "Jake" Jacobs, age 70 of Sevierville, TN passed away Sunday, November 30, 2014. He was born on February 18, 1944 in Niagara Falls, NY. Upon completing High School in Niagara Falls, Jake spent 13 years in the US Marine Corps which included two tours in Vietnam. He served as a tank crewman with 3rd Tanks in 1965 – 66 and 1969. And retired as a Gunnery Sergeant receiving a medical discharge after

receiving two Purple Hearts. Jake loved traveling across the United States, visiting military bases and monuments, fishing and spoiling his grandchildren. He was a former member of the USMC VTA.

William Calvert Moody

1944 – 2018



Boyce, Louisiana-On the 28th of November, 2018, William Calvert Moody, age 74, went to be with his Heavenly Father. Mr. Moody proudly served our country in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam. He served with A and B Cos, 1st Tanks in 1968. He was also a past member of the USMC VTA.

He was born on February 28, 1944 in Alexandria, LA, to the late William A. Moody and Frances E. Walker Moody

Hall. He was a devoted husband to his wife, Jackie Moody and a loving father to his children: sons, Leon Moody, Jerry Moody, Billy Moody and Josh Moody and daughters, Kerry Wilson, Jackie Smith and Sara Moody; a wonderful grandfather to numerous grandchildren. Following his military career he went on to be the owner and operator of Cal's AC and Electrical Contracting Company.

Lloyd Fitzpatrick

Thank you for sending the Sponson Box magazine. Lloyd always enjoyed reading it. Unfortunately he passed away March 3, 2022.

Semper Fi,

Sharon – his widow

We want to provide to you the names of VTA members who have passed away since our organization's founding over the July 4th weekend in 1999. Please note that the names are arranged in chronological order of the time of death after they joined our brotherhood. May each and every one of these Marines sit on the right hand of God for all of Eternity.

Backer Gary	Duncan Gene	Martin Otis	Cotton William	Lynch Robert
Enax Richard	Knifin John	Roberts Thomas	Schuyler John	Walters Russell
Fager Wendell	Fischer Douglas	Glisch Thomas	Lochridge IV Willard	Gagnon Donald
Foreman Mac	Firing, Sr Fritz	Prindle David	Heeren Harold	Tiscia Joseph
Harr Ronald	Thompson, Jr Norman	Weigand Philip	McMillan Donald	Miller Jay
Holly Gerald	Brown, Jr Cecil	Spencer Jerry	Search George	Anderson Mark
Meruez Frank	Gibson Gary	Baranski Thomas	Kues Edwin	Snell Albert
Osborn John	McVay Roger	Tannehill Lee	Falk Stephen	Ritch Pete
Rodriguez John	Waters Al	Fullmer Rae	Littman James	McQuade Ira
Sams Melvin	Pena Dave	Bailey John	Tatosky Robert	Turner Dave
Seiler John	Gardner John	Miller Jacques	Laurent Billy	Peksens Richard
Wille Emil	Shirey Thomas	Frano, Jr Peter	Cummings Gary	McCabe Avery
Winget Robert	Doetker Kent	Wilderman Dan	Morris Donald	Montemarano Carmine
Gerszewski Richard	Bedoar John	Yohn Karl	Chambers John	Fuentes Mario
Davis Roger	Mendes Lenny	Kramer LeRoy	Beck John	Ogle George
Staats Larry	Hummer George	Langford James	Hodum Gerard	Doyle George
Badggor Patrick	Ravino Gerald	Lewis Jodie	Curtis James	Wright William
Hoekstra Frederic	MacLaren Bruce	Nolan Mike	Wokaty Daniel	Fournier Harold
Boardman Robert	DeSpain Chris	Thatcher Charles	Rivero Frederico	Reese John
Harper James	Brandi, Sr Michael	Nawn Robert	Rogers Patrick	Irish Bernard
Boll Clinton	Kaleleiki, Jr Samuel	Slovik Frank	Gilman Michael	Allen Arthur
Wilder Jack	Fischer Charles	Dunphy Terry	Carty John	Donlan James
Ruble Robert	White James	Brumet Timothy	Jarnot Fidelas	Perales John
Guffey James	Brickey Vernon	Wojciechowski Edward	Reveille Bud	Connolly Byron
Doten Charles	Perez Ernest	Person Barnett	Tuck Charles	
Suvlett Warren	Lawson James	Donnelly Justin	Barrios Amador	
Hall, Jr William	Delleville Robert	Trevall Albert	Hightshoe Douglas	
Duty William	Hanas Benedict	Clock Darrell	Walters David	

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in a 2016 issue of our magazine.

An Open Letter to the Membership of USMCVTA

BY LEE DILL

You know me, I'm just like you. I am just a no body that joined the "Corps" during the Vietnam War, I did my job and I came home. Am I famous? No! Am I forgotten? Absolutely. Was anything I did special? No, not to us because we all just did what we had to do. Did I do a good job? Absolutely, I survived my tour, and built a life. Will you be remembered? Only if you want to be. How will I get to be remembered or how will others that died in battle along side of me get remembered? It has taken me a long time to try to figure out an answer to that last question.

Picture this, its football season, a 10 yard pass is thrown, the receiver catches it, the crowd roars and he and the quarterback do a 10 second dance contest to celebrate. Why? Because they did their job. Did we get to celebrate on coming home from Vietnam? We did our job. You know the answer to that!

I was lucky, I got to go to college as a history major. Later I earned my living in IT but at heart I am a history buff and a "wannabe writer." When I talk with people my age, whose fathers have just passed away, and I see a flag on the coffin, I asked where did he serve, or what ship was he on, or what did he do? Most of the time the answer is "I don't know." My mouth drops open and I say "How could you not know? Didn't you ask? Didn't he tell you or write it down?" And most time the answer is: "He did not want to talk about it or he didn't think it was important." But the absolute truth of the matter is that it was important and he was special and what he did should be remembered but his story is now tossed into the dust bin of history; like it never even happened.

So why am I bothering you with this? Because that pain-in-the-ass, John Wear, asked me to. So, here's the scoop on me: I joined USMCVTA early (in 1999) but never attended a reunion. My reasons were that I only kept in touch with two of my Marine tanker buddies from Vietnam, Tim Hanks and Dennis Martin, and to be very honest I really didn't keep in touch with them very well. I knew almost no Vietnam veterans; somehow it turns out that all of my friends have always been 5 to 10 years younger than me and the vast majority still are. From 1997 until 2013 I

was a Boy Scout leader and while I stressed love of God and Country to the Scouts I still didn't have time for reunions, I was too busy.

It did occur to me that I did want to leave my history (Tour of Duty) on paper and I decided to write it for friends and family. So I wrote it and I included photographs, maps and basically I did a memory dump of what I thought was important from Day 1 of my tour in Vietnam to my last day. I was very pleased with the results, printed the document and it was well received by my family and a few selected friends. It did generate some questions that I explained as they came up, but overall it helped them to understand me. Things we Marines considered normal were hard for the non-military friends and family to imagine.

So what brought me to a VTA reunion and led me to write to you-all? I read the Sponson Box article written by Ed Hiltz that ran a few issues ago. I had spent time with Ed in An Hoa from January '69 until he went home in April. When we were in-country he and I had exchanged home addresses since we were both from Baltimore. I actually called Ed about 15 years ago. We were cordial to each other but were both too busy with our families and careers to do anything else. Ed wrote the article and it was pretty good. It was a normal type Vietnam article, with no "John Wayne stuff." It was just "Here's what I did" sort of stuff. Long story short; I reconnected with Ed and we both went to the 2015 Washington, DC reunion. It turns out that we both just did just one day but we both went in order to see up close and personal exactly what UMCVTA is all about.

While it was there, I ran into John Wear, and things have been different since then. In our conversation, I admitted to writing my own Vietnam history and John asked if I had written pages of stuff for friends and family and then why I had not contributed them to the Sponson Box. I replied to John that in all honesty even though I did a tour, and a six month extension, my tour really wasn't that "bad" or glorious. I never hit a mine, took an RPG, or was wounded; I thought my story would be boring and uninteresting. John replied the VTA wanted to document everyone's tour, no matter how

mundane or boring and he said that they were all important. Since then I have looked at my book and have recently been feeding John stories, non-heroic as they are.

Which now brings me to you. Have you told your family anything about Vietnam? Have you written anything down? Here is the part you may have a hard time believing: They really do want to know what you did. There were very few tankers out of all the Marines who served in Vietnam. I ask you: Who could cause more damage in an hour? A company of grunts or one tank working out? Correct. The one tank. We were the equalizers, so your family and friends need to know what you did. We need to know what you did.

Yes I know it's hard to write, but the more you do it the easier it is. Write an outline of the months you were there. Try to remember each month and who you were with, what tank, what job, and what you did. Even an incomplete story is better than no story. So please write or have a son or daughter write while you talk. If parts of the tour hurts to talk about leave it out but anything is better than nothing.

The history books are filled, unfortunately about how the war was stopped thanks to the protestors. We all know most of the protestors where limp-dick males that were afraid to go. We were not afraid, we served loyally and faithfully until we rotated home and moved on with life.

When we went in, we all loved the Corps. Some of us, when we left, it was not so much love. I will honestly admit, when I got my 6 month early out, I ran for the gate and never looked back. It seems that I could not adapt to the stateside Marine Corps after Vietnam. In Vietnam I felt I was doing something important but in Le Jeune, I was dying in place.

"Write my friend; just write something on paper and take it out of your memory bank where it's been just sitting dormant for nearly 50 years."

- Lee Dill 3/6/16

GUESS WHO Photo Contest

Can you guess who the Marine is on this photo? The first person to contact John Wear at 719.495.5998 with the right answer will have his name entered in a contest for a chance to win a yet un-named mediocre prize.



Last Issue Winner

Last issue's winner was Steve Rasner who called at 12:22 PM (Mountain Time Zone) on Thursday, July 7, 2022, to identify Rick Lewis as the Marine on the right.

Rick adds: To the right of me is Greg Auclair who also became a 1st Sgt

That picture is 1966 at Charlie Co CP that was NW of Da Nang. John Wear notes: This photo may have given us the most responses in several years. And as a side comment, Craig Newberry called and told me that he thinks that he took the photo. OOO-RAH!!!



Ronald Reagan got a Marine Recruiting Letter while he was President of the United States — his response was classic!

Ronald Reagan got a Marine Recruiting Letter while he was President of the United States — his response was classic!

Even though he was 73 years old and serving as President of the United States at the time, Ronald Reagan received a letter from the Marine Corps asking him if he would like to enlist in 1984. It may have been a clerical error or just a practical joke from thep service to its commander-in-chief, or in the words of Reagan in his response, the result of “a lance corporal’s overactive imagination.” In any case, on Tuesday the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Company shared on its Facebook page the letter he sent back to then-Commandant Gen. Paul X. Kelley on May 31, 1984, appears below ... and well, it’s classic.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
MAY 31, 1984

Dear General Kelley,

I regret that I must decline the attached invitation to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

As proud as I am of the inference concerning my physical fitness, it might be better to continue as the Commander-in-Chief. Besides, at the present time it would be rather difficult to spend ten weeks at Parris Island.

The recruiter notes that "had (I) joined six months ago, I would have a whole new life now." There is no doubt about that. As much as the other political party would appreciate the notion, Nancy is happy with the house and I am totally satisfied with my job. As for the immediate future, I have the kind of tenacity the Corps is famous for in my resolve to stay here for the next four years. Would you consider a deferment until 1989?

On a more serious note, P. X., I'm sure my invitation came as the result of a lance corporal's overactive imagination. Nevertheless, please let him know that he honored me in believing that I have what it takes to become a United States Marine.

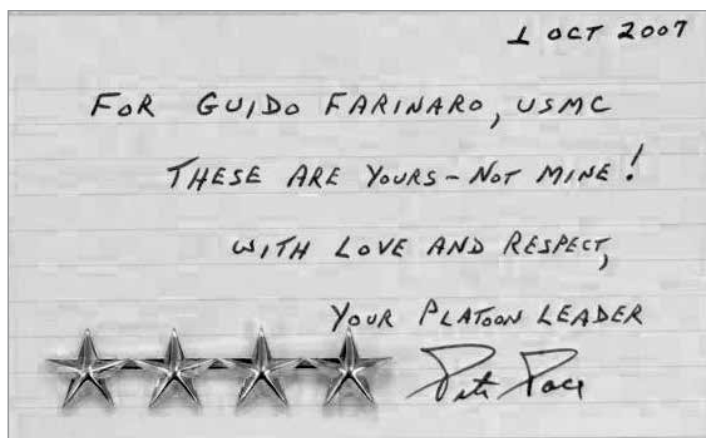
Semper Fidelis,
Ronald Reagan

General Paul X. Kelley
Commandant
United States Marine Corps
Washington, D. C. 20380

(It’s worth noting that Reagan served stateside in the U.S. Army Air Force’s first motion picture unit during World War II).

US Marine General Peter Pace at the Wall

On October 1, 2007, US Marine 4-Star General Peter Pace, shortly after turning over the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Admiral Mullen, visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and left three cards at the Wall, each adorned with four stars. On them were the words you see below – each was a personal notes to three men who served with 2nd Lt Pace in Hue City, Vietnam, during the Tet Offensive in 1968 and who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. General Pace, you were a great leader and it was an honor to serve in your military.



The cards were personally addressed to each of the three KIA Marines and said something like:
*These are yours – not mine!
With Love and Respect
Your Platoon Leader*
Pete Pace 1 Oct 2007

Back in 1997, Dick Carey, the founder of our amazing brotherhood, wanted to have a reunion for Marines who served in-country with Bravo Company, 3rd Tanks. As time progressed, the gathering morphed into a reunion of all US Marine tankers and tank support personnel that served in Vietnam... and it was to have happened in November 1998. We ended up holding our very first reunion over the July 4th weekend in 1999. Below is the very first (one page) “Sponson Box” sent out in the summer of 1998. ■

THE SPONSON BOX

USMC VIETNAM TANKERS REUNION



Volume 1, Issue 1

Once a Marine Tanker...



Always a Marine Tanker...



Now hear this!

The first Marine Corps reunion of the 1st and 3d Tank Battalions that served during Vietnam will be held in Washington, D.C. on November 7,8,9 1998. This reunion will mark the 30th Anniversary of the 1968 Tet Truce Offensive and the halfway point of the involvement of United States Marine Corps Tank Battalions in this country’s most controversial war.

As a veteran of this war it is important that you recognize your historical contributions, and the involvement of Marine Corps tanks. A recognition of the crews and support personnel have been overlooked in the history of the Vietnam War.

There are many untold stories of the sacrifice and bravery of the men who served with the 1st and 3d Tank Battalions during this long war. You now have an opportunity to come to this reunion and meet with former comrades and share stories and events with them. Also a historian will be putting together a history of the men, the platoons, the companies and the battalions that will be published after this historic reunion.

All reunion participants will receive a free copy of the *History of Marine Tanks in the Vietnam War*. You will want to attend this historical event.

If you have a story you would like to submit for the *History of Marine Corps Tanks in the Vietnam War* please contact Dick Carey directly by calling (508) 548-9887 for details on how to do this. Thank you.

138 Died in Vietnam

From 1965 to 1970 there were 138 officers and men who paid the ultimate price while serving their country in Vietnam.

Of those that died there were 16 officers, 108 tank crewman and 14 tank mechanic/crewmen.

Here is a listing of the officers who died serving in the 1st and 3d Tank battalions.

02/12/67 - CAMBY, STEVE W. <i>Capt</i>	Age: 26, Spindale, NC
04/12/67 - ANDERSON, JACK H. <i>2Lt</i>	Age: 31, Livingston, MT
05/18/67 - DOBBIN, LOUIS D., II <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 23, Brighton, MA
07/06/67 - HAYES, WAYNE M. <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 23, Menomonie, WI
01/24/68 - KENT, DANIEL W. <i>Capt</i>	Age: 24, Auburndale, MA
02/02/68 - LIA, NICHOLAS A. <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 23, New York, NY
05/26/68 - WILLIAMS, FRED., H, JR/ <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 24, Sutter Creek, CA
08/29/68 - DAILEY, HAROLD C., II <i>2Lt</i>	Age: 21, Austin, TX
07/22-69 - HAMILTON, ROLAND C. <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 26, Anaheim, CA
07/28/69 - WUNSCH, MICHAEL C. <i>Capt</i>	Age: 25, Feasterville, PA
08/24/69 - SCHAEFER, CHARLES H. <i>1Lt</i>	Age: 24, Streator, IL

In the next issue I will list the 14 platoon maintenance personnel, retriever crew and company mechanics/crewman who died in Vietnam. Following issues will list the 108 crewmen from 1st and 3d Tank Battalions



E-MAIL ME AT...
WarVeteran@aol.com

Dean T. Lund

HOME OF RECORD: Syracuse, New York

Silver Star

AWARDED FOR ACTIONS DURING Vietnam War

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Battalion: 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

GENERAL ORDERS:

CITATION: The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver

Star to Staff Sergeant Dean T. Lund (MCSN: 1572519), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving with Company A, First Tank Battalion, FIRST Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against insurgent communist (Viet Cong) forces in the Republic of Vietnam. On 6 February 1968, Staff Sergeant Lund was a member of a Southern Sector Defense Command Reaction Force participating in a company-size search and destroy operation in the vicinity of Tuy Loan Hamlet (1) in Quang Nam Province. Late in the afternoon, his platoon was moving across an open field toward a tree line when it suddenly came under intense machine gun and automatic weapons fire from a heavily

fortified enemy force entrenched in the tree line. In the initial moments of the fire fight, the platoon sustained several casualties and was temporarily pinned down by the heavy volume of enemy fire. Observing that four Marines were pinned down by fire from an enemy machine gun position, Staff Sergeant Lund unhesitatingly disregarded his own safety, ran forward and threw a hand grenade into the enemy emplacement, destroying the position.

Displaying exceptional courage, and repeatedly ignoring the hostile fire around him, he selflessly attacked the enemy positions with hand grenades, significantly decreasing the hostile fire in the area and enabling the Marines to maneuver to covered positions. During the ensuing fire fight, Staff Sergeant Lund rallied his companions, aided the wounded and directed effective fire against the enemy. When two amphibian tractors arrived to evacuate the casualties, he fearlessly led the vehicles throughout the fire-swept area, contributing immeasurably to the orderly and expeditious movement of the wounded from the hazardous area. Although sustaining painful fragmentation wounds to his face, Staff Sergeant Lund steadfastly continued to encourage and assist those around him and subsequently accompanied the platoon as it advanced through the enemy positions and secured the area. His indomitable fighting

spirit and sincere concern for his fellow Marines inspired all who observed him, undoubtedly were instrumental in saving several Marine lives and contributed immeasurably to the accomplishment of his unit's mission. By his extraordinary courage, bold initiative and selfless devotion to duty at great personal risk, Staff Sergeant Lund upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.



V. A. News & Updates

For more VA information please go to our website
www.USMCVTA.org

Military Retirees and Dependents with ID Cards That Don't Expire Need to Get Replacements within 4 Years

Retirees and military family members who have identification cards with no expiration date can choose to upgrade to the new Next Generation Uniform Services Identification, or USID, cards whenever it's convenient—as long as it's done within the next four years, according to the Defense Department.

There is no looming deadline for use of those old non-active duty cards without expiration dates, but the department expects to completely phase out and replace them with the next-generation IDs, which are more durable and have enhanced security features, by 2026, Maj. Charlie Dietz, a spokesman, told Military.com.

In the meantime, cards with expiration dates are required to be replaced within 90 days of elapsing. The Defense Department began the effort to update all those IDs to the new format in July 2020, but the changeover hit delays caused by the pandemic.

“DoD plans to phase out and cancel the existing card forms in 2026 when all existing cards with an actual expiration date will have expired,” Dietz wrote in an email. “After then, only the USID card will be accepted for installation and benefits access.”

The USID format for military retirees and dependents represents the first change to those identification cards in nearly 30 years; the last update was in 1993. The new design closely resembles the Common Access Card, or CAC, format issued to active-duty troops and department civilians.

But there was uncertainty among those with cards that list the expiration as indefinite. The IDs are needed to access military facilities and to confirm eligibility for various military benefits, so missing a deadline or losing the identification could disrupt cardholders' lives. Expired cards can be confiscated at base gates.

Those with cards with no expiration dates “may have the card replaced at their convenience,” according to Dietz. The department recommends they go to the ID Card Office Online and use the office locator to find a site that issues the new cards and book an appointment.

Retirees and their dependents, dependents of active-duty troops, reserve members and Medal of Honor recipients are among those who will receive the USID cards. A description of the new cards and a complete list of who is eligible can be found here.

At the onset of the pandemic in April 2020, the Defense Department extended the deadlines for replacing expiring cards in an attempt to keep the military community from gathering in issuance offices and spreading COVID-19. By February 2021, more than 200,000 of the new IDs had been issued.

“Social distancing and other pandemic safety precautions at DoD ID card sites worldwide has delayed the progress of existing card replacement, but generally most of those cardholders who needed to replace an expired card have done so,” Dietz said Wednesday.

[Source Military.com | By Travis Tritten 14 Jul 2022

Vet Internet Availability Update 01: Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

An updated program from the federal government offers free or

discounted internet to many Americans, including many active duty families, veterans and their survivors. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), administered by the FCC, replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program which, while open to more people, was a temporary program enacted during the COVID-19 crisis. It ended March 1, 2022. Those eligible for the ACP include those receiving other federal benefits, such as:

- A VA Veterans Pension
- A VA Survivors Pension (also known as Death Pension)
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), or food stamps
- WIC (Women, infants and children) assistance
- Medicaid
- Free or discounted school lunch or breakfast
- Pell grants
- Supplemental security income (SSI) from Social Security

Those with an income that is at twice the federal poverty guideline or lower are also eligible. That includes a family of four earning no more than \$55,500; a family of two earning no more than \$36,620 or a single person who earns no more than \$27,180. There are higher limits in Alaska and Hawaii. Persons who have a Lifeline phone can also apply for the program. Others may be eligible as well. See the ACP website <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/do-i-qualify> for more information. Even if you aren't eligible under these existing stipulations, you may be eligible for the program if you are eligible for discounted internet from your service provider.

The ACP program will pay up to \$30 monthly (\$75 for those residing on tribal lands) directly to the internet provider. That means if you have a discounted program like Internet Essentials from 37 Comcast, the nation's largest internet service provider, it may cost you nothing as a participant in the ACP program. The ACP program also provides a one-time discount of up to \$100 to cover the cost of a device to access the internet.

This can be a laptop or desktop computer or a tablet computer. It does not include mobile phones, large phones or “phablets” that can make mobile calls. The participant must contribute a portion of the total cost, and the device cannot cost more than \$150. Many providers offer these devices at a large discount to low-income customers; for instance, Comcast's Internet Essentials program offers a choice of a windows or Chromebook laptop computer for \$149.99. There is a limit of one device per household. You can apply directly to the government at <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/how-to> apply, but in many cases, it may be easier to contact your local internet provider directly to see whether they participate in the program. The FCC has a list of all internet providers participating in the program at <https://www.fcc.gov/affordable-connectivity-program-providers> to assist you in finding a local provider.

Either way you apply, be aware that lots of documentation will be required with your application. You need to show proof of eligibility: either a benefits letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or another qualifying agency; proof of address; copies of identification documents and other documentation. If you are applying based on income, you may need to submit copies of tax returns or other documents.

[Source: The MOAA Newsletter | May 12, 2022]

Medicare Advantage Update 12: IG Reports Some Plans Denying Medically Necessary Care

Medicare Advantage Plans that have become popular among many seniors are offered by private insurance companies. They are advertised as alternatives to traditional Medicare that can be less expensive and provide a wider array of benefits than the traditional government-run program offers. More than 27 million seniors are covered through private Medicare Advantage plans, which receive a set amount to cover each enrollee's projected cost of care. The plans receive higher "risk adjusted" payments for sicker individuals with more projected medical costs.

Those plans are offered because they are very profitable for the companies. However, a new report from the Office of the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Health and Human Services raises troubling questions about how some companies are trying to increase their profits. According to the report, some companies have denied access to medically necessary care by denying prior authorization and payment requests that, in fact, met Medicare coverage rules. They have done that by:

- Using clinical criteria that are not contained in Medicare coverage rules;
- Requesting unnecessary documentation; and
- Making manual review errors and system errors.

They have also sometimes denied payments to providers for some services that met both Medicare coverage rules and the companies' own billing rules. Denying requests that meet Medicare coverage rules may prevent or delay beneficiaries from receiving medically necessary care and can burden providers.

Under traditional Medicare, there may be an incentive for hospitals and doctors to over treat patients because they are paid for each service and test performed. But the fixed payment given to private plans provides "the potential incentive for insurers to deny access to services and payment in an attempt to increase their profits," the report concluded. According to one health care lawyer, people signing up for Medicare Advantage are surrendering their right to have a doctor determine what is medically necessary, he said, rather than have the insurer decide. The investigators urged Medicare officials to beef up oversight of Advantage plans and provide consumers "with clear, easily accessible information about serious violations."

Medicare officials said in a statement that they are reviewing the findings to determine the appropriate next steps, and that plans found to have repeated violations will be subject to increasing 86 penalties. The agency "is committed to ensuring that people with Medicare Advantage have timely access to medically necessary care," officials said.

[Source: TSCL | May 2, 2022 ++]

Home Health Care Workers Current and Future Shortage Concerns

The number of adults aged 60 and older in the U.S. is expected to increase 30 percent by 2050. Even now, more seniors and people with disabilities are choosing to stay in their homes rather than going into institutional care. As a result, home health aides are predicted to be one of the fastest-growing nations in the next decade. However, there is a shortage of home health aides now and there is concern that the need for them will outstrip the number of people who are willing to go into the field.

One of the big reasons is the low pay home health workers receive and employers say they are already struggling to attract serious candidates. In fact, some fast-food restaurants, like McDonalds, now

pay their employees more than some home health care workers get. Experts say raising wages is an important first step, but it is not the only change that is needed. Home health aides need more training opportunities and support to develop specialized skills, and most do not have career opportunities that would allow them to move up into other related health care or social work positions.

Medicaid pays for many home health care workers and in order to help improve the situation the Biden administration has proposed investing \$150 billion towards home health care as part of its Build Back Better Act. But the legislation, which also contains a provision to lower drug prices by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with drug companies, is stalled because of disagreements within Biden's own party. TSCL supports the legislation precisely because of the two provisions regarding drug prices and health care and we urge you to contact your senators, especially if you live in West Virginia, and urge them to find a way to pass the bill this year.

[Source: TSCL | May 9, 2022 ++]

Probate Update 01: How to Avoid It

Probate is the process of proving the validity of a will and supervising the administration of an estate usually in the probate court. State law governs the proceedings in the probate court, so the process can vary from state to state. Supervising the administration of an estate can result in additional expense, unwanted publicity, and delays in the distribution of estate assets for a year or longer, which is why planning to avoid the probate process may be beneficial. There are several ways in which assets may transfer on death directly from the decedent/owner to others without probate. The following are some of the more common ways.

Create a living trust. A revocable living trust is a separate legal entity that can be set up to hold assets. You can transfer most assets to a living trust while you're alive and have complete access to and control of those assets during your lifetime. You can also direct who is to receive assets held in trust upon your death. The use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations, and usually involves upfront costs and ongoing administrative fees. You should consider the counsel of an experienced estate planning professional before implementing a trust strategy.

Name a beneficiary. Many types of contracts allow you, as the account owner, to designate a beneficiary or beneficiaries to receive the assets directly upon your death, avoiding probate. Examples include life insurance, annuities, and retirement accounts such as IRAs and 401(k)'s.

Make accounts payable on death. Certain other types of accounts, such as bank accounts and brokerage accounts, also allow you to designate a beneficiary to inherit the account at your death without going through probate.

Own real estate jointly or create a life estate. Owning property jointly, as joint tenants with rights of survivorship, is another way to transfer property at death while avoiding probate. When one joint owner dies, property ownership automatically transfers to the surviving joint owner. You can also create a life estate in the property. In this case, you transfer ownership of the property to others, often called remainder beneficiaries, while you retain a life estate in the property. This means you have the right to use and control the property during your lifetime. Upon your death, complete ownership of the property passes to the remainder beneficiaries.

[Source: Navy Federal Investment Services | David Hammond | May 2022 ++]

What Members Are Doing

Cappy's Father's Day Gift



Cappy Everhard got a real treat for his pickup from his kids

Garry Hall's Corvette



Garry Writes: For Throw Back Thursday: This picture is way back in the day when I used to restore, sell and show Corvettes. This was 1974 Sun-Commercial newspaper photo after winning the Bloomington Corvette Corral as Grand Champion Overall. Did all the restoration myself except paint. Sure wish I owned it now!!!!

Clyde Hoch's Bike

The oil painting is of my last tank in Vietnam. It was done by Marc Cherms who does a lot of military magazine covers. The painting on the motorcycle tank was all hand done. I was never told who did it. A friend had this bike and sold it to another friend of mine. The friend who now owned it didn't like it and it sat in his garage. When I first saw it the tires were coated in mud. A foot peg was broken off and it

wouldn't run. I actually felt sorry for it. He asked if I would get it running. I tried but failed.



He offered it to me cheap. It just so happens I have a neighbor with a small 3 car garage where he works on dirt bikes and quads. I asked him if he would look at it and I told him I wanted to have it repainted and how I wanted it but most of all running.

He agreed and he took it to his garage and tore it apart. He sent the fenders, tank, and side panels out to get the paint job. In the meantime, he took the carbonators off and rebuilt them. The paint job cost more than the bike. Now I have to keep it clean.

We have a group who is our brother group of bikers. They are a great group they call themselves 11 Bravo MC. They all wear the Veterans Brotherhood patch.

Bob Skeels' Catch



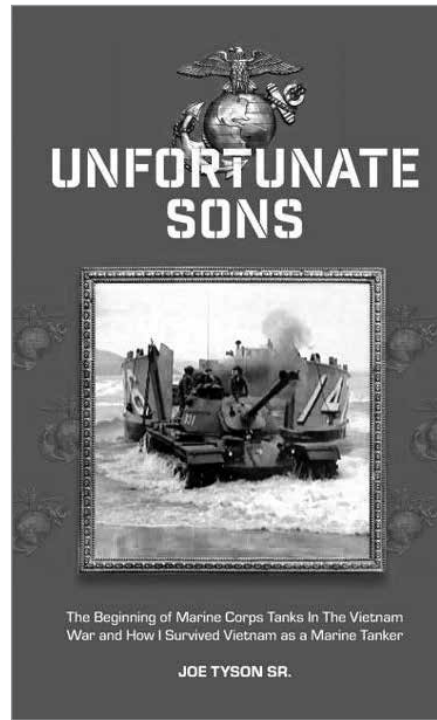
How about this 18 inch Rainbow caught in Norway Lake about 5 hours ago? My buddy caught a slightly shorter but fatter LGBQ et al trout about 30 mins. Later-both on Mooseluk wobblers lures.

Bob Haller – Honor Guard



I was thinking, I was on a USMC Honor Guard detail way back in 1968 and I think I mentioned to you that I was thinking about joining the Honor Guard at the Washington Crossing (PA) National Veterans Cemetery ... which I just joined. There are 54 years between the two honors of doing so.

Joe Tyson's Book Signing Event



Joe recently had a very successful book signing of his personal Vietnam experience book *Unfortunate Sons*, at the USS Yorktown museum at Patriot's Point, Charleston, SC.

Short Stories

Editor's Note: Since this is the 4th issue of 2022 and in a few months it will be the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we decided to include a holiday story for your enjoyment.

Christmas in Vietnam

WRITTEN BY MARINE CAPT BOB BRENNAN, THE CO OF ALFA COMPANY, 1/12

My unit was in a place called Con Thien which was a little more than a half mile from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). It was a place where we could view the "Arc Light" (B-52 strikes) to the northwest and "Freedom Bridge" (the bridge separating North and South Vietnam) to the northeast.

On December 23rd I was told that we were being relieved by Vietnamese Marines but there were not enough choppers (helicopters) to get us all back to Dong Ha so my unit would have to stay at Con Thien for several more days. Though disappointed, we knew it was necessary. However, on December 24th I was told that we now had enough choppers to take us all back. After we arrived, we cleaned our weapons, inventoried all equipment, and got our first real showers in over six months. We also received all our mail and Christmas packages from

home and to be honest, we even got two beers each. During all of this it was great to see this diverse group of people taking care of each other and caring for each other.

In the early evening, a Sergeant and a Corporal came to my tent and asked if they could get a tree for Christmas. I told them "yes" but to be careful because the United States had to pay for trees that were knocked down in certain areas. Later that evening, while I was writing a letter home, these same men along with my Executive Officer came in and asked if I would come out and sing Christmas Carols with them. It was about 2345 (11:45 pm) Christmas eve and when I went out, there was this beautiful scraggly tree decorated with the bows, ribbons and little figurines that the Marines had received in their Christmas packages. One mother had cut out a canned

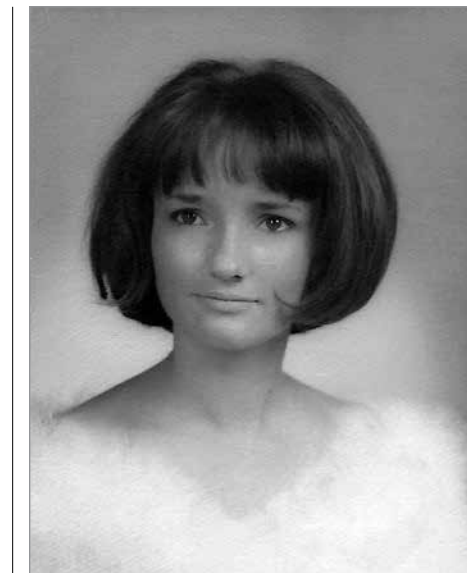
ham tin where she put contact paper and built a Nativity scene. Another mother had sent her son a wind-up train set. These things and more had been placed under this beautiful tree. There were over one hundred Marines standing around that tree; Hispanics, African-Americans, and Whites; Catholic, Protestant, Baptist and at least one Jewish youngster. They were close to 10,000 miles away from home holding hands and singing Christmas Carols.

When I went back to my tent to finish my letter home I wrote, with tears in my eyes, "If I couldn't be home with you and the kids tonight there is no place on earth that I would rather be than with these young Marines because this is what Christmas is truly all about."

42 YEARS LATER

BY RON DUDEK

Okay here we go. John, you're not the only one that likes redheads. Kind of a long story but bear with me. Guess we both are at the age where we are looking down Memory Lane, it's too bad we can't go walking back down there in real life. Well in 1966 I came home from Viet Nam on my first tour. I bought a brand new 67 Chevy Malibu convertible in Chicago and drove it out to California with my cousin Mike. I was stationed at Camp Pendleton on Main Side. Well, as you well know when you have a car in the Marine Corps you might as well be a damn general, you have more friends than you ever had in your life.



One fine sunny day I'm driving off the base headed to Oceanside. On the side of the road, I see these two hot babes waiting for the bus, I drive on for about five minutes then I get second thoughts so I do a U turn and go back to try to pick them up. The one had just came out to visit her boyfriend who was going to Viet Nam. The pretty redhead with her girlfriend accompanying her was a full-blooded Cherokee Indian. I gave them a ride and dropped them off at the Greyhound bus depot since they were on their way to the LAX airport. I knew what time their bus was leaving so after dropping them off, I went and grabbed some chow, then >>

I got second thoughts again ... you would think I would have learned the first time. Why didn't I get her phone number? I was smoking at that time ... one of the many addictions I picked up from the Nam. I wrote my address down on the inside of a book of matches in very small print. I then took off on Highway 101 to catch up with that bus. I caught the bus and as I drove, I saw that the two girls were sitting on the right side. I blew my horn and signaled for them to open the window. They opened the window and

I had one shot so I threw the match book right in the window waved and took off. About a month later I got a letter from Wilma Leach, the redhead.

Well, I did not like being a troop handler at Staging Battalion checking in young 0311 going to Nam, watching them saying goodbye to their girlfriends. So, I volunteered to go back for second tour. That was in October 67. I drove my car home and visited "Willie" in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Well, she fell in love with me. I drove back to Chicago dropped my car off and took

off for Viet Nam after my 30 day leave. She wrote me for several months and the last letter was the infamous "Dear John."

Now 42 years later I am sitting in my study and I get a phone call. The lady on the other end is asking me these questions and all my answers were "Yes." Well, it was Willie trying to locate me after all these years. She apologized for that Dear John letter and regretted it all those years and she is still in love with me, go figure! We still keep in touch.

Thoughts from Gary McDaniel

The other night as I was sitting so comfortably in my easy chair, I noted in the Wall Street Journal that Cadillac has plans to make the ultimate in an electric vehicle! From what the article said, the company plans to make three hundred of them at a cost of Three Hundred Thousand dollars each! Want to get in line? No, me neither.

Since my bank is so close to a local Ford dealership, I made my weekly deposit, got a change order and then strolled across the parking lot to look at the new pickup trucks. Won't be able to buy one of those either. Then it really dawned on me; since I make a pretty good living and can no longer afford a new vehicle, there is no way that the average American can continue to pop for a new vehicle. Somehow I think we will soon be at the point of the Cubans....driving fifty and sixty-year old cars, all the while patching and repairing to keep them rolling! Been to a car repair shop lately? High prices there too. Before it is too late, better go

get a copy of your car's do-it-yourself book and get ready.

Five Dollar gas? Yep, 'tis here. This Old Geezer remembers when 1630 hours on Friday rolled around at Camp Le Jeune and those of us who got liberty that weekend headed for the Traffic Circle. There, for one dollar per hundred miles, we could pay that fortunate person who had a vehicle to carry us the 300 miles from the base to Washington, DC, with trip ending at Bassins' at 14th and Penn. From there, a short walk to the Soldiers', Sailors', Marines' and Airmen's House where for another buck we could get a rack, a locker, and a hot shower. Next morning, fully rested and cleanly shaven, we headed out to see those West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland girls who had moved to DC to work in the hundreds of secretarial or clerical jobs that were always available but hard to find in the small towns from whence they came. Ah, those were the days for a single Marine!

This Old Geezer also remembers

the poster always hanging in the Day Room. It was a map of the East Coast with circles delineating where/how far you could go on a Weekend Liberty Pass, a Three-Day Pass, or a Ninety-Six Hour Pass. No one, as far as I am able to determine, really took that seriously.

'Twas many a time I piled into a car with my Liberty Card in my billfold, paid six dollars, and headed to Atlanta with the ultimate destination somewhere in South Alabama! Again, oh the fun and excitement of a single Marine on liberty in Dixie! Those of us who made multiple trips to Atlanta always planned a stop at a well-known restaurant in Saluda, South Carolina where the tastiest hamburgers in the South were served by the prettiest South Carolinian girls. All of that seems like ten thousand years ago. As I close, I make this statement: Sometimes I think this is not the same Country into which I was born! Ever think that way?

Editor's Note: We received yet another hand written note from Tom and we painstakingly typed it out for your reading pleasure.

Another Letter from an Office Pogue

BY SGT TOM HAYES

Charlie Co, 3rd Tanks - Nov 1967-Dec 1968

In reply to the recent Sponson Box story, "Flipping New Guy," and to

my fellow Jarhead Bob Vaxter, I just went back in time, on my way to Nam,

stopping off in Hawaii for 45 minutes at 0330 hours to refuel then on to >>

Kadena AF Base on Okinawa. Spend a few days at Camp Hansen, I was never issued jungle boots or utilities. Arrived in Da Nang with buddies from Staging Battalion and most of us just back from Gitmo with 3/6. Three of four office clerks (MOS 0141) are assigned to 9th Marines. How did I get 3rd Tanks?

When you (Bob Vaxter) joined us, we were HQ, C Company, 3rd Tanks. We were 100 yards off of Highway One at Quang Tri. Earlier when I arrived in-country, I had to hitch a ride from Phu Bai to Gia Lea with no helmet, weapon or flak jacket. All of that gear was issued to me from 3rd Tanks supply after I reported in wearing stateside utilities and boots.

You reported in during the Tet Offensive. You were probably greeted by GySgt Claypool, our acting 1st Sgt. Sadly Gunny Claypool was later KIA. When you reported in there were no front gates. We were set up along the highway and living in GP tents. Those tents were riddled with shrapnel holes

from an enemy mortar attack on Jan 31 during Tet '68 that took out supply, motor T and the HQ sleeping tents. Our company corpsman was KIA during the attack.

I hate to be a nitpicker (but what are 0141's for?) but I ran a good office when not involved with patrols, ambushes or LP's with GySgt Langford. I took care of our orders, SRB's, R&R's, Unit Diaries, etc. When you (Bob) reported in to Nam, you were told to go the 3rd Tank BN HQ for in processing and then assigned to a company. They, at battalion, knew where the greatest needs were. Not Division.

The asshole who told you that the tents were shot up from a gook machinegun was messing with you. As I said before, we got hit pretty badly at HQ on Jan 31 with gook mortars and the tents were riddled with shrapnel.

I'm noticing in the Sponson Box that a lot of 1811's are starting to speak up about the wonderful current CMC who abolished tanks. I was wondering how long they would remain silent

before finally starting to let it out.

Again, per usual, no stories or letters from non-1811's. Again I'm sorry to nitpick to "Lurch" Vaster but what little I can remember, I try to tell the story. Also when I received orders to go home, I had to check out at battalion to get to Da Nang from Quang Tri with no helmet, flak jacket or weapon.

My thanks to Rick Lewis for submitting the 8th Marines article. I served with 3/8 from Jan '69 to Sept '69, after I got back from Nam. I was also very happy to read the article because my father, Cpl. Pat Hayes, USMC was on Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa during the Pacific Island Campaign in WW2. My dad was standing right next to General Simon Bolivar, the CG of 10th Corps when the general was KIA from shrapnel in late June '45. Many of the Marines that were present were upset when WIA Marines were left on the side of the ridge while they took the CG's dead body down to the beach on a stretcher.

A Letter to a US Marine Vietnam Veteran from His Son, a US Marine Iraq and Afghanistan Veteran

Dad,

On March 20, 2022, Vietnam War Veterans Day, you and I were having a discussion as we often do about our past and our service as Marines. During our conversation the concept of "making a difference" during our time came up and the following thought occurred to me.

We are both men of service and have spent significant portions of our lives in the service of our country and our Corps. While the concept is resounding to most, the hope of what each of us did while in service making a difference in the world seems to reside closer to our core.

The Vietnam War taught our country, most specifically its citizens, a great number of things on how to view the unfortunate necessity of conflict and more importantly how to

treat those brave men and women who step forward to our nation's call. It saddens me that these lessons are lost on so many veterans of the Vietnam era. Vietnam was our nation's full scale counterinsurgency conducted on a modern battlefield. Some would argue that the Korean War was such, and to a large degree I agree, but the remnants of World War II tactics and mindset I feel puts Korea into a category all to itself.

In taking a closer look, Vietnam was not only our first full scale counterinsurgency, but it was also the first time in our history that "boots on the ground" media coverage was present on the battlefield. Combine this with a very polarized society and what I think we were left with was a large portion of the population not emotionally prepared to see firsthand

the rigors of war. Many Americans took awful stances and created a scar that unfortunately many have had a hard time recovering from. In this attempt to recover many veterans look for purpose. They question, what was it all for?

When a young man or woman takes the oath of service, regardless of the branch of the military, they write a blank check of sorts to be used in the defense of our nation. The amount of the check varies, but they all pay some. For many the concept of complete service and sacrifice causes them to look what their check bought. In the case of Vietnam veterans, it has purchased more than many of them realize, and while the purpose of their sacrifice and service may not be exactly what they imagined, that does not mean that it was not of immense >>

value.

The long war on terror brought many challenges that America had not seen before or in some time. The length of the war, the fact that it was happening simultaneously on multiple fronts and the fact that we were attacked on our home soil first to name a few all played into the aperture from which America's citizens viewed our place in it. When contrasting what the citizens of this country dealt with these "new" challenges to how they did in the era of Vietnam the difference is night and day. I did not suffer the indignity and disrespect (you did) when I came home from Iraq and Afghanistan. I did not feel inclined to hide my service. But most of all, I did not have to search for a purpose. The praise, although very uncomfortable to receive, and respect

that I continue to get solidifies the fact that a difference was made and that my time there had a purpose. Make no mistake that I require the approval from others for what we did over there, what I mean is that not coming home to a feeling of abandonment from my country allows me to see more clearly.

What I wish for all Vietnam veterans is that they too can realize that everything that they went through had purpose and that purpose resounds through our country and our military today. From the tactics they learned and perfected on the battlefield, to what they endured when they returned home. ALL OF IT made a difference. This difference or purpose may not be what they wanted, but the life of a serviceman (or woman) is not about getting what you want, it's about doing

your job, making good on the check, and leaving the planet better than it was when you got here. And to all of those things, I and countless others say, "Job Well Done and Welcome Home."

As for dealing with the critics, those who do not understand or know what real evil looks like and then criticize the actions of those who go forward to fight it and keep it from our home shores, I would remind our veterans, the lions should not concern themselves with the opinions of sheep. Don't ever forget that you are a lion.

Sgt Edward R Heyward
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

From the "Sound Off" (Readers' Letters) of the July 2022 issue of Leatherneck magazine.

A Letter from former CMC, General Al Grey

I completely agree! These are difficult times but we have been there before!

We have a Marine Corps because our great Nation needs a force in readiness that is prepared to do whatever must be done! That is why they passed the law many years ago establishing our three Divisions and three Wings in the active service and one in the reserves.

It is the Air/Ground/Logistics Capability under a single Commander that makes us unique and so effective in the Joint or Combined environment. The MAGTF is unique in the world and must be preserved!

New technologies are important and should always be pursued, particularly when then make a significant difference in the situation. However, the Warriors on the battlefield still make the difference!

We must be very wary of being dependent on others for military and

logistic support! In my judgement, the Army is still not in good shape from the standpoint of logistics! This goes back to the 1979 decision to create 4 Light Infantry Divisions of 10,000 personnel each which resulted in the deletion of 40,000 Logistics billets!

The situation in the first Gulf War wherein the Army provided the Tank Brigade was because the British Armor Brigade (which had been assigned to us) wanted to be with the Army. Interestingly, we gave the Army 600 trucks (with drivers and assistants) and fed the 82nd Airborne Thanksgiving Dinner. All because we had, inter alia, the MPS capability which is now been drastically reduced!

Our Nation's Corps of Marines must remain the Nations Force in Preparedness for all major contingencies and NOT focused on one geographical area!

All the so-called challenges with

respect to race, and all the other topics, can be resolved through good leadership, period!

Leaders need to LISTEN to their people and take appropriate actions!

Keep the faith! I have always been the optimist and still believe the American people, through the Congress (difficult as that seems today, with among other things, the lack of bi-partisanship) will get this straightened out!

Strategically, we are still a Maritime Nation. It is across the oceans which move what the Free World uses for their prosperity, we have a long history of operating with our Navy to help keep things free. Our contributions, over time and with respect to sea control, air superiority, ASW and special operations are far more than many recognize!

W/R & S/F, Al Gray

Story #7

BY BR MCDONALD

This incident happened to 1st Platoon, A Co, 3rd Tanks (light

section) around July 1966. We were told to go to an ARVN outpost about

20 miles SW of Da Nang and do an operation with them. At this >>

time (and most of the time that I was there) we didn't trust the ARVN. After we got there, a platoon of ARVN jumped onto our tanks and we headed west to sweep an area. One of the ARVN had a silver helmet, patches all over his utilities and acted like he was in charge. The ARVN dismounted a few miles later and we all were sweeping in a line. The ARVN stopped an old lady with a "dummy stick" on her shoulder. The silver helmet slapped her so hard that she fell down onto the ground.

I was the loader on our tank and I yelled at silver helmet, "You MoFo!" and started out my hatch.

My TC, Sgt Banner, grabbed my shoulder and pushed me down while telling me, "Shut up!"

I was mad as hell until silver helmet dumped her basked over and two M-26 grenades fell out. Silver helmet



continued to communicate with her and a few minutes later we headed into the village and surrounded it. Silver helmet went over to a grass hut and ordered the occupants out of it. He immediately had his troops arrest them all. He then set the hut on fire and it burned to the ground. Afterward, three ARNV cleared the debris away and found an entrance to a tunnel. One of the ARNV emptied his carbine into the hole, then looked into

it. You could hear a muffled gun shot from the hole and the ARNV jumped back. Another ARNV threw a grenade into the hold, it exploded and silver helmet looked into the hole. There was another muffled gun shot. Silver helmet then took a CS gas grenade and dropped it into the hole and then covered the hole with some wood.

About 30 minutes later, another ARNV wearing a gas mask, went into the hole and dragged out a gook wearing black pajamas. The same ARNV went back into the hole and brought out another gook who was wearing a uniform. It turns out that the gooks had an L shaped tunnel, which was the local VC commander's headquarters of local operations. We took the bodies and the prisoners back to the ARVN post and returned to Hill 22.

Why United States Marines Drink from a Fountain in France

BY BLAKE STILWELL FOR MILITARY.COM

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, drinks from the Devil Dog Fountain in Belleau, France.

In 2018, America woke up to the above photo of Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, drinking from a public fountain in France. It wasn't a drinking fountain; it was a fountain on the estate of the Count of Belleau.

While some civilians might not have understood at first, United States Marines definitely did. The fountain is in the shape of a dog's head, it's known as the Devil Dog Fountain, and it's a pilgrimage site for Marines and Marine Corps veterans.



On Veterans Day 2018, France was hosting representatives and guests to honor the 100-year anniversary of the end of World War I. Dunford, then-Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Robert B. Neller and retired Marine-turned-White House Chief of Staff John Kelly were walking

the grounds of the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, which happens to sit across the road from the Devil Dog Fountain.

The Aisne-Marne American Cemetery is the final resting place for some 2,289 Marines killed at the Battle of Belleau Wood, 250 of them still unknown. The German forces at Belleau Wood had just transferred 50 fresh divisions of troops from the Eastern Front after the Bolshevik Revolution knocked Russia out of World War I.

With these new troops, the Germans hoped to break the stalemate in the West with overwhelming force. At Belleau Wood, five of those German divisions squared off against >>

the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Brigade and the Marines' 4th Marine Brigade. It quickly turned into a rout—of the Germans.

Marines forced a German retreat and followed them into the woods, where Marines and those fresh German veterans of the war's Eastern Front fought for an entire month amid artillery fire, poison gas attacks and many, many machine gun nests. It was a battle no one believed the Marines would win until they did. It's said

those German troops called United States Marines Teufel Hunden—"Devil Dogs."

Today, at Belleau, the Devil Dog Fountain sits a few steps away from a chapel rebuilt by Americans after the war, bearing the names of 1,060 men who disappeared during the battle. From the fountain comes a constant stream of fresh water, and Marines visiting the site take a drink in the belief those who drink from it will receive strength and protection

in battles to come. It's also done to remember the Marines who fought there and those who never came home.

The day before Dunford, Neller and Kelly visited the site, was Nov. 10, the birthday of the Marine Corps. It's a holiday that is, to Marines, as celebrated as Veterans Day itself. There's no way these Marines of past and present would have missed the chance to take a drink from one of the most revered sites in Marine Corps history.

An Old Photo Tells a Thousand Words!

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Richard, (my husband), never really talked a lot about his time in Viet Nam, other than he had been shot by a sniper. However, he had a rather grainy, 8 x 10 black and white photo he had taken at a USO show of Ann Margret with Bob Hope in the background that was one of his treasures.

A few years ago, Ann Margaret was doing a book signing at a local bookstore.

Richard wanted to see if he could get her to sign the treasured photo so he arrived at the bookstore at 12 o'clock noon for the 7:30 PM signing.

When I got there after work, the line went all the way around the bookstore, circled the parking lot, and disappeared behind a parking garage. Before her appearance, bookstore employees announced that she would sign only her book and no memorabilia would be permitted.

Richard was disappointed, but wanted to show her the photo and let her know how much those shows meant to lonely GI's so far from home. Ann Margaret came out looking as



beautiful as ever and, as second in line, it was soon Richard's turn.

He presented the book for her signature and then took out the photo. When he did, there were many shouts from the employees that she would not sign it. Richard said, "I understand. I just wanted her to see it."

She took one look at the photo, tears welled up in her eyes and she said, "This is one of my gentlemen from Viet Nam and I most certainly will sign his photo. I know what these men did for their country and I always have time for 'my gentlemen.'"

With that, she pulled Richard across the table and planted a big kiss on

him. She then made quite a to-do about the bravery of the young men she met over the years, how much she admired them, and how much she appreciated them. There weren't too many dry eyes among those close enough to hear. She then posed for pictures and acted as if he were the only one there.

That night was a turning point for him. He walked a little straighter and, for the first time in years, was proud to have been a Vet. I'll never forget Ann Margaret for her graciousness and how much that small act of kindness meant to my husband.

Later at dinner, Richard was very quiet. When I asked if he'd like to talk about it, my big, strong husband broke down in tears. "That's the first time anyone ever thanked me for my time in the Army," he said. I now make it a point to say 'Thank you' to every person I come across who served in our Armed Forces. Freedom does not come cheap and I am grateful for all those who have served their country.

POSTCARD FROM 1969

July 26, 2022, I received a nice YouTube video called "A Post Card from 1969" where the narrator talks

about the decade when JFK was assassinated and then a short time later JFK's brother Bobby, Martin

Luther King and Malcom X were all murdered. And at the same time the Vietnam War was raging while >>

it seems as if the world had been turned upside down. But then in July of that year, Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon. The narrator said, "Not everything that was occurring was 'bad'. "Then the narrator concluded the presentation with "Just when it seems hopeless, something good happens."

A link to the program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaMkOES-y3Y>

Below are some comments about the program:

John Wear writes: I was home from Vietnam in Feb of 1969 and discharged from Active Duty in June of that same year. I then went back to Greeley, Colorado for college summer school and I got to watch the moon landing on a B&W television at a friend's house. What a thrill...!!!

Doc Gene Hackemack comments: Great story, and I remember seeing this video a year or so ago. Having spent most of my civilian working career at NASA: The moon landing – we just had our annual "Apollo 11 Moon Landing reunion" this past Wednesday at NASA. (The anniversary of the 1969 landing). We did skip 2020, 2021 due to COVID I do believe.

Going back to your video clip – I am not quite as optimistic as the narrator of the 'feel good' story. The reason is because times have change drastically. That, plus – if you factor in all the new TECHNOLOGY, but most of all, factor in the NEW, spoiled WELFARE GENERATION.

I will even go out on a limb and say another moon landing will NOT take place by the United States – Why? The crew will be arguing in flight, as to WHO WILL STEP ONTO THE MOON FIRST – the black female, the trans-gender hermaphrodite or the white man? ... (Then they will crash)

Oh, back in 1969, if you remember, it was decided that Neil Armstrong should set foot on the moon first. WHY? Because "Buzz" Aldrin was still active MILITARY – and the

PHOTOS EXPLAINED:

(Right) FRED HAISE
– one of the APOLLO
13 astronauts who
miraculously survived the
APOLLO 13 disaster.



(Left) GENE KRANZ
– the head Flight
Director, responsible for
bringing all 3 Apollo 13
astronauts back safely.



good ol' USA and NASA wanted to be "politically correct."

Jim McPeak, a USMC Vietnam grunt writes: And I believe this to be true. I was in a bunker on Phu Loc 6 when we got the news of the moon landing. Golf Company came into relieve us there, as we were going back to An Hoa for four days. Then out to Nong Son Mountain (the coal mines). I knew a couple guys in Golf, and they gave us the news about the moon landing, as we couldn't get an AFVN signal out there, but we could in An Hoa. This was all before the monsoons came in and made Go Noi a real "Island" as the Thu Bon would swell so wide. Fun in the sun.

Art Nash writes: Man, you do bring back some old memories. February of '69 I was on the Med. cruise and then in June I was back in WESPAC. Here's a quickie you'll enjoy:

That Med. cruise ended in June, 69.... The ship was the USS Spiegel

Grove, LSD-32. Upon reaching "A" Co. 2d Tanks HQ at Le Jeune, I learned I had WESPAC orders with "Action immediate /expedite." I took 20 days leave and reported to Camp Pendleton. Within 48 hours, I reported to "C" Co. Forward, 3rd Tanks, which had just arrived on Okinawa a week prior.

The Platoon I was assigned was about to go back in-country as a float unit. I was the only SNCO at the time in the unit that had any experience with BLT floats.

Four days later we embarked aboard ship at "Kin Red Beach"... The ship USS Spiegel Grove. I even got my old bunk back in the Chiefs quarters. The Chief Master Arms "eye-balled" me strangely when I came aboard.... Then asked... "Did we not Drop you off in Morehead city?"

I replied, "You sure did chief, but I did so enjoy the ship greatly."

I just got "The Look". This >>

was the start of one hell of a great adventure.

Rick Lewis adds: You got home in Feb 69, I was the Sergeant of the Guard at Naval Air Station Miramar at that time. Joy and I were going to be married that August and I was leaving the Corps. I had been accepted to the CHP Academy and was looking forward to it. But after two CHP where shot and killed in one month here in SoCal. I figured my chances were better off staying in, so I reenlisted for 6, got a nice check. We got married and rented a place at the beach furnished for \$155 a month. By the end of August I had orders to Vietnam for my third tour. By Christmas I was a grunt sitting in my hole bailing the water out with my piss pot. I was now a platoon sergeant for 29 grunts. In seven months I never got a replacement, it really was strange when we had tanks to support us. And then seven months later all tanks were pulled out of VN and I was

now at 3rd Tanks sitting on the rock (Okinawa) while finishing out my 13 months.

What this guy had to say at the end I believe it to be true there is more good than bad. It's the left press that has done this to us and the far left playbook.

This one is from an old high school friend (Anita McFall) who later was a high school English teacher for most of her working career. She and I are still in touch:

Oh, John... it brought me to tears—big ones. I DO believe people are basically good. Anne Frank said so; what a tribute to love was that thought! I have to believe that lots of people aren't reminded enough of their better angels. I wish that could happen more often, rather than the divisiveness of our current times. I, too, have trusted in and received the good will of strangers. Kindness counts to help people counter their various battles.

FYI... I was on my way to India, traveling with British students from the University of Lancaster in a mini bus. On the day of the moon landing we were camped out in a soccer field in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. My first husband and I were approached by a rowdy bunch of locals who almost dragged us to a tree at the edge of the field where some enterprising entrepreneur had pirated electricity and set up a black and white "telly" in the tree. He'd also set up a makeshift—no doubt illegal—bar. The locals kept pointing at the telly and then pointing at the sky, slapping us on the back and probably yelling congratulations while they poured slivovitz (plum brandy that would peel paint) down our throats. We were looking at the landing. It was the middle of the Cold War, of course, but we were treated like absolute members of their family. I'll never forget their good will. ■

Photo from Vietnam

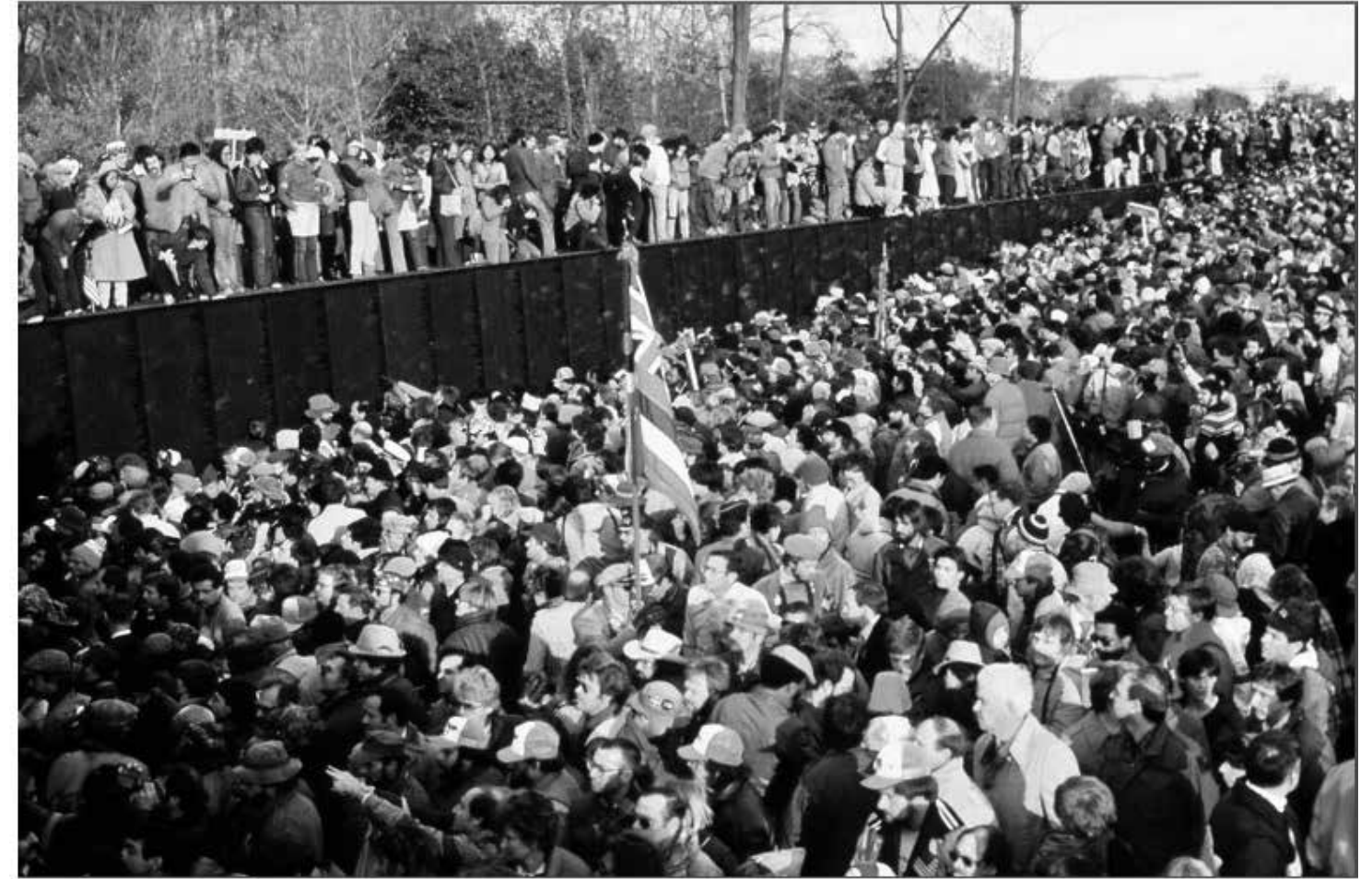
Rick Walters writes: It looks like Ontos from a "float," as they have new uniforms, boots and covers. Vehicles have a designation on Gun 5 of each Ontos, for placement on a ship. New 106's, which could be refitted in Philippines. They are missing mud flaps, track jacks, track and spotter cover's all point to 5th A-T's. Since 1st Tanks wanted no part of them. 1st A-T's had high standards on their Ontos + spare parts. Also they seem to be missing a "pig," since there should be five. The more you look, the more of an orphan outfit. 1st A-T's had a 9 ton weight marker on the front left fender. 3rd A-T's had better equipment. The fender with vehicle platoon + #, is old school and what we had in California. Everything is too clean. Plus the 26th Marines were taking over Hi Van Pass and Namoi Bridge in 1969. At the time, 1st Tanks was gearing up to leave, except for few tanks in An Hoi. This is not 1st AT's...so it's anyone's guess what outfit these "pigs" were with.



COVER STORY

The Wall

Vindication... Maya Lin's design worked



Dedication Day – November 13, 1982

Editor's Note: A little history many people do not know. Many interesting but sad statistics of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (also known as "the Wall").

In 1979, Jan Scruggs conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., as a tribute to all who served during one of the longest wars in American history. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is among the most visited memorials in the nation's capital.

Scruggs launched the effort with \$2,800 of his own money and gradually gained the support of other Vietnam veterans in persuading Congress to provide a prominent location on federal government property somewhere in Washington, D.C. After a difficult struggle, Congress responded, and the site chosen was on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial.

As president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Inc., the non-profit organization created to build and maintain the Memorial, Scruggs headed up the effort that raised \$8.4 million and saw the Memorial completed in just two years. It was dedicated on No-

vember 13, 1982, during a week-long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

1979 – The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is founded by a group of veterans led by Jan C Scruggs.

1981 – 21 year old college student, Maya Lin's presentation is unanimously chosen as the design for The Wall.

1982 – The Wall is completed and dedicate on November 13.

1984 – The Three Servicemen statue and flagstaff are added to the Memorial site.

1993 – The Vietnam Women's Memorial is added to the Memorial site.

1996 – The original "The Wall That Heals" is launched.

2001 – VVMF launches the Wall of Faces, an effort to find a photo for each of the more than 58,000 names on The Wall.

2015 – VVMF launches a virtual collection of items left at The Wall that have been collected over the years. >>

2019 – VVMF launches and dedicated a new and important “In Memory” plaque.

2021 – The VVMF registry is launched to allow Vietnam veterans and their families to share and preserve the personal stories and photos of our Vietnam War heroes.

2022 – VVMF celebrates the 40th anniversary of The 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 36 years since the last casualties.

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.

31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.

39,996 names 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 names on the Wall were 17 years old.

5 were 16 years old.

One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 men were killed on their very first day in Vietnam.

1,448 men were killed on their very last day in Vietnam.

64 KIAs attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. The most deaths for any public or parochial high school in the nation.

8 women are on the Wall. Nursing the wounded.

244 men 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 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.



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.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers

VIETNAM CASUALTIES 1965-1975		
YEAR - KIA	58,178	KIA
1965 - 1,863	REGULAR SERVICE - 34,464	
1966 - 6,144	DRAFTED - 17,872	
1967 - 11,153	RESERVE - 5,758	
1968 - 16,589	NATIONAL GUARD - 97	
1969 - 11,614		
1970 - 6,083	OFFICERS - 7,878	
1971 - 2,357	ENLISTED - 50,306	
1972 - 759		
1973 - 68		
1974 - 1		
1975 - 62		
AIR FORCE - 2,584	YOUNGEST - DAN BULLOCK - 15 y	
IOWA AIR FORCE - 50	OLDEST - KENNA TAYLOR - 62	
ARMY - 38,209	16 YEARS OLD - 5	
IOWA ARMY - 543	17 YEARS OLD - 12	
COAST GUARD - 7	18-20 YEARS OLD - 25,000	
MARINES - 14,838	KILLED 1ST DAY - 997	
IOWA MARINES - 202	KILLED LAST DAY - 1,448	
NAVY - 2,555	BROTHERS - 32 SETS	
IOWA NAVY - 58	FATHER & SON - 3	
SINGLE - 40,775		
MARRIED - 17,215		
WOMEN - 8		
AVERAGE AGE KIA - 20 YRS OLD	ENLISTED - 22.37	
	OFFICERS - 28.43	
	TOTAL : 23.11	
244 MEDALS OF HONOR	153 ON THE WALL	
IOWA - 853	NEB - 395	SD - 195 MINN - 1,072

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. ■

Left at the Wall - a package sent and returned to sender



Reading the Names

BY JOHN WEAR
ORIGINALLY WRITTEN NOV 15, 2007

Early this year I had read an email memo that in order to honor the 25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) was going to once again have volunteers read (in chronological order) each and every name that is etched on the black granite face of the awesome memorial. The VVMF planned to have a volunteer start reading the name of the first American casualty (1959) on Thursday morning and other volunteers would continue reading the names until midnight. The next two days the reading would begin again at sunrise and continue until midnight. Saturday would

be the last day with the reading of the very last American death (1975) at midnight. I was told that there would be approximately 2,000 readers who would read 30 names apiece. A group of us had participated in this same ceremony five years ago (for the 20th Anniversary) and I felt compelled to do the same this year. I put out a call to as many people as I thought would be interested in participating in this awesome and humbling experience. It turned out we had 22 volunteers who wanted to read as a group. There were six readers from the Vietnam Tankers Association and 16 from the Sgt Grit’s bulletin board. We originally wanted

to read the names in the afternoon on Saturday, November 10th. This would give most of us a chance to observe the Marine Corps Birthday parade and dedication at the Marine War Memorial (commonly called “The Iwo Jima Memorial”). When we applied, it turned out that most of the time slots for that day were already filled but after careful consideration our group got inserted between two other assigned readers on Friday evening between 6:30 and 8:00 PM. And the VVMF mailed me a packet of lists of name for each of the group of readers and I mailed each person their list of 30 names. >>

Prior to driving from Philadelphia to Washington I looked up each name of my list on The Virtual Wall website to read a little bit about each individual. I noted that every man on my list was killed on December 8, 1968. Most of the KIAs were Army soldiers but 18 were US Marines. I composed a memorial statement for each name and submitted these to be posted on their page of the website. Each memorial stated that while I did not personally know these men I would be honored and humbled to read their name at The Wall.

On Friday evening most of our group gathered in the hotel lobby around 5:15 and headed over to The Wall. On arrival we checked in and stood in the cold rain for the next two hours listening to people read the names waiting for our turn.

While waiting, the fellow behind me saw my jacket and noted that I was a Vietnam Marine tanker, he said that he had just begun reading a book about tanks in Vietnam. He said that the title was, "Praying for Slack." I told him that the author was a good buddy of mine and that I was mentioned in the book several times. He told me that he was from Atlanta. I replied that the author worked for Kodak in Atlanta and added that he should look up Bob Peavey when he returns home. He said, "Ah ha! The fellow who loaned me the book works for Kodak and we attend the same church!" I gave him my business card and asked that he remember me to Bob when they meet up. I know that he will follow up because he seemed like a very determined man. How do I know that? He had told me that he had been in DC for three days

reading the names of his Basic School classmates who died in Vietnam— all 12 of them. He had twelve lists of 30 names (each list containing one of his classmates) and over the three days of readings, he stood up and read his 720 names.

One of the most chilling and emotional experiences for me happened when three middle-age ladies and an older woman walked up to the podium as a group. The elder lady read off her list of names but when she got to the next-to-the-last-name she said, "And for my only son..." and paused. Then the younger ladies chimed in, "And for our only brother...", and then the mother read the name. I got so choked up that I could not speak. God bless and keep them all. ■

FAQ ABOUT READING OF THE NAMES

When and where does the Reading of the Names take place?

The Reading of the Names of the 58,281 service members inscribed on The Wall will take place beginning at 4 p.m. ET on Monday, November 7th, 2022 in Washington, D.C. Reading will go until Midnight that night. Reading will continue on November 8th, 9th, and 10th from 5 a.m. until midnight each day. The final name will be read just before midnight on Thursday, November 10th.

What order do they read the names?

The names are read in the same order they are inscribed on The Wall – by date of casualty. To find out exactly when a name is being read, search by name in the box above to see the approximate date and time.

Do I have to be there in person to read or can I read it online?

This is our every five years in-person Reading and you must be in Washington, D.C. in order to participate. We have been reading the names virtually online since last November. Please note those names are read in a different order – by those who died on a given day – no matter the year. To see/hear those readings, click on "Daily Virtual Name Reading" above.

How many names does each person read and will I receive my list of names in advance?

Each volunteer reader will receive 30 names to read for a two-minute reading time. The list of names you will be reading will be emailed out to you once your reading request has been confirmed by VVMF. VVMF will be finalizing all reading slots after the registration period closes on August 1st. After that, we will work to confirm reading slots as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience in advance as we work through any conflicting requests.

What happens if I don't get the exact time slot / exact name requested?

With nearly 2,000 volunteers needed to fill all of the name reading slots, multiple people signing up for the same time will likely occur. VVMF will do everything it can to ensure that you are able to read the name of a loved one or friend that you request. Once VVMF has finished processing all requests and addressed multiple signups for the same individual / time we will email you a confirmation. If you do not get the exact name / time, please do not be disheartened or cancel your reservation. Our volunteers will work with you once you arrive at the site and check in. We will then take all the steps appropriate to ensure that you will get to say the name of your person.

Can I say something else other than the names on my sheet?

We ask that you only read the name on your sheet as it is written. While there are many reasons as to why, the main reason is that we are following the "spirit" of the Memorial. The Memorial contains no ranks, no branches of service, no awards, no commendations and no citations. On The Wall every name is equal, from the first to the last. The Reading of The Names happens on hallowed ground and is not the place for any kind of political speeches or grandstanding. We require all our guests and volunteers to follow the spirit of the Memorial and act with reverence during this tribute to our fallen service members.

Is there an opening ceremony?

There will be a brief introduction prior to the start of the Reading of the Names. This introduction will take place between 3:00 PM ET and the 4:00 PM ET start time of the event on Monday, November 7th, 2022.

Is there parking near the reading site?

Parking in the District of Columbia, especially around the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and National Mall, is very limited. We recommend utilizing

public transportation to get to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Parking along Constitution Avenue and many of the streets around the National Mall is paid/metered parking with a time limit. For more information on parking and handicapped parking, please see "Local Parking and Transportation"

I will be taking a taxi or ride share to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for the Reading of The Names. Where should I have my driver drop me off?

The two locations we recommend are either "Constitution Ave NW & 21st St NW, Washington, DC 20245" or "Constitution Ave. NW & Henry Bacon Dr NW, Washington, DC 20418"

What happens if it rains?

The Reading of the Names will continue on regardless of weather, with the exception of extreme weather or weather would require seeking immediate shelter, such as thunderstorms and tornados. Any postponement or interruption to the ceremony would be issued by the National Park Service or National Park Police. VVMF does not have umbrellas or rain gear available. Please plan accordingly for rainy and/or cold conditions by ensuring you have warm clothes, ways to stay dry and appropriate footwear as the site can become wet and muddy.

Can I sign up in a group?

You can sign up as a group but you will need to sign up for using the "Sign up by Time Slot" option on the signup page. You will need to manually signup for these times one at a time. This is ensure that both groups and individuals have the same equal access to reading signups.

Is it safe?

The safety of our visitors and guests is of the utmost importance to us. For tips on visiting the National Mall please review the Safety section of the National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/safety.htm>. For general safety visiting Washington, D.C. and the surrounding areas, please visit <https://washington.org/dc-information/washington-dc-safety-information>. ■



Musings about a Name on the Wall...

Today (2/9/06) I was going through my Marine Bootcamp graduation book looking for any possible KIA casualties from my Marine Bootcamp platoon. I came to the end of the book after sadly finding several Killed in Action Marine brothers. On the positive, the number of KIA from my platoon was only 4 out of 70 Marines. When you think about the fact that I graduated in the fall of 1966 and virtually every single Marine graduate for the next several years was headed to SE Asia, it's almost a miracle that only four unfortunate Marines were killed.

I then decided to enter my family name (WEAR) into The Virtual Wall site to search to see if there were any of my kin that, unbeknownst to me, who may have perished in that God-forsaken land so long ago. It has been 40 years since we went overseas to fight the Commies. That is a lifetime ago.

A name came up: **Dennis Wear.**

I then posted a note on Dennis' place on the Virtual Wall website:

While I did not know Dennis... I am saddened to see such a fine young man's name on "The Wall"... but I promise that I will visit his place of honor on the most fitting of memorials for those brave heroes who died.

Semper Fidelis my brother Vietnam veteran!!! I will see you in Heaven. Forever young.

Posted by: John Francis Wear, II
Email: johnwear@yahoo.com
Relationship: We served together
Friday, February 10, 2006

Original Message

From: Rick Dunn [mailto:backhaul46@bresnan.net]

Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2006 1:37 PM

To: johnwear@yahoo.com

Subject: Dennis Wear

Hi John,

I catch myself doing the same thing you did. I was going through old school

annuals and there I found those too that will be "forever young." So many that I went to school with didn't make it home alive from that place. It saddens me to reflect on my good life and then compare it to my buddies that didn't come home alive. My service tour sent me off to Korea where I had it easy. I guess it's sort of a guilt thing.

My deepest respect is for the Dennis Wear's, the Frank Garcia's and the Gregory Gifford's that didn't come home. From my small hometown in Montana 22 guys didn't come home. That's a large number and a few close friends are bound to be in that count. When possible I try to post a picture of those heroes so when someone passes by the Virtual Wall website so that there is a face to go with the name. Just looking into that young face shows the incredible price that was paid. I only wish I had a photo of Dennis Wear. His story is rather hard to trace. All I have is a photo of his headstone. That's sobering enough.

Thank you for remembering our fallen in such a public way. It takes an effort to do that and it is appreciated. Thank you even more so for your service to our country during that terrible time in our history. I have nothing to compare it to for I wasn't there. I'm sure you have stories that should be told. I hope that you are sharing them with the newest generation of young folks. I get the distinct impression that the newest generation doesn't have a clue about what happened to guys like Dennis or even you.

If someone hasn't told you lately, I will. Welcome home John Wear! Welcome home.

Rick Dunn (Sgt. US Army Signal Corps Korea 1969-70)

From: John Wear

On Thursday, Dec 07, 2006

Hello Rick,

Today I am looking at some very old

emails and I found the one that you and I exchanged back in February of this year. I just wanted to share a story about The Wall. A few years ago, when we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the unveiling of "The Wall," I was privileged to participate in the "Reading of the Names on The Wall" program. I don't know if you know about this amazing and powerful program but for 3-1/2 days prior to the actual anniversary date thousands of volunteers stand at a podium one at a time and each person reads twenty names of the KIAs from Vietnam. The names are read in the chronological sequence of their deaths. There were ten or twelve of us from the same group of readers and since we wanted to read together (in sequential order) we were assigned random names... versus names of loved ones or buddies. When my turn came to read the names, I had previously looked up the services of the 30 KIA American service men and after each of the six Marines, I said, "United States Marine Corps." Later I found that the VVMF frowns on anything spoken other than just the name.

After reading my list of names, I found Dennis Wear's name on the wall and made a rubbing. If you'd like, I can mail it to you.

Semper Fidelis,
-John

Original Message

From: Rick Dunn

On Friday, Dec 08, 2006

Hi John,

Thanks for writing again. It's been awhile. I'm glad that you attached the earlier emails. It must have been an incredible honor to read those names. I would have been one of those that could not have done what you did. It would have been too emotional. Early in May my wife and I did make a trip to D.C. It was kind of a last minute decision to dip into our savings and make

the trip. I wanted to see the sites, but the main reason was to see The Wall. My emotional high and low was visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (aka The Wall). It was my first and could be my last trip to see this incredible monument to my friends.

We got there and the weather was rather cool so we chose to hit the inside stuff first... and as you may already know, there was a lot to see. About the third day the weather broke and the sun came out. It was early in the morning and we took off on foot. Our hotel was only a few blocks from the White House. It was beautiful walking along the Reflection Pool toward the Lincoln Memorial. We left the walk way by the Reflection Pool and headed up a slight hill and walked through the trees. I sort of knew where the monument should be and so we kept walking through the trees. I kept thinking of Frank, Greg, Dennis, Mike and the others and it started to get to me. I was getting all emotional and I wasn't even there yet. It was the anticipation of something, I didn't know what. I crested the grassy hill and there it was! I had seen hundreds of picture of it in books and on the internet, but I wasn't prepared to feel it. I guess I mean "feel" myself and how I would react to it. I was overpowered by the sight of it. It was black like I knew it would be black! Yet I was amazed that it was incredibly black. It was stark. It was a "gash in the earth" as I had read others describing it. I was kind of wiggling out a bit and knew I had to get hold of myself before I went down there. Sensory overload!

There was a bench close to the bronze monument of the three nurses caring for the wounded hero. Sitting on that bench was a man sobbing. His wife was trying to comfort him. Damn, I didn't need to see that. We quickly walked toward the west entrance passing the bronze of the three warriors and started my walk into the valley of names. The "Valley of the Shadow of Death" came to my mind as I walked. Amongst the hundreds of tiny thoughts that flashed through my

brain I remembered that I had a list of names and panel numbers. I pulled the list out of my billfold and started looking for panel numbers. In a few steps I was knee deep in names and then shoulder deep in names. Soon they were towering over my head. I couldn't even think. I could hardly focus on any particular name for there were so many. I had to have my wife tell me at what panel number we were located. I was looking for 24-East. That was on the other side. There were probably 75 people there at the time but I was oblivious to them. Nobody was talking; just whispers. Nobody was crowded around 24-East. There I was. I came across most of the width of this country to stand in that very place to look for a name carved in stone and then touch it. Talk about powerful! I reached out and touched his name. All that I would whisper was, "God, why was he taken?"

John, you won't believe this, but at this moment a booming loud voice yelled out, "Stop running! This is a place of respect." The loud voice snapped me back into reality. It seems like a bunch of young kids were horsing around and the US Park Ranger dude barked at them. At that I started to look around at the others that were looking at the names. I saw this older guy who was most likely my age was having a bit of trouble like I was. He had found his name. He had touched it and I stopped to watch him. He would walk away a few feet and read some more names and then come back to the first and run his fingers across it again. I could only imagine what was going through his head. His lips were moving. I could imagine he was talking to his friend. I could sense his pain.

I saw some people making rubbings. Because we came in from a different direction we never went by the booth where a person could get the paper and pencils to do these etchings. I walked up to the ranger and asked how we can get an etching of a name. He asked if I knew where the name was. Damn,

I was getting all choked up again and could barely whisper 24-East Line 77. He must have seen and heard thousands of guys like me before and knew what to do. He made a perfect etching and handed it to me without saying anything. If he would have asked me about Frank, I probably would have bawled like a kid. I was able to say thank you and walk away.

John, I had to get out of that place. I had emotionally beaten myself up real good by then. I would come back a few days later and take some pictures. I felt much more at ease about being there the second time. I knew what to expect so what I did the second time was watch people. I was amazed by the respect they were showing to the thousands of our heroes. I had never seen before in a group of people like that, a hush that would come over them as they walked down that path. Before they were a bunch of noisy people getting off busses and now they were honoring my friends. It was beautiful.

I hope I can go back again. If there is anything that I learned from my trip to The Wall it is this. A person doesn't have to come across the whole country to find their friends at The Wall. Their friends live on in their memories deep within their hearts. I didn't mean to write a book, but the more time I have had to think about it the more vivid my memories become. The wall is a powerful place. Walking into that valley of names, as I like to think of it now, I'll never ever be able to grasp the huge price these young guys had to pay. A person can't walk away from the wall without knowing that freedom is not free. We'll visit again.

With regard to the rubbing of Dennis' name, I'd love to have you send it to me. Thank you!

Always faithful Army guy,
Rick

A TRIBUTE TO A FALLEN MARINE

On Sat, Jan 15, 2022 William M. Killian <wkillian@smjuhsd.org> wrote:

I am a Vietnam War researcher volunteering for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and I am trying to write an accurate account for the loss of PFC Samuel J Frieson, H&S Co, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division to post on a veteran's tribute website (vvmf.org). I was curious if you could please provide some details regarding this incident. Thank you.

Regards,

William M. Killian
Social Studies Department
Pioneer Valley High School
675 Panther Drive
Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.922.1305 x5611

On Tuesday, January 18, 2022 Bruce VanApeldoorn <bvanapeldoornsr@gmail.com> wrote:

I am providing a couple video interviews that should help.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jjHicWzmWU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jjHicWzmWU>
If you need additional information or would like to talk let me know.

Semper Fi,

Bruce

On Wed, Jan 19, 2022 William M. Killian <wkillian@smjuhsd.org> wrote:

I watched the video and came up with a decent tribute. Considering the efforts you have made regarding this incident, I think it is appropriate that you review what I wrote. Could you please take a look at it and see if I need to make any changes. Thanks.

Regards,

Bill

On Saturday, January 22, 2022 Bruce VanApeldoorn <bvanapeldoornsr@gmail.com> wrote:

I do agree with your reporting. It does need to include that there was a correction made to PFC Frieson's records in that he was awarded the Purple Heart. This video will explain.
<https://youtu.be/xjRPfutf6n4>
Do let me know if you have any questions.

Semper Fi,

Bruce

On Sat, Jan 22, 2022 William M. Killian <wkillian@smjuhsd.org> wrote:

Congratulations to you and your comrades for your efforts regarding PFC Frieson's loss. I have amended the tribute I

wrote to reflect the changes made to his record (see below). This will be posted to vvmf.org.

PFC Samuel J. Frieson was a cook serving with Headquarters & Service Company, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division. Frieson was attached with a small group of Marines in Hoi An at a Republic of Korea (ROK) Marine Brigade Headquarters to support the U.S. Marine tank platoons as they rotated in and out while supporting ROK Marine operations. Inside the massive ROK compound, Marines had an area for vehicle maintenance and refueling, hootches where the men slept, and a dispensary where a corpsman (medic) served. There was also a mess area where Frieson cooked so the Marines could get a break from the c-rations they consumed in the field. During the post-Tet Offensive period, there were still North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units scattered about the northern I Corps military region. U.S. Marine units with their ROK allies would conduct patrols searching out and engaging the NVA. On the morning of March 6, 1968, Frieson was in the Tank Platoon office at Hoi An when two Marine tankers came in requesting their mail. They were told it had been placed in their hooch, and Frieson accompanied them with a key to their living space which was kept locked during the day. Moments after the two tankers entered the hooch, an explosion occurred. When they got outside hut, they found a critically injured Frieson on the ground. The command staff responded to the blast, and aid was administered to Frieson while they waited for medivac. Frieson was placed on the helicopter and flown to U.S. Naval Station Hospital in Da Nang where he expired nine days later from fragmentation wounds. It has been surmised that the explosion was caused by a booby-trapped M26 grenade placed on the door. The four-second fuse allowed the two tankers to pass Frieson and enter the hooch after he unlocked it and move far enough down the row to not be harmed by the blast (one man reported being hit by fragments from the grenade but was not injured). Nevertheless, the Marine Corps coded Frieson's death "Non-hostile, accidental self-destruction." Fifty years later, due to the efforts of his fellow Marines, Frieson's death was reviewed by the Marine Corps, and the cause was recoded as a "hostile" loss. He was subsequently awarded a posthumous Purple Heart medal.

[Taken from coffeltdatabase.org and information provided by Bruce Van Apeldoorn (2015 and 2017) at youtube.com]

Regards,

Bill

VOICES FROM THE WALL

I Don't Remember His Name

BY SARA MCVICKER

The medical patients usually came in late afternoon. They'd send a chopper around to the firebases if anyone needed to come in to the hospital. Most would be an FUO (fever of unknown origin, which usually would turn out to be malaria or typhus), sometimes dysentery, occasionally pneumonia, and once or twice a cardiac case.

Unless they were so woozy they couldn't stand up, we would get the blood samples we needed for diagnosis, let them shower, feed them and then let them sleep as much as possible around monitoring their temperatures and getting additional malaria smears. Most of them weren't too sick—sick enough to be sent to the hospital, but not critical.

After diagnosis and treatment, they sometimes went straight back to the field, or if they were lucky, they got a week or so at the 6th Convalescent Center in Cam Rahn Bay. That's probably why I don't remember names. I didn't want to pick up a Stars and Stripes and see that someone we had sent back to the field had gotten killed.

One afternoon, a call came from the ER: FUO, unconscious, temperature off the end of the thermometer. They did not have much history on the pa-

tient. He was out in the boonies with his unit and hadn't felt good for a couple of days, but nothing specific. Then suddenly he collapsed, burning up to the touch. They threw him in a mud puddle to try to get his temperature down and called in a "dust off" (the helicopter that would take him to the hospital).

They brought him up from the ER on a stretcher, packed in bags of ice. We got all the diagnostic tests, got another IV in him and a urinary catheter. Jim, our chief of medicine, was the doc. We started him on quinine in case he had malaria. We gave him something for typhus and something else for a bacterial infection. None of the tests showed anything in particular. We kept sponging him down and, between that and the aspirin suppositories, his temperature started coming down.

A little before 7 p.m., the night nurse and corpsman came in and saw what was going on. I asked the nurse to handle the rest of the ward. I hadn't done any 6:00 meds, but one of the corpsmen had done vital signs, kept an eye on the IVs, gotten everyone fed and had told me everyone else was OK. All the other patients knew what was

going on.

Finally, we had done everything we could. His temperature had come down, and we had gotten him cleaned up. I gave a report to the night nurse and then went back in the room to see if Jim needed me for anything else before I left. "No", he said, but he thought that he would stay for a while.

The next morning when I came back, Jim was still there. He had stayed by this guy's side all night, and he was there almost all that day, too, except for a few breaks. The patient was still unconscious but stable.

And then he began to slip away from us. It was nothing dramatic, just blood pressure gradually dropping, urine output decreasing. No heroics—there wasn't anything else to be done. And then, he was gone.

We never knew what killed him, whether it was whatever caused his fever or if it was because the fever was so high it "zapped" his brain.

I don't remember his name or where he was from, but I know where he is now. His name is somewhere on the west Wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, panels 26–19.

He didn't die alone. And I remember him.

VOICES FROM THE WALL

From 1776 to 1982 large numbers of veterans had encamped in the nation's capital only twice. On Sunday, September 18, 1892, Washington, DC, welcomed approximately 100,000 Union veterans who came for a reunion. Forty years later, during the Great Depression, at least 30,000 WW I veterans and their families came to demand advance payment of benefits awarded for wartime service.

Getting There

Two vets and a child died when tanks, soldiers on horseback and bayonets forced them out of town.

Now, in November 1982, veterans and their families from all over America were once again gathering. It was exciting and spontaneous, with momentum that defined itself.

"I will be in Washington for the dedication," one veteran wrote. "I will not be there to tell tales of terror in the

skies over Hanoi. I won't be representing alone but a handful of ghosts whose blurry names and strangely boyish faces needed to be welcomed home."

A Vietnam vet sold his washer and dryer to get money for plane fare.

A vet got out of bed at night and told his wife, "I've got to go to Washington."

A vet walked 3,000 miles to Washington in combat fatigues and >>

carrying a full combat pack, just as he had 12 years earlier in Vietnam.

A vet whose twin brother had died in Vietnam walked 1,255 miles to Washington.

A vet hitchhiking to Washington fell asleep, and awoke at the airport with a paid airline ticket in his pocket.

A vet told his wife about the Salute (and dedication of the Memorial).

“You are going, of course,” she said.

“Can we afford it?”

“Does it make any difference? You were there, you should go.”

A vet put a sign reading “Nam Vet To DC” in the back window of his car. People honked and waved.

A group of vets checked out of a VA hospital penniless. A Congressional Medal of Honor winner took out a personal loan to rent a bus for them.

A Midwestern couple heard about the Salute on TV just after finishing dinner. They rushed to clear the table, loaded the dishwasher, switched it on, and went out the door to DC.

A bus bearing 40 vets broke down in Columbus, Ohio. The repair bill was \$1,500. The maintenance shop foreman said, “My son is a Vietnam vet,” and refused payment.

All across America, such buses – along with airplanes and cars caravans – became rolling barracks, as men drifted into Washington from Boston, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, and San Francisco; and from Stroud, Oklahoma; Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Jessup, Iowa; Bethel, Connecticut; and all the other towns and cities whose sons had served.

“It was as if they were all drawn by the same ghostly bugle,” a newspaper in Beaumont, Texas noted.

They were afraid that they would not be able to find the names they wanted. They were afraid that they’d cry. They were afraid that they’d be disappointed once again. They did not know what to expect.

“They say that you never forget your first love,” a woman wrote to her lo-

cal newspaper. “In 1957, when I was a teenager...he was slim and dark with a really nice smile. Overcoming shyness, he invited me to a party. I took my 45’s in a small gray cardboard box with a plastic handle. Our favorite record was Bobby Helms’s ‘Special Angel.’ He carried the box and held my hand as we walked. It was beautiful, and it was romantic. We were very young (and, no doubt, very naïve). But we were very happy...Although we talked a lot and kissed a lot...the romance didn’t last long. His family (moved away). I never saw him again. Years later, escaping the drudgery of caring for my infant son, I went to the movies with my sister. We ran into an acquaintance who told that he had been killed in Vietnam. In spite of all the rhetoric about America forgetting, for that day on I never have....I will go to Washington and try to find his name on the Memorial. I hope I’ll Be able to touch it.

VOICES FROM THE WALL

Matt’s Vigil

BY BOBBIE KEITH

Morning dew sprinkled a rainbow of colors across the Wall as the sun’s first ray glistened upon the black granite panels. Crips, cool air whispered through trees. Squirrels pranced upon a blanket of colored leaves.

On such a fall morning, I noticed a lean, blue-jeaned figure hunched on a park bench. I met Matt. He had kept vigil throughout the night – lighting candle after candle in memory of his Navy buddy. When his last candle finally lost its flame, he stood, saluted and quietly retreated.

Later that morning, as I sat in the warmth of the information kiosk, I searched for what Matt had dropped in my carry-all bag – only to find a crumpled up piece of paper. It read:

*In the shadow of your footsteps
I walk with you tonight
With memories kindled bright
By the flame of candle light.*

Dennis (a Park Ranger who had also served in Vietnam) and I simultaneously took a deep breath and sighed to keep any tears from forming as we discussed had just read may explain Matt’s pilgrimage to the Wall; that perhaps he wanted us to understand his thoughts through the poem he had written.

Fall after fall, Matt would return to continue the candle-light vigil he began in 1983. The early Fall morning is out one of a mosaic of heartwarming images developed through time as a

volunteer at the Wall.

Today, I still have the crumpled up piece of paper. Framed, it captures many of the emotions shared at the Wall.

Bobbie Keith was employed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and was posted in Vietnam from 1967 – 1969. Many veterans will remember her as “Bobbie the Weathergirl,” who did the nightly weather broadcast for “Vietnam and Back Home in the Land of the Big PX.” She continued her adventures working for the Dept. of State in Germany, Jordan, France, Turkey, Columbia, Morocco and Canada among others. In her four years posted in Washington, DC, she worked as a National Park Service volunteer at the Wall. ■

THE LADY AT THE WALL

BY JOHN WEAR



Betty Henry a volunteer at The Wall with some young Marines

Sometime around 2003 I agreed to get a rubbing of a certain KIA who had been a spotter for a buddy of mine who had been a Marine sniper in Vietnam. I had visited The Wall many times in the past so I knew what to expect for my visit. In fact, I had lived in DC for three years and I went to The Wall whenever I heard that there would be something happening there. This next trip was to be made around the Birthday of the Marine Corps (Nov 10th) and Veterans Day (Nov 11th). Because of the holiday, I knew that The Wall would be a madhouse with visitors, but I was determined to fulfill my promise. So that you know, I had never actually touched the black granite before. Don’t ask me why, because I do not know. I just couldn’t make myself touch it in the past.

The morning of my task came and so I headed to the Lincoln Memorial after the Birthday wreath laying ceremony at the Iwo Jima Memorial and then over to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I knew that there were volunteers around the memorial answering

questions and handing out paper and pencils for people to make their rubbings. Standing there chatting with several visitors was a volunteer lady. As I walked up and stood there waiting to speak to her, she turned, gave me a huge smile and then asked if she could help me. I said that I’d like to make a few rubbings. She reached into her backpack and handed me a few papers and a short pencil. She then asked me if I knew where the names were. I said that I did, thanked her and walked off. I went to the first name that I had promised that I would make and send to my Vietnam Marine brother. There it was. Oh God! Can I really do this? My hands were shaking. I actually touched The Wall, but my hands would not move. It was as if an electric charge was holding them to the black granite and not allowing me to make the rubbing. I heard a gentle voice behind me. It was that nice lady volunteer. She said, “Here, let me help you. I know that this is sometimes hard to do.” I almost cried. Actually when she stood up and handed me the piece of paper, I did get all teared up and could not

speak. She hugged me. What a wonderful lady!!! Later on that day, I was able to make another rubbing of the first name and then I walked over and made rubbings of some of my buddies whose names will be forever young in my heart.

Fast forward a few years. I got an email from someone about the condition of the landscape around The Wall. For one reason or another, Park Service had recently decided to cut the lawn around the memorial every-other-week versus every week. I contacted the Park Service and a very nice supervisor replied to my e-mail that the decision was recently reversed and that the lawn was to be cut weekly during the spring and summer months. I then sent an e-mail to the person who alerted everyone about the problem. As it further turns out, the wonderful lady volunteer (Betty Henry) who helped me get the first rubbing was the person who I replied to. I told her of the above story and thanked her again. It turns out that she is a widow of a career US Marine. That makes her even more special in my heart. ■

A Veteran's Emotional Visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

BY CPL. EDDIE BEESLEY, USMC (RET.)

He lost his legs in Vietnam but his commander lost his life.
Would he ever be able to forgive himself?



I wheeled myself down the walkway, following the rise of the black granite wall. Connie, my wife, walked beside me. My eyes fixed on the names, almost 60,000 of them. Each one a memorial to a soldier killed in the Vietnam War; the war I'd fought in as a Marine 30 years before. The one that took my legs.

I'd put off coming here for more than a decade. Connie had urged me to make the trip. But I wasn't sure I could face all those tragic names without asking myself the question that haunted me: Why had I lived while so many others died?

I'd grown up in a poor Oklahoma farm family, the eighteenth of 21 children. My mother had instilled in me my faith. The last thing I heard every night

was her prayers. But I couldn't see any future for myself in tiny Beggs. One day in my junior year of high school, I skipped classes and hitchhiked to Tulsa. Outside a recruiting office, I saw a poster of Marines in their dress blues. I saw myself marching out of Beggs. A life with purpose. What I wanted. I was 17. My father had to sign for me.

I loved being a Marine, the discipline, the sense of mission, being part of a tight team. Out of boot camp, I was assigned to a platoon and sent to Hawaii. Our commander was 1st Lt. James Mitchell. I was 19 by then, the lieutenant only six years older. But he had a determination and a maturity I aspired to have. He inspired us. He pushed us high school

dropouts to take night classes during the 14 months we were stationed in Hawaii. Thanks to him, I got my GED. My confidence soared. I was later promoted to corporal.

In May of 1965, we deployed to Vietnam. Lieutenant Mitchell still made time for each of us. He asked about our families. Our future plans. He told us about his wife, Jan, in California and the baby they were expecting. When word came that they'd had a daughter and named her Erin, the whole platoon cheered. Our platoon was charged with protecting the Chu Lai airfield. Every day, we patrolled the bush that surrounded us. It could be nerve-racking, especially the threat of hidden land mines.

On August 31, we went on patrol. I was on point, the tip of the spear. By 9:30 a.m., we'd been patrolling for 90 minutes in 110-degree heat. We came to a hedgerow. I put my leg through an opening, then jumped back. Below my foot was a mine, beside a hole in the ground. We'd disrupted someone in the midst of planting it. I called for the lieutenant. He and a corporal arced around me, coming in on the other side of the hedge. A sergeant charged up from the rear and squeezed past. I stepped back—

BOOM! I'd triggered a different, buried mine. It shot up beneath my legs and went off with a deafening explosion, blasting shrapnel directly at Lieutenant Mitchell and the corporal. I landed on my back on the other side of the hedge, nearly 20 feet away.

I heard the lieutenant yelling to set up a perimeter and call for choppers. The air smelled of gunpowder and burning flesh. I looked down. Jagged bones stuck out from where my feet should have been. I tried to remember the Twenty-Third Psalm, but the words jumbled in my mind. I begged God not to let me die, not here, not now. A corpsman rushed to my side, his expression telling me this was serious. He whipped off his belt and another corpsman's and tightened tourniquets on my legs. In the distance, someone screamed, "He's dying!" I heard choppers. Someone put me on a poncho and loaded me in along with other injured Marines. We lifted off.

I was shipped to five different hospitals for surgeries before landing at the Naval Hospital Oakland, in California. My new life was coming into focus, and it wasn't a pretty picture. What good was a man without legs? Why had I lived? Most men with my wounds bled to death on the battlefield or in transit. Yet I had survived, one of the military's first bilateral above-the-knee amputees since the Korean War. Some distinction. It was at Oakland that I learned Lieutenant Mitchell had been killed.

Why had God spared me? The lieutenant had a wife and a baby daughter. I couldn't stop thinking of the agony they must be going through. I considered writing them a letter, but I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to add to their sorrow. I tried not to think about it. Pushed the whole thing down inside me. Or tried. Just figuring out how I was supposed to go on living was overwhelming. The hospital let me keep a bottle of bourbon. The one thing I could depend on to kill the memories.

A little after Christmas, I awoke bleary-eyed to find a gorgeous USO hostess at my bedside. I rubbed my eyes. "Are you real?" I asked. She just smiled, a dazzling smile. Her name was Connie, and she wasn't fazed by my missing legs. She stopped by more and more. Her father had been a Navy corpsman. I guessed she had a soft spot for a man in a uniform. We married six months after meeting and moved to Oklahoma. I went to college for a teaching degree. I'd been fitted for prostheses, but this being the late 1960s they were difficult to use. Mostly I stuck to my wheelchair. On campus there were protests against the war. No one hassled me, but it was clear no one thought of

me as a hero. That I could deal with. It was the guilt I felt over being alive that was killing me. I told Connie about the lieutenant, how I felt almost responsible for his death. After all, I was the one who'd stepped on the land mine. Over and over again, she told me it wasn't my fault. I knew she was trying to make me feel better.

I prayed for healing but found no answers there either. The guilt only got worse. One summer, Connie and I went to California to visit her family. I remembered Lieutenant Mitchell's widow, Jan, lived in the area. I thought I might check on her and her daughter, Erin, now almost three. I found Jan's number in the phone book. I stared at that number for what seemed like forever, too scared to lift the receiver.

"Do you want me to dial the number for you?" Connie asked.

"No," I said. "I can't."

I graduated from college but veered away from teaching. I started my own business installing wheelchair lifts into vans. Who better than me? I created a tractor lift for a quadriplegic farmer. I met other disabled people. One day a friend invited me to join a wheelchair basketball team. I'd done well in business, but now I was excelling physically. I loved the competition, the teamwork. It was like being back in the Marines. But the better my life became, the more I felt I didn't deserve any of it. There was an inverse relationship between my blessings and my guilt.

I was never comfortable talking about Vietnam. Even with Connie. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 1982. I told myself I'd make the trip to see the Wall...someday. I was afraid it would be like one massive indictment against my life, almost 60,000 charges. The hardest days were the anniversaries of my injury and Lieutenant Mitchell's death. Connie gave me my space. I'd brood alone, reliving the moment, how it could have gone differently. I'd think about Jan and Erin, but after so many years it seemed pointless to contact them. Then one day, I realized almost 30 years had gone by since I stepped on that mine. All at once I felt an urgency to make that trip to the Wall. "It's as if it's calling me," I told Connie. I couldn't explain it.

And so on that next anniversary we'd come. Staring at the rows and rows of names before me, I wondered if I really was ready. I'd worn my dress blues. Slowly I pushed my wheelchair forward. An older couple stood next to the wall, holding each other. The woman rubbed her fingers back and forth over a name on the stone, sobbing. Another man I took for a vet scanned the names until he found one, then covered his eyes and ran down the walkway. I was looking for panel 2E. I wheeled my way there and gazed up at the names. Then I found it. What I'd traveled so far to see: James M. Mitchell Jr.

Why God? There was still no answer, but losing myself in that sea of names, there was a peace, an understanding, that came over me. I was a kid. It was war. Chaos. I could see I was far from the only vet suffering. I thought of the people I'd

(Continued on page 44)

Wall of Faces: Mission Accomplished



At Least One Photo Found for Every Veteran Honored on Vietnam Memorial

By Stars and Stripes

AUG 11, 2022

A photo of every service member whose name is inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is now featured on a website dedicated to honoring them.

At least one photo has been found of each of the more than 58,000 service members listed on the memorial, also known as The Wall, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund announced in a news release. The photos can be viewed on the virtual Wall of Faces, which is dedicated to honoring and remembering these service members who died or were missing in action during the Vietnam War.

“When VVMF began this effort, the goal was to put a face with a name for each of the 58,281 service members whose names are inscribed on The Wall. To ensure that visitors to The Wall understand that behind each name is a face — a person with a story of a family and friends who were forever changed by their loss,” VVMF

President and CEO Jim Knotts said in the release. “Today, the Wall of Faces tells these stories through photos and remembrances left by both friends and family members.”

The search for the photos began in 2001, with a more concerted effort launched in 2009, the release said. Volunteers and family members of these veterans from across the country contributed to the effort.

VVMF, the nonprofit that founded the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, is still seeking higher quality photos and remembrances of these Vietnam veterans, Knotts said in the release.

To view and search the Wall of Faces, visit vvmf.org/wall-of-faces. Visit vvmf.org or call 202.393.0090 for more information. ■

Photo from Korea

USMC M-46 Patton tank



Photo from WW2

US Marines taking a Japanese tank home with them.



A Veteran's Emotional Visit...
(Continued from page 41)

helped in my business, how grateful they were. These were all the things Connie had told me, and now I found myself believing them in my heart.

I went home and searched in earnest for Jan. But all my internet queries turned up nothing. I spread the word with Marine buddies that I was looking to talk with her.

Veteran's Day 1999. Connie answered the phone. "Give me just a minute," I heard her say. She covered the receiver. "It's Jan," she said.

I froze. Memories from a lifetime ago rushed back. I said a prayer and then took the phone. We talked for nearly an hour. Jan had remarried and was living in Arizona. She sounded completely happy and at peace. I told her how much Lieutenant Mitchell meant to me.

"I know how important you guys were to him," she said. She told me she was writing a book about him, then added that Erin was eager to talk with me and gave me her number.

I talked with both of them over the phone several times, but I wanted to see them in person. In August 2000, Connie and I drove to North Carolina to visit Erin and her family.

She met us at the door, and I saw her father in her. We spent the day talking, but it seemed we were both skirting the reason I'd come. I told her how excited her father had been when she was born, how much the men respected him. But not about the land mine. The day he died. Finally I couldn't take it anymore. I told her everything. She looked at me, perplexed. "Eddie, no one blames you. Not me and definitely not Mom. Thank God

you survived." Then she wrapped her arms around me.

It wasn't Erin or Jan's forgiveness I needed. I needed to forgive myself.

A year later, soldiers were again being sent in harm's way, this time in Afghanistan and then Iraq. The news was filled with images of wounded vets coming home, many with amputated limbs. I remembered how there had been no role model for me. I began visiting military hospitals and sharing my story.

One day Connie and I visited Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. There I saw a mother sitting outside a room, sobbing. "My son is 19, a Marine corporal," she said. "He lost his legs, and now he won't leave his room. He wishes he'd died."

I wheeled myself inside. The corporal stared back at me. In his eyes, I saw myself 41 years earlier. "I don't really feel like talking," he said.

"That's okay. I get it." I told him what had happened to me. "Your life is just beginning. Don't give up hope."

Hope was what kept me alive, a hope buried so deep I didn't know I had it until I faced the Wall. Until I was finally free from the guilt I felt for something that was never my fault. Things happen in war that we will never understand, like the combat death of a good man with a life ahead of him. We who survive can only understand that God is with us not just in war but in peace. ■

Photo from WW2

An M36 ('Jackson') Tank Destroyer (90mm Gun Motor Carriage, M36) near Düren Germany - February 1945. The M36 tank destroyer, formally 90 mm Gun Motor Carriage, M36, was an American tank destroyer used during World War II. The M36 combined the hull of the M10 tank destroyer, which used the M4 Sherman's reliable chassis and drivetrain combined with sloped armor, and a new turret mounting the 90 mm gun M3. Conceived in 1943, the M36 first served in combat in Europe in October 1944, where it partially replaced the M10 tank destroyer. It also saw use in the Korean War, where it was able to defeat any of the Soviet tanks used in that conflict.



That Reminds Me

The Things That Bring Back Memories

BY BEN COLE



Over the years since Vietnam, something out of the blue would remind me of Vietnam. It could be a song on the radio that was popular at the time. Loretta Lynn's hit Don't Come Home a Drinking with Loving on Your Mind was one. Turner, another southern boy and my tank's loader, had a battery powered phonograph he carried everywhere, and she was his favorite singer. Her songs grew on you and before long we all were humming the words long after the batteries were dead.

Another song, my favorite, The Letter, by the Box Tops, still reminds me of a slow day when our platoon was at the Washout. When it came on, we would all harmonize "... lonely days are gone, I'm a going home, my baby done wrote me a letter". It would always lead to talk about the cars we going to buy or the girls waiting back in the world.

There were many other cues that

brought back strong memories or flashbacks as they referred to or diagnosed now. The obvious ones, the backfire of a car, a loud or sharp sound would have me ducking long after the war much to the amusement of my civilian friends. A long whistling or hissing sound would do the same, even today. These were instant and reflexive responses to instant recollections.

Recently while browsing for Christmas gifts in a Sharper Image catalogue, I came upon a new electronic visual projector that would project movies from your I-phone to a movie screen. It could be used indoors and out. A slick color ad had the device showing movies at night in a family's backyard. I immediately remembered watching a movie this way after dark in Vietnam.

I was with Alpha company Third tanks and sometimes we would have a

couple of days inside the wire at Dong Ha while getting the tanks worked on. There we would sometimes enjoy a warm shower, a beer ration and a hot meal at the mess tent. After dark we settled down outside on some re-purposed ammo boxes behind the CP tent to watch a movie. The old 16MM projector with barely audible sound cranked out some old scratched and forgotten black and white movie.

In the distance, a few clicks to the north, in the dark background behind our bedsheet screen, were tiny fireflies of routine flares marking our outposts along the road from Cam Lo, to Con Thien in the distance.

Halfway through the movie, the number of flares increased above an area west of Charlie Two. We knew it was getting serious when someone from the CP came over and said 3/26 was getting hit and one our tanks had already been knocked out. Our platoon had just returned from the area sweeping and looking for this NVA unit, that our replacements had apparently found.

Puff, the Magic Dragon then appeared to help the surrounded the Marine unit from being overrun. Dropping flares while it circled, its mini guns were firing with a solid line of tracers from the dark sky to the unseen targets on the ground. Someone turned the projector off and hardly anyone noticed because we were watching another drama, a real one real taking place in the distance right before our eyes. It September 10, 1967, and the location would be known as Ambush Valley.

We were told to hit the rack and get some rest that we would be rolling out at daylight to help. The following day created other memories that can still be triggered today. ■



We found a source to produce a certificate like the one above. If you are interested in owning your own full color personalized gem, please call John Wear at 719.495.5998 and we will form a list of VTA members who may want to purchase one.

They come plain paper (11" x 17") rolled for \$75 delivered...

Or matted and framed (9" x 18") for \$150 delivered.

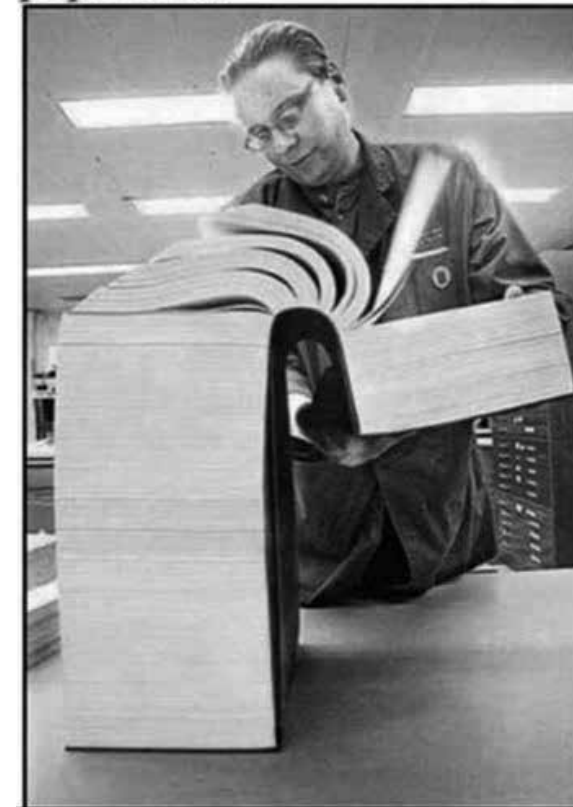
Note: You provide the personal details, the tank number, tank battalion logo and any other customized information that you want to appear.

"Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road of life is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision."
~Unknown~
SHARED ON I'M NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD.COM

BEHIND EVERY ANGRY WOMAN, STANDS A MAN WHO HAS ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT HE DID WRONG!

Reading can seriously damage your ignorance.
HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

Just letting you know that the book, "Understanding Women" is now out in paperback



Despite the old saying, "Don't take your troubles to bed," many women still sleep with their husbands.
©womenafter50.com

NEVER MAKE A WOMAN MAD. THEY CAN REMEMBER STUFF THAT HASN'T EVEN HAPPENED YET.
SHARED ON I'M NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD.COM

"Never make fun of someone who speaks broken English. It means they know another language."
H. Jackson Brown, Jr.
HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

USMC Vietnam Tankers Association

16605 Forest Green Terrace, Elbert, CO 80106-8937

**Please note: If the last two digits of "EXPIRES" on your address label is "21"
then your 2022 membership dues were payable back last January.**

If you do not pay soon, this may be your last issue.

And since 2023 dues are payable in three months, you may as well go ahead and pay for 2023 now.

Make your check out to: USMC VTA for \$30* and mail to:

USMC VTA c/o Bruce Van Apeldoorn, 99 Shoreline Drive, New Bern, NC 28562-9550

***Over & Above donations are always gratefully appreciated.**



NOT EVERYONE WHO LOST HIS
LIFE IN VIETNAM DIED THERE,
NOT EVERYONE WHO CAME HOME
FROM VIETNAM EVER LEFT THERE