

THE LRRP/RANGERS



*OF THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION
DURING THE VIETNAM WAR*

Number 19

March 1996

President's Report

Dear Friends:

I hope this Spring Newsletter finds everyone in good health and basking in warmth. In Minnesota, a bitter winter continues to hang on, with below zero temperatures and heavy snows. It has served as a reminder that Minnesota always has produced the toughest (or was it dumbest?) LRRP Rangers. In any event, some news from the outside world actually has gotten to this forsaken place, at least the lower half.

The 1996 Reunion is set for Milwaukee, July 31st to August 4th. One change this year is that reservations for lodging must be made directly with the hotel rather than through the 1st Cav Association. Contact the Milwaukee Hilton at 1-414-271-7250 or write Attn: Reservations, 509 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203.

Stan Freeborn has been working with the hotel, and I understand that though they won't block rooms, if you let them know you want to be with LRRP Rangers, and register early enough the hotel will try to place us together. The cost is \$69 plus tax, per night.

Registration for other reunion activities continues through the 1st Cav Assn. and can be done in advance (the cheapest way) or in person at the reunion. While our members typically register for different activities, I hope all will attend our highlights which are the Saturday Unit Luncheon and the Sunday morning breakfast. As always, your president and all "real" LRRP Rangers attend the Saturday night banquet. One last word on the banquet: For those who have never witnessed it, the sight of Leo Rabago in his dress uniform is worth the price of admission alone. He is so spectacular I thought he had joined the Marines.

If you have any questions regarding the reunion, please contact Stan Freeborn at 515-

476-3244, Bonnie or myself. I find the time spent with old friends and comrades, and the excitement of meeting new ones at the reunion to be extremely rewarding. Please try to attend. For those who are nervous or unsure about attending a reunion, you will find the warmest welcome without pretense or demands. Please join us.

This reunion also includes the excitement of elections. All positions are up for election including that of esteemed President. Your board is seeking nominations for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Sergeant-At-Arms and two Board Members.

If you would like to be nominated, or know a member who would, contact any board member. Remember, any organization will thrive only as long as members get involved. The early summer newsletter will have a ballot and slate of candidates. You can also nominate and vote for candidates at the reunion. All ballots, whether received by mail or at the reunion require members to be current in dues. This isn't back years, but for 1995-96.

I also have some sad news. Johnny Suggs' mother, Odia Estelle Suggs, passed away over the Christmas holidays. Johnny ("Doc") was one of the original LRRPs. He has been unable to attend the reunions while caring for his mother, but has been one of the Association's strongest supporters. He enclosed a beautiful poem he asked to be dedicated to all LRRP Ranger mothers. Consider dropping Johnny a card or giving him a call. It is a difficult time for him and we are his family. On behalf of our Association, Johnny, please accept our prayers and condolences.

One last note: We are at an age at which health problems become apparent. Please get a regular physical exam. Don't ignore seemingly minor problems.

Have a wonderful Spring!
Bob

**In Memory of
Odia Estelle Suggs**

"Miss me But Let Me Go"

Miss me, but let me go
when I come to the end of the road
and the sun has set for me
I want not rites in a gloomy room
why, why for a soul set free?
Miss me a little, but not too long
and not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that we once shared
Miss me, but let me go
For this is a journey that we
all must take and each must go alone
It's all a part of the
Master's plan, a step on the road to home.
When you are alone, and sick at heart
go to the Friend's you
know and bury your
sorrows in doing good deeds
Miss me but let me go.

--Dedicated to all mothers of LRRPs

Treasurer's Report

In this newsletter you'll find a current statement about our finances. T-shirts and watches have been replaced, as you can see in the expenses. A reminder to all about our dues, which remain at \$15.00 per year. The price of t-shirts has gone up \$1.00 each because, like most things, our cost has risen.

I'd like to thank Deb Matze for getting these for the unit. The new ones are of top quality. In the past we have tried raffles where tickets have been sent to all members. This really didn't work as I had hoped. So this year John Fort has donated six commemorative Vietnam Veterans plates that are truly a collectors item. These, along with the Abbott hunting knife, will be raffled off at our luncheon. (The knife was redonated to the unit by John LeBrun.) The reunion this year should be well attended; however, if you're unable to make it and would like a chance on the items, let me know. Each ticket will be \$5.00. If you win, I'll be sure that the prize will be shipped directly to you. There will also be a variety of

items raffled off, such as t-shirts, watches and belt buckles.

We as a group have come a long way under the leadership of some fine people and the support of the unit members. I would like to give my sincere thanks to all for your support!

FINANCIAL REPORT

\$4,198.91 previous balance
1,810.09 expenses

\$2,388.82 balance

Expenses: Breakdown

\$400.00 Aug. Newsletter
350.00 Mar. Newsletter
227.40 Watches
67.00 Postmaster
365.32 T-shirts (white)
400.37 T-shirts (black)

\$1,810.09 Total

Merchandise available:

T-shirts - Black or White (silk screen): size M, L, XL: \$10.00. XXL: \$11.00. XXXL: \$12.00.
T-shirts - Black only (Decal) size M, L, XL - \$11.00. XXL: \$13.00
Black sweatshirt (Decal) large and X-large: \$18.00. XXL: \$19.00. Hats - white or black: \$10.00.
Unit Logo Belt Buckles (Brass) - \$20.00.
Unit Logo Watches - \$35.00.
Unit Patches (cloth) - \$4.25.
Unit Logo Bumper Stickers - \$1.75.
Unit Logo Decals (window) - \$1.75.
Unit Rings (silver) - \$35.00 (one size: 10)
Ranger Crest Patch (cloth) - \$4.00.

Contact: Howard Shute
111 East Miller Avenue
Munhall, PA 15120
412-461-9120

Note: I am still trying to locate a reasonable source for the metal unit crest pins.

Secretary's Report

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR July, 1995 THRU March, 1996.

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$196.09
INCOME FROM TREASURER	<u>750.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$946.09
EXPENSES	
1st Cav. flowers	59.85
Misc.	79.69
Printing	131.57
Phone Bill	30.40
Photocopies	29.56
Postage	219.57
Supplies	<u>27.55</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$578.19
OVERALL TOTAL	<u>\$367.90</u>

Secretary's Report

The Board and elected officers of the LRRP/Rangers hope your Easter was filled with memorable and peaceful moments.

No new members were located this half of the business year. One of our hard-working and generous with his limited time members, Charlie Burckhardt, has volunteered again to help me find these last remaining LRRP/Rangers. Charlie is soon to retire as a Philadelphia detective in the major crime unit. He also instructs college courses, is a remodeler and is working toward another degree. Somehow he also fits in the task of locating LRRP/Rangers. Please make sure you thank him when you see him.

This newsletter will be a bit different. Chuck Coffin, ('69-'70) is a Lt. Colonel and still on active duty. Chuck has volunteered to help me with the newsletter. His computer and printer are top of the line, so we'll see a nice difference. Please thank Chuck for taking the time away from his family to help us. His wife, Linda, has an extraordinary voice. She has studied opera and has been busy writing novels. They have four beautiful children: three boys and one girl. Chuck has a Bachelor's in English and a Masters in International Relations. He is presently assigned

in the area, working as the Operations Officer for the 308th Civil Affairs Brigade. Many of the members of the Brigade are currently deployed to Bosnia. Chuck may retire at the end of this year.

Chuck says he has a story of Leo Rabago on a mission, guaranteed to embarrass Leo, which he will sell to the highest bidder. He and Leo (along with Danner Bierhaus), were all recently stationed together at the Special Warfare Center and School at Ft. Bragg. Three veterans of H Company, 75th, still on active duty, stationed at the same time and place may be some sort of record. Comments?

Ken Olson, 1/9 Air Cav., (67-68) sent you LRRP/Rangers a Christmas card and wishes all of you a happy new year. Bob Gill and Ken live close enough to have lunch on occasion.

Kregg Jorgenson took a fall at work and reinjured the area on his hip where he was shot in Vietnam. He's facing hip replacement or may have had it done already. Kregg reports: "Kit Beaton, a former pilot with Apache Troop (68-69 time frame) recently died of pancreatic cancer. Kit earned a Silver Star at the recommendation of H Company for climbing out of his helicopter during a hot extraction and carrying back a wounded LRRP." Kregg also reported Ron Aiman of Apache Troop died recently of cancer. Bob Gill, who knew them both, said Ron died of kidney cancer. Kregg says he intends to investigate all the cancer reports.

To follow up now on the cancer in our unit, I will list those who have contacted me.

McWilliams, David (Mac) served 68-69.

Deceased from complications from kidney cancer surgery.

Kirby, Joe 68-69. Has had one cancerous kidney removed and after chemo is doing well.

Michlin, Clare (Mick) 68-69. Had a large bladder cancer tumor removed at age 28 yrs and a recurrence in 1991. He's being checked frequently and is doing all right now.

Echterling, Mike 68-69. Had a large bladder cancer tumor removed 9/95. Undergoing treatments for the cancer at present.

Elliott, Bill 68-69. The V.A doctors found a cyst in Feb on one kidney and a big scar. The kidney apparently is not functioning well. (Bill is farming now.)

Markovich, Dale 67-68. Had non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and after chemo has been free for two years.

(Secretary's Report, cont.)

Van Hook, Donald 67-68. Deceased from non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.

Holte, Ronald 67-68. TL of Donald Van Hook's team has spinal cancer and is wheelchair-bound. Rick Tedder, also on this team, can remember them being sprayed directly at least once. Rick has problems also.

Deimes, Alvino 1970 - has received money from Dow re Agent Orange. His liver and thyroid are not functioning properly. He has diabetes and the beginnings of Parkinson's and PTSD. In Dec he was to be checked for kidney or bladder cancer. No word yet on his condition.

Brown, Steve 71-72. In February Steve was found to have advanced liver cancer. He is undergoing chemotherapy now, but the doctors are not optimistic. Steve wants all of you to know he did not smoke, drink, or use drugs. He never felt sick or suspected anything was wrong. He highly recommends you all have scans or x-rays done besides the checkups. Steve has a son in the Army and a daughter who is 13. Please include Steve and his family in your prayers.

Cochran, Richard 1970 - Richard was diagnosed in 1989 with Transverse Myelitis. He also received money from Dow re Agent Orange. He has no feeling from his waist down and other complications.

Rausch, Bill 71-72. Bill has seen blood in his urine and his stools. The doctors are unable to explain why.

Renfro, Cal. Cal has skin cancer, for which he has been operated on several times.

O'Brien, Paul 68-69. Generally not well, but needs encouragement to visit a doctor and get tested.

Alfaro, Paul. Paul says he is feeling better, is not using his canes, and has lost weight. He has written 2 children's books, and has 3 children in the service.

Blackwelder, Duane. Duane called and he is well. He received the newsletter and told the VN vets at work about the cancer. One went to the doctor and was in surgery within days. He had prostatic cancer.

There are two deaths to report.

Jorge Otero '68 - 69.

James Loughery '67.

I do not know the causes.

If more of you have problems, please let me know. My phone number is 219-696-6589. I work Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30 to 5:00 CST. I sometimes work other hours, so keep trying.

I always enjoy hearing from you, so don't hesitate to call. Mike and I want to thank those of you who have checked up on us. We appreciate the calls and prayers.

Bonnie



Bonnie Echterling

626 Lincoln

Lowell, IN 46356