

**THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE LRRP/RANGERS OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION
DURING THE VIETNAM WAR**



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JANUARY 2011

THIS NEWSLETTER IS DISTRIBUTED IN JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR. IT IS FOR THE MEN WHO SERVED IN THE LONG RANGE PATROL UNITS OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THESE UNITS ARE: LRRP DET., 191ST MI; HHC (G-2) LRRP; CO. E (LRP), 52ND INF.; CO. H, (RANGER) 75TH INF.; AND DET. 10, (RANGER) HHC, 3RD BGE.

THE NEWSLETTER IS MAILED TO ALL OF THESE MEN FOR WHICH AN ADDRESS IS AVAILABLE. FUNDING FOR THE NEWSLETTER IS BY THE LRRP/RANGER ASSOCIATION OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

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**You can generate \$2.00 for
the LRRP/Rangers
association**

The 75th RRA will reimburse
us for each 1st Cav
LRRP/Ranger who joins the
75th RRA

One insert in this newsletter is the menu for the Christmas 1968 dinner. It is from Wilbur Wesselius.

The second is a list of all attendees to all reunions since the first one in 1987. Thank John LeBrun for doing the busy work on the reunion rosters.

**64th Annual
1st Cavalry Division Association Reunion
Killeen/Fort Hood, Texas
8-12 June, 2011**

Please note: the dates for the reunion are different than those in the last newsletter.

There was no more information about the reunion available from the 1st Cav Assn. at the time of this writing.

The number for reservations at the Shiloh Inn is 254-699-0999. The fax number is 254-699-0994. If calling, Donna is familiar with the LRRP/Rangers block of rooms and Brenda is on the email, either one can help.

TREASURER'S REPORT

From bob Carr

START 7 - 31 - 2010 \$10,783.20

DUES & MERCHDISE INCOME \$892.25

EXPENSES

NEWSLETTER & POSTAGE	[\$692.70]
BRICK PURCHASE	[\$280.00]
BALANCE CLOSE 11 - 9 - 2010	\$10,702.75
BRICK FUND BALANCE.	\$320.00

THE BRICK MONEY IS IN THE SAME ACCT. AND I WILL KEEP TRACK OF THE BAL AND DONATIONS
TAKE CARE .. BOB

JIM McINTYRE
NOMINATION FOR RANGER HALL OF FAME
from Kregg Jorgenson

James. F. McIntyre, my former team leader, was a remarkable LRRP/Ranger as well. I wasn't on the team when one of the guys on a mission in contact dropped a live grenade in the middle of the team. Mack threw his ruck on it and jumped on the rucksack. I think he got an impact Silver Star and instant promotion for that while the bigger minds tried to figure out if it merited something more.

That had to take balls. He was my team leader when we got hit and if it wasn't for him I doubt if we would have gotten out with just two of five KIA, one serious WIA and Mack and I with minor wounds.

I got a Silver Star for just surviving, nothing more, nothing John Wayne and only because he directed me and I was scared shitless the entire time.

Mack died of a brain aneurysm in Watertown, New York and my goal is to get him in the Ranger Hall of Fame, if only for the grenade incident. That's real heroism

It would help a lot if someone who was there when Mack jumped on that grenade would write up a first hand account of that incident. A write-up by anyone who was there when the general pinned on his impact Silver Star would also be a big help.

Comments from anyone who served with Mack would also be appreciated.

Contact me at: 206-767-7729

bigdwarfl@comcast.net

Kregg Jorgenson

Any personal stories or comments you may have that would help Mack into the RHOF would be greatly appreciated.

Bill Anton, the association's representative to the 75th RRA, and a 2009 inductee into the Ranger Hall of Fame is working with Kregg on this.

UPDATE FROM MYRON PRCHAL

November 2010

Hello Everyone,

First of all, I hope you all had a good Veterans' Day and that everyone around you thanked you appropriately.

I wanted to take a few minutes to update you on the progress we have been making. Your responses have been nothing short of amazing and we cannot be more thankful to each of you. I am still assembling the paperwork and statements for Myron's next VA claim, so we haven't had any movement on that front. However, there is so much that has happened as a result of that one mass email that Bill Carpenter sent.

One of the emails we received was from "Dutch", in Tomah, Wisconsin, urging us to make Tomah Myron's VA home clinic. Well, Tomah is about 3-1/2 hours north of us, but the Rockford VA representative agreed with Dutch that this would be a very good move. So we did just that. Myron had his first four physician appointments October 18. The first follow up appointments were November 2. We have been absolutely stunned at the results at each appointment.

The VA psychiatrist has given Myron the formal VA diagnosis of PTSD. The VA physician has agreed that Myron's back pains "more likely than not" were caused by the rucksack he carried as a LRRP Ranger in Vietnam, adding that at the time he only weighed 119 pounds. As well, she agreed that the hepatitis B that he carries was caused "more likely than not" by a blood transfusion that would have been an obvious necessity due to the extreme bleeding that would have occurred with his eye injury. Also, she stated in her report that the sinus abscess that almost killed him in 2005, and must be monitored every 90 days the rest of his life, was "more likely than not" caused by the migration of the shrapnel in his head. Physical therapy began working with him that same day on the pain in his injured left hand.

Myron has another appointment with all of these people on December 20 and during this visit he will see an ophthalmologist as well. At that time we will request the written reports of all of the doctors and assemble the next claim. We have been advised by several of you to submit each part of the next claim separately and we intend to do just that.

This has all happened very quickly in light of how long it has taken us to get this far. It would never have happened without the help of all of you. I hope we have the opportunity to meet you and thank each of you in person at the next reunion.

There is something else that I want to pass along to you though. Shortly after our responses from you, I was contacted by the wife of a veteran who is so completely disabled by PTSD that he has now become agoraphobic (won't go outside) and has held no job for years. The wife is suffering from Parkinson's and cannot work either. They have been moved into their son's basement and are trying to make a life there. This woman called me because she volunteers her time (phone calls) with the Silver Star Organization and Myron was on her list to be presented with the Silver Star Award. At the time I talked with her, we were just on our way to Tomah for the first time and I expressed to her our high hopes. We will be meeting with her and her husband in the next few weeks to advise them of our success in Tomah and see what we can do to help their situation. We would not have been able to offer any kind of assistance to these people without the mass email that Bill sent out, without the advice and help that you all sent us, or without the insistence of Dutch that Myron get to Tomah.

We cannot say thank you enough or mean it more sincerely. We'll update you as we have progress.

Toni (Mrs. Myron) Prchal

SURGERY IN THE FIELD

From Doc Gilchrest

Leo Corey's whining essay of his visit to the prostate doctor was really heart-warming, and brought back some fond memories our time in VN.

The training on LRRP Hill in An Khe was especially intense and difficult to say the least. A few of us managed to get passes for some downtown passes and afternoon R&R. We made our way from one bar to the next, having a grand ole time, celebrating our enthusiasm for the next weeks training schedule.

At the last bar, a young but experienced bar maid began to stare and point at the huge black mole on Leo's face. In her defense I will have to admit that the mole was really large and protruding from Leo's right upper cheekbone. Leo's feelings were hurt and a few words were said between Leo and the young woman, which brings us to the story of Leo's ruggedly handsome good looks. He was not born with it.

Leo asked me if there was anything I could do about his demoralizing mole. We sipped a few more shots of our favorite drinks while I thought about a medical procedure that would make Leo a better looking person. I finally told Leo that I had seen Drs in the VA burn off moles with a cautery. This controlled the bleeding that comes from this procedure. I told him that the 15th Med guys could probably do it in a jiffy.

Leo was and probably still is an impatient person of sorts, and wanted to know why we couldn't do it right here, right now, in the An khe Bar with a dirt floor.

Jesse McConnell, David Dickinson, Johnnie Webb and a couple of others lrrps could not think of any good reason not to. A conference was held and we decided to burn the mole off with Cigarettes and use whiskey as an antiseptic, to which we all agreed. We worked in shifts lighting cigarettes and passing them to the person doing the burning. The mole bled profusely, which in turn put out the cigarettes. To overcome this obstacle we learned not to hold the cigarette to the mole, but to hold it as close as possible without getting it in the blood. This slowed down our operational time and accordingly went through three or four packs of cigarettes.

Not one LRRP complained about using up our own cigarettes, after all this was "our black swan". I am sure we drank as much of the antiseptic as Leo did. It was a very tedious and time consuming procedure. Days later when the bandages were removed and we waited in anticipation to see if the mole would return, we were rewarded with our "Swan".

Leo was born again. A more beautiful specimen than before and an ego to go with it. To this day the mole has not returned and Leo's good looks have taken him far and wide in this world we call home. By the way Leo, how did your prostate Dr know which end to stick the barrel????

Doc Gilchrest

True Story.

CHRISTMAS EVE 1967

There has been a story bouncing around about an LRRP team calling in a "Santa Sighting" on Christmas Eve 1967. Below is the documentation of that event from the TL who called it in.

I remember it well. The team was on patrol between LZ English and LZ Up Lift. It was the night before Christmas, at about 2355 hours. We had a lot of movement to the east of Hwy. 1, just north of LZ Up Lift. It was so dark it was hard to see.

We could hear someone yelling and it sounded like a company of troops. Then all of a sudden, there he was. A skinny little guy with a white beard and eight Asian barking deer pulling a two-wheeled rickshaw. It was full of beef & rice and chili con carne. The little old man was yelling "HO HO HO CHI MINH". We called it in to control ASAP.

It was a good sighting. I am sorry, I never thought anyone would doubt me

To all a happy and a merry,

Bob Carr

BOB GILLES' LAST BIKE

By David Head, Harbor City, CA
Reprinted from
American Motorcycle Product News

We sold a new '09 FLHTCUTG Tri-Glide to Robert Gilles on June 23, 2009. We bought it back from this decorated veteran's widow on Nov. 10, less than five months later.

It was early spring 2009 when I first noticed the change in Bob's appearance. He was happy to tell me that, although he was on borrowed time, he had already beaten the medical statistics by half a year. Even so, he said, "I just don't wanna die before the age of 60 and that won't be 'til September. That means I'm gonna have to beat the odds another six months, I guess."

After that he came in to see me once a week. We talked openly about his cancer and feelings. I helped him with a strategy to sell his two Harleys. He seemed happy to think about giving his wife a couple of decent checks to help cover his final expenses. Sure enough, two weeks later he came in all smiles. His bikes were sold and he felt a sense of relief.

After that visit, I noticed that he started paying attention to the new Tri-Glide on the showroom floor. I worried about what to do. Under the circumstances, wouldn't it be wrong for me to try to sell a Tri-Glide to the dying hero?

Even so, I took the time to teach him everything I knew about the vehicle. One day, I had Bob sign a demo ride waiver form, and then I got in my truck and followed him around our demo route. When we returned, his smile won me over. I knew he wanted it, and he had ridden well. But still, I didn't want to suggest that he make a purchase at such a time.

I decided to call his wife and share my feelings and questions. She thanked me sincerely for letting her know. The very next day they came in the store together. We talked about life, joy, dying and planning for eternity, and all of the things people generally avoid talking about. But Bob was never afraid and neither was his wife. I lost my fear, and we closed a deal that included a written dealer buy-back agreement on the Tri-Glide. This was the document Bob needed in order to allow himself to accept his wife's permission to buy it in the first place. And she wanted my personal assurance that Bob safely controlled the trike during the demo ride. This was the assurance she needed from me in order to give him her blessing in the first place.

Bob's wife later said that Bob had a wonderful time customizing it in the garage with their son, Matt. It was a special time for both of them. She also told me that the Tri-Glide extended his life by at least two months.

I saw him cruising around twice, and each time I smiled and wondered if I will face my end with half as much dignity, joy, and courage. The last time I saw him, I knew the Tri-Glide was somewhat helping the man live beyond all odds. Watching Bob go by, I knew I was observing the real deal.

Bob died early on the morning of Sept. 17. The day after his 60th birthday! It turns out that for all the hours and days I spent trying not to sell this man a trike, it was the best sale I would have ever hoped to have made because it gets even better when I consider what happened in the end. We paid Bob's wife a generous buy-back, a terrific young couple came in and bought Bob's trike at a fair price; and in the end I sold the trike twice instead of once. I am reminded of what we are supposed to be doing here in the first place. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



Veterans Day 2010 at The Wall
Washington, D.C.
By Ken White

The weather in the nation's capital on Veteran's Day was splendid. It could not have been nicer. It was warm with temperatures in the low-to-middle 60s, sunny, and dry, and the fall foliage was in full view with the leaves on the trees ranging in color from bright yellow to vibrant reds. The crowd size at The Wall was moderate, but the 1st Cav was well represented with many vets in attendance to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Battles of the Ia Drang Valley. Sam and Kathy Dixon, and yours truly, were there representing our unit. Sam, of course, is our unit's 5th Past President, and current member of 1st Cav Association Board of Governors.

Prior to the start of the observance at The Wall, a group of high school students from Forest Park High School in neighboring Woodbridge, Virginia came up to a group of us who were standing around and talking, to thank us for our service to America and to wish us a wonderful Veteran's Day. Then they handed each of us a letter that I thought you might find interesting. It read as follows:

November 11, 2010

To You, Our Veterans

On behalf of my fellow students here at Forest Park High School in Woodbridge, Virginia, we want to thank you for your faithful service and sacrifice to our country while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

We suspect you (and most of our veterans) haven't heard a lot of thanks from us teenagers, but our club, titled America's Club, is committed to changing that.

May you know on this Veteran's Day and always, that we students recognize, appreciate, and feel incredibly grateful for the freedoms and blessings you helped secure for our generation.

May you enjoy your special day, and be encouraged knowing that we young people not only remember and appreciate you, but we too are also committed to serving others – just as you did.

Have a wonderful Veteran's Day.

Most Respectfully,

*The Students of Forest Park High School
and Members of America's Club
Forest Park High School
15721 Forest Park Dr.
Woodbridge, VA 22193*

Well, tell me this doesn't help restore your faith in America. In spite of all the negative news that surrounds us each day, these young people are filled with energy and enthusiasm and are eager to work to make this country a better place to live for one and for all.

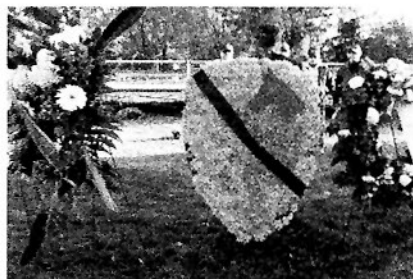
As always, the Cav was well represented at the observance with several speakers. General Barry McCaffrey (Ret.), Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry (A Shau Valley '68) who is a member of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, provided introductory remarks for speaker Air Vice Marshal Kym Osley, head of the Australian Defense Staff (Washington, DC) and Australian Defense Attache, Embassy of Australia. Also, Ed Times, Bravo Company 2nd Bn. 7th Cav. (LZ X-Ray and LZ Albany in the Ia Drang Valley '65) led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ed is also one of the two official 1st Cav wreath bearers for the Veteran's Day observances on The National Mall and at Arlington National Cemetery, having been appointed to the position by General Hal Moore (Ret.) in 1995.

The day's keynote speaker was Michael E. Heisley, owner of the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies basketball franchise. The Heisley Foundation recently pledged \$2.5M toward the planned underground education center on The National Mall. Heisley's uncle, Joseph Heisley served in Vietnam, and his father's childhood friend, Captain Rocky Versace, was killed while being held as a prisoner of war by the Viet Cong. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. (Note, Rocky Versace was a Ranger and served with the 1st Cav in Korea.)

The 2nd Annual 1st Cavalry Division Association Veterans Day Dinner was held in the evening at the Crown Plaza Hotel at National Airport in Crystal City, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from the nation's capital. I was lucky enough to be able to attend along with an approximate 110 other Cav veterans and present members of the division. Dennis Webster, executive director of the 1st Cav Association, was the keynote speaker. I didn't know it until Dennis spoke at the dinner that evening that he served in Task Force Eagle with the Cav conducting peace support operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the late 1990's.

Finally, I have two photographs from the observance. The first one is of the honor guards from the 1st Cav and 82nd Airborne Divisions, and includes bugler Tech Sgt Karl Sweedy, U.S. Air Force, and bagpiper Christopher Jackson. Incidentally, MG Mike Conrad (Ret.) is responsible for coordinating the color guards at The Wall. The second photograph (below) is the wreath that was placed at The Wall by the Cav.

See you at The Wall on Memorial Day 2011.



NOT A ROUTINE INSERTION

From Earl McCann

We pulling a mission out of LZ Uplift, into the mountains of the highlands for a drop off. Normally I was one of the first one out of the chopper, no later than 2nd. But this time I was the last one out. On the right side of the chopper the team had about a 5 ft jump,,no big deal. But on the left side it was about a 12 to 15 feet drop down a rocky hill.

As I got on the skid ready to jump,,the chopper raised about 5 more feet in the air. As I was falling,,I wrapped my left leg around the skid,and was hanging on for dear life. The door gunner was telling me to drop head first. It was then about a 20 feet drop. I was shaking my head no.and hanging on with one leg. I must have looked like a Monkey hanging upside down. I might have been a little crazy to volunteer for the LRRPs, but I was not stupid enough to drop 20 feet head first-down that rocky slope.

After what seemed like an eternity,,probably about a minute. I was able to release the rucksack. and reach up and grab the skid with both hands. Then they lowered the chopper about 5 feet, so I only had about a 8 ft drop, feet first. I don't remember anything else about that mission, just the part of hanging upside down by one leg wrapped around the skid,and holding on for everything I was worth.



HISTORICAL OCCURRENCES

BILL CRITCHFIELD'S LAST MISSION

BY Bill's cousin, Dean Lindstrom

On Dec 26, 1967, SP-4 Bill **Critchfield** returned from a mission with another team lead by Bob **Carr** in a remote area in the Kim Son Valley in the Vinh Thanh Mountains known as the Crow's Foot. He volunteered to join another mission scheduled for the next day. This mission was to be lead by Sgt. "Montana" Joe **Haverland**. Bill was the Assistant Team Lead (ATL) joining Pat **Blewett** (RTO), Don **Van Hook**, and two South Vietnamese scouts **Qui** and **Phi**. The team lifted off from LZ Uplift the following morning for a first light insertion in the Suoi Ca Valley. The Suoi Ca Valley lies ~20 miles south of Bong Son in the Binh Dinh Province and is named for the Suoi Ca stream that meanders through the craggy valley. The insertion was successful and the team made their way to their first rendezvous point. After laying dog, they began to reconnoiter the mountainside and deep ravines in the valley thick with triple canopy vegetation. The day wore on without excitement or significant discoveries.

At approximately 5:00pm, the team located and established a night position on the side of a hill with a ~20 degree incline in an area surrounded by thick jungle with trees that afforded Montana the ability to climb a tree and view the valley floor. At around 5:30, as the team was just getting ready to eat dinner, Montana whispered down to the team, "Gook." A moment later, "Another one." Several moments later he said "Shit. They're all over the place." An NVA anti-aircraft battalion consisting of 1,500 – 2,000 North Vietnamese Regulars were moving down the valley floor, hugging the edge of the tree line nearest the team's position. As the RTO, Pat **Blewett** radioed in an artillery strike to decimate the large force. As the artillery shells landed, Pat called in the coordinates, walking the artillery up the hill toward the team's position but unfortunately the main NVA force evaded directly up the hill on top of the team.

Montana, still in the tree, called out "Let's get the hell out of here." The E&E plan called for the team to split up into two groups (Pat, Bill, and Phi) and (Montana, Van Hook, and Qui) and move in opposite directions around the hill and rendezvous in the valley on the other side. Bill and Phi were squatting on the ground in a defensive firing position to the left of Pat, packs on, ready to move. NVA soldiers simultaneously threw a satchel charge and sprayed the area with automatic weapon fire as it detonated. The charge landed several feet immediately in front of Bill and Phi. Pat had just pulled on his pack and was turning to say "Let's move" when he saw a bright orange flash. He pulled the emergency release on his pack and kicked his legs out, landing prone on the ground as the satchel charge exploded. After the blast, Pat opened his eyes and looked to his left to discover Bill and Phi in a heap. The explosion blew a hole in Pat's calf and shredded his backpack, which had not come off - likely saving his life. The explosion also blew off Qui's heel and blew Montana completely out of the tree, injuring his back. Only Van Hook managed to escape serious injury. Pat and Van Hook immediately went to Bill and Phi who were unconscious and attempted to administer first-aid. Unfortunately, the med kit had been in Pat's backpack and was destroyed. Van Hook found a damaged can of serum albumin but sliced his hand open while attempting to open it. Meanwhile, NVA soldiers were still overrunning the position while evading artillery. As Van Hook helped Montana and Qui, into defensive firing positions, Pat radioed in the initial distress call with request for reinforcements and immediate evacuation.

A 30-man Quick Reaction Force (QRF) from the 1st Squad/9th Cav scrambled out of LZ Two-Bits near Bong Son. The 1/9 headed south into the mountains and valleys of the coastal plain toward Suoi Ca to insert the Blues platoon, secure the area, and extract the 1st Cav LRRP team. Paul **Hart**, the lead lift pilot described the following:

"In the darkness of the mountains our guns ships designated a landing zone (LZ) as close as possible to the team and we proceeded to air assault our Blues into the area. As we circled above the valley floor we could see our unit(s) in "contact" and tracers streaked through the air."

The 1st Cav team had managed to set up defensive firing positions and in the darkness was working by sound only.

In a recent email regarding the events of that night, Pat **Blewett** stated:

"Suddenly something set off one of our trip flares and Van Hook spun around to sweep the area on full-auto but I stopped him and got on the radio, 'Blue, if you tripped that flare, tell me now.' We received an affirmative reply. I answered back 'You're going across the mountain above us. I'm sending a man up to you. Don't shoot.' Van Hook went up to the Blues and we got everyone ready to go. Everyone, except Van Hook and I, were put on ponchos and carried out. Van Hook was able to walk on his own and I walked up the hill with two M-16's for crutches and one on each shoulder. Van Hook and I dusted one gook hiding in some bushes on the way up."

Paul Hart continued:

"I accepted responsibility for the extraction and medivac when we got the call. The other three lift birds would add the additional troopers that made up the squad I would leave behind. With the area still "hot", [still shooting] we received a call from our Blues telling us that they had reached the LRRP team and needed immediate medivac. That was my call to go. I went into a makeshift LZ at the direction of our Blues and under cover of our guns. In the few frantic and hurried minutes it took to land and load, I was able to glance around as the team was helped or placed aboard by our Blues. Some seemed to be conscious others not. My crew chief yelled "flights up" and we were gone. Fortunately, there was an aid station a short flight away. After everyone was unloaded we departed the area and returned to our base camp... As the Aircraft Commander (A/C) that evening, I was recommended for and received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). Something that I continue to display and take pride in -- not because it came from an act of war, but more from an act of humanity - one soldier helping another - what more can be asked."

MORE ON THE STAN LENTO STORY

From Mike **Bakkie** 9-26-10

The article in the last newsletter on Stan Lento is slightly incomplete. Yes, it was an accident and I know who's pack caused the blast. But what is important is that Stan did something that day no one knows about. I am the only person on the team that walked away without a single scratch.

We were preparing to go to MACV and demonstrate who we were, what we did, and how we did it. Everyone was sitting around Stan's bed, I was standing, as he went over what we would be doing. One of us still had his pack on and instead of laying it down, dropped it and 3 people died plus 2 were wounded.

This is the part that has never been told, except to Stan's wife, several years ago by me. Stan, like lightening jumped up and yelling; "get down!" pushed me down and laid on me. If he had not done that there would have been 4 dead and 2 wounded.

He really should be awarded a 3rd Silver Star for what he did but I don't know how it can ever be made to happen. When they started the Ranger brick project at the Ranger memorial I made sure that the 3 of them had bricks with their names on it. As for the pack with the daisy-chained claymores that caused the tragedy, that will go to my grave. Last item, the Jewish Song to the Dead. The section of the poem quoted should have read:: "They are bound up in our memories, in the rising and the setting of the sun they are remembered, in our going out and coming in they are remembered, as long as we keep them in our hearts they live forever."

There are many, many such poems written by many Jewish poets over a vast span of time.

Michael Bakkie
ambakkie@astound.net
925-429-3845
fax 925-429-5128

VETERANS AFFAIRS

From John Simones

Diabetes and your eyes:

People with diabetes are 25 times more likely than other people to become blind. Chronic high blood sugar can damage tiny blood vessels that maintain the health of your retina. This complication is called diabetic retinopathy. The longer you have diabetes the more likely you are to develop diabetic retinopathy.

In its early stages, the retinopathy is barely noticeable unless you get a leak that may cause blurred vision. As the condition progresses a blood vessel can rupture and sudden vision loss can occur. Scar tissue can form and "pull" on the retina causing it to detach. Pressure may increase and lead to glaucoma.

As I have stated in recent columns, I am not a doctor. Check with your primary care doctor, have regular dilated eye exams. If you have diabetes, careful management is the best way to prevent vision problems.

Good health John

R.E.A.C.H. PROGRAM

From Steve Camp

I had to do a temp change of address last year while my daughter was in the hospital with back surgery or they wouldn't send my meds...big hassle. I. back home now for good???

(fyi) My wife and i went thru a program for vets w/PTSD..called REACH. It is a great class for husband and wife. If you know any couples struggling with relationships this is a big time help. It deals with everyday things and PTSD issues. It is offered free through VA centers. Ours was at the Oklahoma VA hospital.

Steve Camp

What is the difference between training and combat? In training, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In combat, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.

PATIENT ADVOCATE SERVICES

From Bill Carpenter

Having trouble with service at the VA hospital, or any hospital for that matter? Talk to the patient advocate. Every hospital has one, but they usually don't want anyone to know that. I have had three experiences with patient advocates, each time they walked through the system and talked to the person at the source of the problem. Patient advocates do not send memos.

I was having a problem with my service connected disabilities with the local VA hospital. This went on for three months. I had hand-carried all my records to the hospital, including a copy of my original, 1968, evaluation by the VA. The patient advocate found out that less than half of the relevant material I had taken in had been put in the computer. It took the patient advocate about three hours to isolate and eliminate a problem that had been going on for months.

CARE PACKAGES

From Lou Bruchey

If you belong to any organization, like the VFW, Amvets, American Legion, or if you want to send a care package yourself to the Rangers serving overseas, here is how you do it. This is from a good friend of mine who is now serving as a ranger Captain.

Lou, Bruchey

Anyone can send a package to our central address overseas: Soldier

PRG 6-3(2)

APO AE 09354-3005

Please do not put any ranks or anything about the Ranger Regiment on the package. Please let me know how many packages will be sent, very roughly, and I can let them know they are coming so they can have a plan to distribute them to the outstations.

CPT Neil Markey

Battalion Engineer

2nd Bn, 75th Ranger Regiment

Comm; (253)967-5880

AKO; neil.markey@us.army.mil

Show Your Colors

From Jim Regan

This has been on my mind for quite a while now. There are several ways that we "Show Our Colors!" I still remember that the colors for my high school, they were green and white. Then there are the colors for Motorcycle/Automobile clubs, all the sports teams, and indeed, some of the packaging that we see for our food items.

Somewhere along the line, even our States in the Nation were designated by color. Some Red, some Blue! As for me, I'd color them all; Red, White, and Blue!!!

When I was a small child, I remember our sainted neighbor, Uncle Don, who decorated my tricycle for the Fourth of July celebration parade. Red, White, and Blue crepe paper through the spokes of the wheels and the handlebars. It was the only time I could ride the bike in the street! Never won a prize but was always proud to "Show My Colors!!!"

That was during WWII. Mom had a small flag, about 12" X 18" hanging on our front door. One star in the center. That signified that we had a member of our family, Dad, who was serving in the war.

As I grew up, I learned to respect the National colors and in fact the colors for the Armed Forces and States. Even found out things like; When the State flags are displayed, they are posted according to when they became a state in the Union. Delaware first, on the right, and Hawaii last on the left. There were many occasions when I was responsible for assuring that the colors were properly displayed, the Flags were flown according to regulations, and all other such things surrounding ceremonies. I'll not forget a wonderful "Change of Command" ceremony at Ft. Hood Texas. Had over seven hundred troops in formation, below a hill, out of site of the bleachers and spectators. As the 1st Cavalry Division band played the bugle calls and began the marching music, here comes the entire Battalion, on line, Colors and Guidons whipping in the Texas wind, marching up the hill and into position. What a rousing cheer went up from the crowd. Our Soldiers marched a bit straighter and felt the excitement, as did we all. After the ceremony, troops are marched off and colors are cased and retired. The Corps Command Sergeant Major "Found" me. Jim, he said, that was a wonderful Review. How'd you ever "hide" an entire battalion? Then he goes on to tell me that the Bunting on the reviewing stand was "upside down!" Always display the Blue towards the sky, he told me. I have never forgotten his wise counsel.

It has never been a chore or struggle for me to display our colors; at our quarters while serving in the military, or even now at our home here in Lexington. Our flag flies on our front porch, 24/7. On holidays, there are about a dozen smaller flags that are placed and spaced, along the front of the house.

At times, I have even stopped at a home and knocked on their door. Did you know that your flag is improperly displayed, I'd ask. The folks were always glad to correct the display and I felt responsible for helping them out. There have been occasions at churches and other places that I scan and check to insure that the displays are correct.

Proper display and respect is what we need to practice, every day. Show your colors proudly and properly. Don't get upset if a Crusty ol' Veteran stops and gives you some advice about your Colors. Faded, worn, and tattered colors need to be replaced. 14 June, Flag Day, is my usual day for replacing the flag out front.

It was always amazing to me to watch the Old Guard at Ft. Myer, VA, the day before Veterans' Day. The entire Regiment, with their rucksacks full, would spread out over the cemetery, and place a flag in front of every tombstone at Arlington. Every flag the same distance from the headstone, and all "dressed right dressed!!!"(Perfectly lined up!)

Show your colors! Be proud of them. Many have given their life's blood so that you have the privilege and freedom to fly "Old Glory!!!" Jim RLW

Ranger Applicants Get Intensive Training Here

By PFC Alan Brown

Reprinted from *Cavalier* about Nov-Dec 1970

From Glen McCrary

PHUOC VINH – There are a select group of young men at Phuoc Vinh who volunteer for 12 days of strict discipline, rugged exercise and a rigorous training schedule in order to wear the black beret – a symbol of professionalism. There are 22 men presently undergoing training at the 75th Ranger Academy here.

During this period the men of Company H are judged by their attitude, aptitude and physical endurance. All courses must be passed, or the aspiring trainee is dropped from the program.

According to SSgt. Oscar Nalls, an instructor at the Ranger Academy. "The reason why a man is so strictly tested is that a Ranger must always be alert and ready to respond instantly. Sometimes a trainee might be awakened in the middle of the night by a training sergeant and asked a question concerning the day's lessons in order to test his alertness and ability to think."

Day Starts Early

A typical day's training begins at 4:30 a.m. with an hour of physical training. Push-ups and running get a Ranger trainee in the top physical condition he'll need for extensive field operations.

For the remainder of the day various indoor classes are conducted to educate the students in essential Ranger subjects such as map reading, first aid, radio procedures, patrol organization, and many more.

A 10 minute break for the Ranger usually means a few more push-ups and a quick jog around the area.

One of the most grueling tasks the trainee has is the gradual build-up to a five mile run with a sandbag on his back.

If the trainee drops out from any of the runs he is automatically dropped from the program.

Strict Training

The trainee does not have privileges during these 12 days and is not allowed even a simple can of beer.

SSgt. Nalls adds, "This constant harassment is used to test the individual's ability to operate effectively under pressure. It teach him discipline and the ability to follow orders which will be of great importance to him out in the field."

The trainees agree with Nalls' philosophy and actually enjoy the pressures they are faced with. Even such unpleasant tasks as low crawling through monsoon mud are performed without complaint.

After the 12 day training program is completed, the student must go out on five actual missions before he is considered a full-fledged Ranger. It is a moment of well-deserved pride when a man is finally able to wear his black beret – he knows he is a professional.



Rangers Tune In Enemy

By Spec. 4 Tom Benn

Originally published in the *Cavalair*
in Nov. or Dec 1970

From Glen McCrary

PHUOC VINH- The sound of music proved fatal to two enemy soldiers November 22 as their transistor radio led a team of Rangers to their position 18 kilometers from here.

As a result, the members of Ranger Teams 55 and 69 of Company H, 75th Inf., were presented with valor awards and a promotion for one at an impact ceremony here the next day. Brig. Gen. Jonathan R. Burton, assistant division commander, made the presentations.

According to Capt. Frank H. **Stewart**, the Rangers had split into two teams and set up ambushes along a stream when they heard voices and transistor radios coming from the other side. The Rangers crawled up on the enemy.

"One of them," Capt. **Stewart** said, "spotted movement. If we'd have had another five seconds we would have gotten all of them." Two of the enemy died in the contact while four others managed to escape.

After approximately 45 minutes the contact broke, but Cobra gunships continued to rake the vicinity and the Rangers counted their catch. Besides the two dead, they took five AK-47s, three K-54 pistols, one P-38 pistol plus enemy uniforms and other clothing.

"What helped us was that they didn't know we were there, and it was raining," said SSgt. Timothy V. **Harper**, who was promoted as a result of the action and received a Bronze Star for Valor. Others receiving awards were Sgts. Terry A. **Cordle**, Barry J. **Dykeman**, Robert M. **Keiser** and Spec. 4s Robert C. **Hughes**, John W. **Sparks**, Ellsworth M. **German**, Rodney R. **Tague**, William L. **Weaver** and James M. **Barrett**.

Rangers Get Double Kill

As published in the *Cavalair* 17 Feb 71

From Glen McCrary

FSB BUTTONS – Ranger Team 61, H Co., 75th Rangers, recently claimed the lives of two unwary NVA soldiers who walked into an ambush approximately 10 kilometers east of FSB Audie.

The Ranger team, working on the fourth day of a routine reconnaissance mission, had set up an ambush along a jungle trail when the two unlucky enemy soldiers blundered into their position.

"We were marking a trail at about 9 o'clock in the morning when they came bopping along," explained Sgt. John W. **O'Neal**, assistant Ranger team leader. "We had set up our claymores for an ambush," O'Neal added, "when the two of them came walking right it to it."

O'Neal surmised the unfortunate duo was probably the point element of a larger group. Shortly after the contact was made, the Rangers found themselves in a fire fight with a larger group of NVA.

"After we blew the first two away, the rest of their squad tried to engage us," added Sgt. Paul L. **Middleton**, Team 61's leader.

"They tried to flank us," continued O'Neal, "but they failed and we engaged them with small arms for about ten minutes."

But fire support for the Rangers soon tipped the balance on the firefight. "I called a RASH bird in to work over the area where they were firing at us, and soon we heard no more from them," commented Middleton.

Shortly after, the Blue Plt. Of A Trp., 1st. Sqdrn. 9th Cav was inserted to reinforce the Ranger team and access the damage done to the enemy. A sweep by the Rangers and Blues produced two AK-47 rifles from the bodies of the slain NVA, plus their rucksacks which contained rice, medicine and personal gear. Among the items being carried was a copy of this year's January edition of "Sports Illustrated Magazine".

EDITOR: the following letter was sent to me by Joyce Denke, the Domit Dollie who was engaged to David Ives when he was killed. It was written in 1991 but I think it is still relevant.

It does me good to see the current "Just say 'thank you'" effort by many, directed to today's combat veterans, many of them our children.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ANYONE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

Dear Hero,

I was in my twenties during the Vietnam era. I was a single mother and, I'm sad to say, I was probably one of the most self-centered people on the planet. To be perfectly honest...I didn't care one way or the other about the war. All I cared about was me—how I looked, what I wore, and where I was going. I worked and I played. I was never politically involved in anything, but I allowed my opinions to be formed by the media. It happened without my ever being aware. I listened to the protest songs and I watch the six o'clock news and I listened to all the people who were talking. After awhile, I began to repeat their words and, if you were to ask me, I'd have told you I was against the war. It was very popular. Everyone was doing it, and we never saw what it was doing to our men. All we were shown was what they were doing to the people of Vietnam.

My brother joined the Navy and then he was sent to Vietnam. When he came home, I repeated the words to him. It surprised me at how angry he became. I hurt him very deeply and there were years of separation—not only of miles, but also of character. I didn't understand.

In fact, I didn't understand anything until one day I opened my newspaper and saw the anguished face of a Vietnam veteran. The picture was taken at the opening of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. His countenance revealed the terrible burden of his soul. As I looked at his picture and his tears, I finally understood a tiny portion of what you had given for us and what we had done to you. I understood that I had been manipulated, but I also knew that I had failed to think for myself. It was like waking up out of a nightmare, except that the nightmare was real. I didn't know what to do.

One day about three years ago, I went to a member of the church I attended at that time, because he had served in Vietnam. I asked him if he had been in Vietnam, and he got a look on his face and said, "Yes." Then, I took his hand, looked him square in the face, and said, "Thank you for going." His jaw dropped, he got an amazed look on his face, and then he said, "No one has ever said that to me." He hugged me and I could see that he was about to get tears in his eyes. It gave me an idea, because there is much more that needs to be said. How do we put into words...all the regret of so many years? I don't know, but when I have an opportunity, I take...so here goes.

Have you been to Vietnam? If so, I have something I want to say to you—Thank you for going! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please forgive me for my insensitivity. I don't know how I could have been so blind, but I was. When I woke up, you were wounded and the damage was done, and I don't know how to fix it. I will never stop regretting my actions, and I will never let it happen again.

Please understand that I am speaking for the general public also. We know we blew it and we don't know how to make it up to you. We wish we had been there for you when you came home from Vietnam because you were a hero and you deserved better. Inside of you there is a pain that will never completely go away...and you know what? It's inside of us, too; because when we let you down, we hurt ourselves, too. We all know it...and we suffer guilt and we don't know what to do...so we cheer for our troops and write letters to "any soldier" and we hang out the yellow ribbons and fly the flag and we love America. We love you too, even if it doesn't feel like it to you. I know in my heart that, when we cheer wildly for our troops, part of the reason is trying to make up for Vietnam. And while it may work for us, it does nothing for you. We failed you. You didn't fail us, but we

BOOKS

by and about LRRP/Rangers

The Ghosts of the Highlands by Gregg P.J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. This is about the beginning of the 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1966-67

LRRP Company Command by Gregg P. J. Jorgenson, Ballantine Books. The 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1968-69

Acceptable Loss by Gregg P. J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. Gregg's autobiography, 1969-70.

MIA RESCUE LRRPs in Cambodia by Gregg P.J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. One mission gone bad during the Cambodian Invasion.

Above All Else by Ron Christopher, PublishAmerica. Ron's autobiography about being the TL of the first team to pull a mission as the 1st Cav's LRRP/Rangers.

One-Zulu by Curtis "Randy" Kimes, published by author. About one mission, May 7-9, 1968.

Lurps: A Ranger's Diary of Tet, Khe Sanh, A Shau, and Quang Tri by Bob Ankony
University Press of America, of Rowman and Littlefield Publishing group, 1967-68

OTHER BOOKS

For What It's Worth by David Klimek, published by author. Dave's experiences during the Cambodian Invasion before he joined H-75th.

A Troop, 9th Cavalry by Ron Christopher. PublishAmerica. Ron's experiences with the "Blues" A-1-9 before he joined LRRP.

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Cloth Logo Patch:	\$4
Wooden Nickel:	\$1
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Decals: interior/exterior	\$2
ANNUAL DUES	\$15
Shipping per order	\$5

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The \$5.00 shipping charge covers only one or two shirts. Donations are gladly accepted

failed you and we lost our only chance to be grateful to you at the time when you needed and deserved it. We have disgraced ourselves and brought shame to our country. We did it and we need your forgiveness. Please say you will forgive us and please take your rightful place as heroes of our country. We have learned a terribly painful lesson at your expense and we don't know how to fix it.

From the heart,
Julie Weaver
237 East Gatewood Circle
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Crabby Old Man

What do you see nurses? . . . What do you see?
What are you thinking, when you're looking at me?
A crabby old man not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?

Who dribbles his food and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice 'I do wish you'd try!'
Who seems not to notice . . . the things that you do.
And forever is losing A sock or shoe?

Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding The long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking? . Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am. As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of Ten . . . with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another.

A young boy of Sixteen with wings on his feet.
Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at Twenty . . . my heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows . . . that I promised to keep.

At Twenty-Five, now . . . I have young of my own.
Who need me to guide . And a secure happy home.
A man of Thirty My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other . . . With ties that should last.

At Forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my woman's beside me . . to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more, babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children . . My loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me my wife is now dead.
I look at the future shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing . . young of their own.
I think of the years . . and the love that I've known.

I'm now an old man and nature is cruel.
Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles grace and vigor, depart.
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.

But in this old carcass, a young guy still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living life over again.

I think of the years, all too few gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, people open and see.
Not a crabby old man . . . Look closer . . . see ME!!

We will all, one day, be there, too!



**Tigger and Purple Heart Medallion
on Bob Gilles' bike**

PULLING SLACK

OBITUARIES

JAKE GEIGER

Bob asked me to let you know that we were notified yesterday of the passing of John (Jake) **Geiger** (68-69). Jake passed on Nov. 3 after being hospitalized for 2 days although his health hasn't been good for quite a long time. His funeral was Nov. 8th. Jake's wife had misplaced our phone number and finally remembered that she had our e-mail address.

I am so glad that he and Bob reconnected at the Jacksonville reunion. It was good for both of them and I am sorry that they didn't have more time together.

There is an online Guest Book for Jake's family at obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary. If anyone has trouble getting to it with this, the obituary was in the Star-Ledger, Newark, NJ. I do not have an updated address for his wife, Liz. The last rooster we have is from July 2006 and the address in there is not their current address.

Barb Raab

RICKY L. BRADY '69-;70

2403 Robin St.

Slidell, LA 70460

Ricky died on October 4

FOUND RANGER

From Mike Desso

It was my good fortune to run into Charlie **Steele** today at the VA Hospital. Charlie served 69/70 Talon 45, he is still wearing his original ring with most of the words worn off the bottom scroll. I'm sure some are looking to re-connect with him.

His contact info is; **Charles M. Steele**

PO Box 3643, Peace dale RI 02883

He has no computer.

THE VIETNAM WIFE

A MUST READ BOOK FOR YOUR SPOUSE

From Mrs. Myron Prchel

The psychiatrist in Tomah recommended the book Vietnam Wives, written by Aphrodite Matsakis. Wives of LRRPs with PTSD already know what it's like to live with PTSD and wouldn't believe that there is any more that anyone tells them. However, this book is well worth the read. There is guilt and a degree of anger that comes with being the PTSD spouse. There is also that distance and coldness that is turned towards the spouse, but has nothing to do with her in reality. This book does a good job of explaining why the wives have to take on so many responsibilities and why their outlooks are often less than rosy. The book is written from the wives' perspectives and, while it does not offer a cure for PTSD, it does give insights into PTSD that can be critical to real understanding of the psychological demons that haunt these veterans. Understanding may help living with their PTSD a fathomable challenge."

It was a relief to read it to be honest with you. Anyway, should you know of any PTSD wives who are in need of reinforcement, this book is excellent.

WINDHAM EXPLAINS PICTURE

Chuck **Windham** identified the other two men in the "team picture" in the last newsletter. He us the one on the bottom left and Dave **McWilliams** is the one bottom middle.

Now for the rest of the story. The *Saber* newspaper sent a reporter to the company for a story. He also took a lot of pictures. All of the pictures were set up and posed. Each person in the pictures was given a copy. This happened on

25 Mar 69, however some of the pictures were stamped (^68).

In the picture that was published, there are

Blanchard ATL, Grady ATL, Carroll TL

Windham TL, McWilliams TL, Seymour TL

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER

CHAPLAIN'S BOX

The Moving Wall

From Jim Regan

Have you ever heard about it? Have you ever seen it? Do you know that it exists? If the answer to any of these questions is "No," then we got to do better, getting the "word" out!

Got a "call" the other night. "Jim, the 'Moving Wall' will be in London, KY., and we want to 'Lay a wreath!'" Okey Dokey, says I; who, what, when, where, and how??? The answers were there, and I moved on to getting the wreath, planning my trip, making contact with the folks at London.

The local florist did a great job, (was able to fit the wreath into the passenger compartment of my pick'um truck!) I could just "see" that whipping out of the truck bed, as I kept up with the "Big Boys," at 80 MPH on I-75 S!!!

Got to London, KY, a small but busy 'burg! As I followed my "Map Quest" instructions, I immediately "saw" where I was going. There must have been fifty American flags, outside the fence from the High School!!! Turned in and was greeted warmly by all that I saw. There was a "Tent," where the "Table for the Missing Veterans" would be set up. I moved our wreath in, and just kinda, moved around and "scoped out" the area.

Was not too long, and the guys linked up with me, and we discussed what would happen with the "presentation/placing of the wreaths." I felt very comfortable, but did not let my guard down. "Mister Murphy" lurks in the background!

Time for the ceremony, all things not really "solid" in my mind. "Stay cool Jim, go with the flow!" The formation; about a Platoon sized group of Vietnam Vets, the spectators, wives, kids, and grand kids. Color Guard, and we folks with the wreaths, managed to get to where we supposed to be. All the commands were not what I was used to hearing, or shouting, on the parade fields, but they got us to do what we were there for!!! To pay tribute and honor to our "Fallen Comrades!"

The ceremony goes on, and the guy introduces the units that are going to, "place" the wreaths. He tells the "history" of the outfits! First, the JROTC from the South Laurel High School, then the guys, the LRRPS/Rangers from the 75th Ranger Regiment, then the Representatives from the 229th Aviation Battalion, 1st Cav!

The fellow from the JROTC goes forward and places his wreath, about six feet from the middle of the wall.

Next is me, and I say a "silent prayer, "Dear God, don't let me stumble or falter!" I place the wreath. Don't know where it came from, but I stepped back, and straightened a ribbon. Then I saluted, moved a half step to the right, and approached the "WALL!" I placed my right hand on the top of the Wall! Why in the world did I do that!!!!?? Slowly, about face, moving slowly, and surely, I resumed my position to the left of the Color guard.

Taps was "played, and I managed to get "through it!"

I truly believe, SOMEONE, perhaps the guys, (41 of our Comrades,) prompted me to say a "Final Farewell!!!!" Forty one years later!!! I believe that I have finally found "CLOSURE" with Vietnam!!!

Jim RLTW (Rangers Lead the Way)

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