

Number 37

February 2023



CHARGER

JOURNAL

THE 196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE ASSOCIATION



196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

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196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

_____ Membership Application (or) _____ Address Change

Please make sure to fill out the application or address change completely and legibly. There are several members with similar names on our mailing list. Please inform us of any change in address to include both the old address and the new address.

ANNUAL DUES - \$20**LIFE DUES - \$196**

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Birthdate: _____

Email: _____

DATES SERVED IN THE 196TH: FROM _____ To _____ UNIT BM/REGT _____ Co/BTRY _____ PLT _____

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER _____ LIFE MEMBER _____

DONATION \$ _____ ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make check payable to: 196th LIB Association

Mail completed form and dues to Dave Eichhorn - 328 Deming Road, Fleming, OH, 45729-5019

President's Report By Michael Timmerman

To all my brothers of the 196th, I wish you and your family a healthy and prosperous New Year.

We are now looking forward to our reunion in Daytona. Everyone had a great time the last time we were there. I highly suggest that you book your reservations as soon as possible as rooms are going fast.


I am looking forward to seeing all you guys and sharing our wonderful war stories once again. Like the singing group The Happenings would say, See You In September. Take care and stay safe.

Vice-President's Report By Don DeGain

Dear Brothers: We got back on track last year with the dedication of our magnificent 196th memorial statue at Fort Benning on March 28. This was followed by our great reunion in Gettysburg in late July. I'm sure we are all looking forward to our meeting this fall in Daytona Beach.

It never fails to amaze me the great caring, emotion and true brotherhood this brigade has carried and kept all these years. Whenever someone asks me, "who is your hero", I reply, "My Vietnam Infantry Brigade" and I get to sit among them for a long weekend every two years.

I'm sure we have all met famous and important people in our lives; but hero's? I'd be thinking a chance compared to these men. I'm hoping to see of many of you as are able to attend. I have realized my main job at the reunion is keeping the mountain of beer cold and on ice, the wine set out and untold piles of snacks on the ready. PS I love my job.



CHARGER

JOURNAL

The Charger Journal is the official publication of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association.

- Managing Editor: Gary L. Noller
- Creative Director: Lisa Anderson

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Secretary/Treasurer's Message By Dave Eichhorn

Minutes of 2022 General Meeting- Gettysburg

Meeting called to order at 0900 hours by President Mike Timmerman

Invocation by David Eichhorn

Motion to dismiss reading of the minutes from 2019 meeting seconded and approved

Treasurer's report: Checking \$22,059; Savings \$30,121; Investment \$76,235; Total: \$128,415

Motion to accept treasurer's report as read seconded and approved

Old Business: VP Don DeGain gave report on 196th LIB memorial dedication; total cost of memorial \$90,806

New Business: Discussion of reunion dates and sites, Daytona Beach, FL was chosen, last week of September 2023. Jim McGuiness gave presentation and video on the 196th at the Tomb of the Unknown in 1986. Richard Davies shared that in his 30 plus years in the Army, the 196th was the best unit he served in. John Woyansky, who served in 2/1 Inf., told about a memorial for the 1st Regiment at the Infantry Museum near Ft Benning. Bill Stull gave report on ERC/ADVA reunion in Lexington, KY April 2023 (Horses & Bourbon). Olin Warner gave report on 31st Regiment Reunion. Richard Federowicz invited everybody to stop and see his Vietnam artifacts display set up across hall from hospitality room

Elections: President - Mike Timmerman; Vice President - Don DeGain. Appointments: Secretary/Treasurer - David D Eichhorn; Chaplain - David P. Carroll; Managing Editor - Gary L. Noller; Web Master - Ken McKenzie

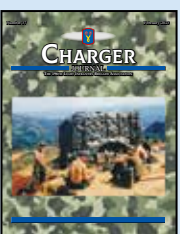
Motion To Close meeting-seconded and approved

Benediction: David Eichhorn

Adjournment: President Timmerman adjourned meeting at 1000 hrs

Treasurer's Report updated January 31, 2023: Updated Treasurer's report 31 JAN 2023

Checking: \$23,874; Savings: \$20,702; Investments: \$76,061; Total: \$120,637



Cover: Courtesy of Larry See, Camarillo, California, veteran of Co. D and Co. E, 3/21st Infantry 196th LIB.

196th LIB Dedicates Memorial at Walk of Honor By Gary L. Noller Photos by Roger Gilmore

March 29 is known as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It was the day chosen to dedicate the 196th Light Infantry Brigade memorial statue at the Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum. The location is near a gate to the entrance of Ft. Benning at Columbus, Georgia.

The seven-feet high statue depicts two Chargers exiting the battlefield after a long fight. One soldier helps his wounded brother walk to a safe location to get much needed aid. The statue is cast in bronze and will last decades and centuries into the future.

The 196th Infantry Brigade is the Indo-Pacific Training Support Brigade and headquartered at Ft. Shafer, Hawaii. Its training mission covers American Samoa, Alaska, Arizona, the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Guam, the Hawaiian Islands, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and states along the Pacific Coast.



CSM Lewandowski, Don DeGain, Sarah Hahn, Dave Eichhorn, Colonel O'Connor.



Sarah Hahn unveils her work with assistance from Bill Stull.

Colonel Ryan O'Connor and Command Sergeant Major Evan Lewandowski, current brigade leaders, attended the dedication ceremony and greeted 196th LIB veterans. COL O'Connor spoke at the morning breakfast and thanked veterans for leading the way for him and those he commands.

Don DeGain, Vice-president, and Dave Eichhorn, Secretary-Treasurer, represented the 196th LIB Association leadership. The association began planning the monument in 2017. Approximately 50 veterans, spouses, and friends attended the ceremony.

MG (Retired) Jerry A. White, Chairman of the National Infantry Association, was a guest of honor. White led the effort to create the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. White served two tours in Vietnam. This included one with the 11th LIB.

The statue was designed and sculpted by Sarah E. Hahn of Columbus, Ohio. In 2012 Hahn earned a Master of Fine

Arts degree from the University of Kentucky. During the ceremony she unveiled her work and received thanks and praise from many admirers.

Hahn gave much attention to the detail of the uniforms and equipment depicted by the sculpture. A Vietnam jungle uniform was provided to her by John Murphy, 1/1 Cavalry veteran. John attended the dedication and proudly beamed with pride that he was able to contribute to its creation.

The completed and installed statue along with a companion plaque cost nearly \$90,000. It was paid for by donations from veterans as well as by major contributions from the 196th LIB Association and the Americal Legacy Foundation.

The Walk of Honor is a short walk from the National Infantry Museum. It features approximately 100 memorials to Infantry units. The Americal Division memorial was dedicated in 2012 and the first achievement of the Americal Legacy Foundation. By coincidence, the 196th memorial stands next to the Firebase Mary Ann memorial. The Walk of Honor is now full and expansion plans have been discussed.



Veterans attended the memorial dedication ceremony.

196th LIB News

Father Gariepy: RIP

I wanted to report that Father Robert E. Gariepy, affectionally known in 3/21 as "Sky Pilot", passed on 12 Feb 2022. He was born 16 May 1930 in Leonminster, Mass. He served with 3/21 Infantry in 1968-69. He retired as a lieutenant colonel from the US Army.

Chuck Horner; C/3/21, 1968-69



Rain In Our Hearts Photography

Thanks for the February 2022 issue of the Charger Journal. I knew of Jim Logue's photo journalism but would have not known of his and Gary Ford's book, "Rain in Our Hearts" without reading the article. A must read, it blends day-to-day operations with the insights and feelings of the soldiers and a follow-ups with their families 50 years later.

Jim also sent me another book, "After Action Report, April-May-June 1970," covering the 4/31st Infantry AO. He knew my unit, Co. A, 3/21st Infantry, was in his area during that time. That book sets the standard for the documentation of a unit's history. The book includes after action reports, operational maps, articles from America and Stars and Stripes newspapers, and excellent photo journalism from an infantryman's point of view. It answered the questions that were demons for 50 years. Thank you Jim. [Photo of Dale Sievert in Vietnam.]

Dale Sievert; A/3/21, 1970

Change Of Command

The 196th Infantry Brigade in Hawaii has new command. I received the following invitation to attend the change-of-command ceremony.

On behalf of Colonel Ryan P. O'Connor, Colonel Bryan M. Martin, and the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Soldiers of the 196th Infantry Brigade, we cordially invite you and your families to join our Change of Command Ceremony. What: Charger Brigade Change of Command. When: August 24, 2022 at 1000 AM (HST). Where: Historic Palm Circle, Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

Colonel Martin is the new commander. The unit provides training for National Guard and Reserve units in Hawaii, Alaska, Guam, Saipan, American Samoa and Arizona.

David Eichhorn; 3/21st Infantry

LOCATOR REQUESTS

Looking for: Soldiers that served with my father, Arnold Kauppinen in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, 3d Battalion, 82nd Artillery, Battery C. CPT Arthur G Lozeau was the commanding officer. My father was with the 196th in-country from 66-68. He was from Peabody, MA. He was a part of the advanced party that arrived in August 1966. He passed away in 2008. I have a photo of the book cover for the 2nd year of the 196th in Vietnam. I have my dad's copy; he is listed in the book which is where I got the above information. I also have a photo of him while he was in Vietnam. I've been trying for years to find some men who served with my dad. It might fill a void for me to talk with someone that knew him during that time. Contact Philip Kauppinen; philip@grandnewflag.com.

Looking for: A roster of the 3rd Platoon of A 3/21 196th LIB during May 1968. My Dad was told that he would receive the Silver Star after an attack on May 5, 1968 just south of the DMZ in the Village of Nhi Ha. Three of the four eyewitness of him being told that he would be written up for the award were killed before it got written up. There is a Private King who survived, but my dad does not remember his first name or where he was from. No one can help him because he has no "eye witnesses". Contact Stacey Sudbeck; jasonsudbeck@msn.com.

Looking for: Guys I served with in D/4/31 Infantry in 1968-1969 Contact: Richard Czop; richard@richardczop.com.

Looking for: Information. I work at the National Museum of the United States Army. I am trying to find a high resolution scan of a photograph of Pfc. Stanley Goff being presented the DSC from General Creighton Abrams. His DSC citation is dated 22 August 1968. Goff served with 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB. Contact: Sara E. Bowen, Museum Specialist, National Museum of the United States Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060; sara.e.bowen9.civ@army.mil; (o) 571-515-0778.

Looking for: Anyone who might know Wayne Wietting, E Co 2/1 (Recon), 196th LIB, May 68 to May 69. He mentored me as an incoming "Shake and Bake". Contact: R Keil at r_keil@msn.com or 720-841-5152.

Looking for: The unit my stepfather served in. His name is Howard Vincent Deck he was from Alton, Illinois. He served with the 196th light infantry, I believe in the late 60s. He also mentioned a hill named "Mary Ann" watching and possibly participating in a battle there. Contact: Joe Stapleton; frankenjoe02@yahoo.com.

Looking for: Jeff Blue who lived in Ohio. Jeff was in Vietnam during 1969/1970 stationed in Chu Lai, Company B, 196th. Contact: John Stainbrook, stainbrookjm@gmail.com.

196th Memorial Dedication Address

By Don DeGain, Vice-President

Five years ago the Vietnam veterans of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade started to create a very different and very special monument. This came with the help of a very special artist and sculptor, Sarah Hahn.

The 196th Light Infantry Brigade is the epitome of the blood and guts of the infantry in the Vietnam War. It needs no further explanation.

We arrived as the first U.S. Army brigade in 1966. We were the last United States armed forces infantry unit to leave in 1972. That is 50 years ago in June.

We lost 1,188 on the battlefield with another 5,591 wounded.

The best guess on a number of soldiers who served with the 196 in Vietnam is 25,000 to 30,000. No one knows for sure. This relates to a casualty rate of 25%. One of four were either killed or wounded.

This statue is us and for all to see. The way we looked, what we wore, and how we cared for each other.

If all the Combat Infantryman Badges, Combat Medic Badges, Army Commendation Medals, Purple Heart Medals, Bronze Star Medals, Silver Star Medals, Distinguished Service Crosses, and Medals of Honor awarded to this brigade were laid upon this ground today- you would have nowhere to walk.

In another 25 years there will not be enough of us left for two squads or possibly a platoon. The rest will be here at Ft. Benning looking out and in one echoed voice say, Follow Me!, Infantry!, Infantry!, Infantry!

Thank you.

[Don DeGain served with Co. C, 3/21st Infantry, August 1969 to August 1970. The memorial dedication was held March 29, 2022, at the Walk of Honor, National Infantry Museum, Ft. Benning, Georgia. Photo courtesy of Roger Gilmore.]



196th LIB Memorial Plaque
National Museum of the United States Army
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

TAPS LISTING; MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Steve Broadway
Buffalo, NY
F-Troop 1965-67
11/23/2020

Robert Buniak
Mount Laurel, NJ
A 3/82 1965-67
Date unknown

**Maj (Ret)
Thomas Burton**
Middletown, NJ
B 3/21 1965-67
5/22/2021

**Charles F.
Chapman**
East Syracuse, NY
B 3/82 1969-70
3/12/2022

Jack D. Chevalier
Vashon, WA
A 2/1 1968-69
4/1/2021

Douglas Clark
Paonia, CO
F/17 1965-67
9/15/2022

Bill Cruse
St. Petersburg, FL
A 3/21 1968-70
6/15/2021

Ed Dappen
Zwolle, LA
A 2/1 1965-67
3/12/2022
Life Member

Robert C. Dalzell
Conesville, OH
A 1/46 1969-70
1/24/2023
Life Member

Richard B. Fallon
Wilmington, MA
B 2/1 1969-70
8/15/2020

Charles Garefino
Shawano, WI
F-Troop 1968-69
Date unknown
Life Member

Ronald Gleason
Lowell, MA
B 2/1 1967-68
3/1/2021
Life Member

Jerry G. Gouge
Nebo, NC
A 2/1 1968-69
7/27/2021
Life Member

**Chaplain
Daniel Hall**
Fayetteville, NC
HHC 196th
Date unknown

Jerry Johnson
Benbrook, TX
B 3/21 1970-71
2013

**David S.
Knudsen**
Williston, VT
175th Eng 1965-67
4/29/2017

Tom Lynch
Saint Paul Park, MN
B 3/82 1968-69
2/6/2022

David Marjamaa
Chesterfield, MO
B & E 2/1 1968-69
3/19/2019
Life Member

**James N.
Mortimer**
Killeen, TX
C 3/82 1968-69
2/13/2019

Ralph Ordway
Ft Myers, FL
F-Troop 1965-67
6/23/2022

George Pandel
Naples, FL
A 4/31 1965-67
2/3/2022

John Phipps
Visalia, CA
C 4/31 1966-67
1/21/2023

Marvin Powers
Holly Springs, MS
C 3/21 1969-70
4/7/2022

**Sylvester
Sampson Jr.**
Rochester, NY
B 3/21 1965-67
Date unknown

**Raymond
Schwedhelm**
Egg Haror, NJ
F-Troop 1965-67
3/6/2022

Roger Starr
Ludington, MI
C 3/21 1967-68
5/21/2022
Life Member

Olin R. Warner
Maysville, WV
A 4/31 1965-67
12/15/22
Life Member

**LT GEN
Sam Wetzel**
Columbus, GA
HHC 4/31 1968-69
1/20/2022 Life
Member

George Wiseman
Mount Prospect, IL
D 2/1 1965-67
1/22/2022
Life Member

Monte Wolf
Gold Canyon, AZ
E 1/46 1969-70
4/16/2021

TAPS notices should be sent to Dave Eichhorn, Secretary/Treasurer, at de332435@frontier.com.

New Life Members

Junior Adams

A 3/82 66-67

Robert Akridge

F-Troop 69-70

Vernal L. Beale

E 3/21 68-69

James Blickensderfer

D 4/31 68-69

David P. Carroll

D3/21 1972

David G. Chupp

D 3/21 69-70

Albert J. Derenches

A 4/31 68-69

William P. Donnelly

C2/1 65-67

Michael J. Ford

A 2/1 70-71

Robert J. Franecki

F-Troop 65-67

Franklin E. Friers

A 3/21 65-67

John W. Gains

A 4/31 67-68

William P. Harrison

HHC-196 71-72

Miguel R. Hernandez Jr.

D 2/1 68-69

Eric S. Hillyer

HHC 4/31 70-71

David Howard

A 3/82 65-68

Ron Jenovai

48-SDP 69-70

Joshua M. Kreitzer

Current 196th 20-22

William Kryscnski

B 4/31 69-70

Leonard W. Lance

B4/31 65-67

Peter Rowland Moore

E 3/21 69-70

Rocky Moore

B 3/21 68-70

Thomas W. Moore

A 2/1 68-69

Ltc (Ret Robert Nivens

HHC 1/46 69-70

Peter Palamidis

A4/31 68-69

Michael A. Parkhurst

HCB 3/82 71-72

Tim "Pete" Peterson

C 4/31 68-69

Joseph Polchlopek

B 1/46 71-72

Dennis E. Rankin

E 4/31 70-71

Kenneth Rice

C 3/21 70-71

Byrne N. Sherwood Jr.

C 1/46 71-72

John R. Stanclift

B 4/31 70-71

Edward A. Stevens

C 4/31 65-66

Norman Thibodeau

B 8thSup 65-67

Larry Uplinger

B 3/21 69-70

John M. Vail

E 3/21 68-69

Charles Van Natter

D2/1 67-68

James R. Weeks

B 3/21 1968

Dan Wyatt

E 3/21 68-69

Walter L. Zych

A 3/82 69-70

2022 Reunion Photos

By Rich Moser



Miracle At The Wall By Thomas W. Moore



Last year I learned for the first time about the Americal Reunion. I had never attended any kind of veteran's reunion or visited the Wall before. I decided this would be an opportunity to do both. My son and I went and had a great time, better than I expected, having never attended anything like this before.

When we got to the Wall, we went to the panel that was supposed to have the first name on our list, Walter Moses Jr., my squad

leader and best friend. A couple was there and heard us saying Walter's name and asked if we knew him, because they were also looking for his name. This was Richard Rinaldo, my company commander, and his wife. I had heard that miracles like this happen at the wall and meeting my commander after 53 years during my first visit seemed like magic.

I plan to come again as often as I can.

[Thomas W. Moore served with Co. A, 2/1st Infantry, 196th LIB. This story was sent to Dave Eichhorn after the 2022 ADVA annual reunion in Washington, D.C. Included with the article was the following message: I'm Will Moore, Thomas Moore's son. He is mailing you the dues to join the organization, but wanted me to email the story he wrote about meeting his commander, Rich Rinaldo, at the Wall after 53 years. We're including a couple of photos. If you have any questions, you can email me or call him at 765-346-5992. Will Moore]



196th Aviation Action By Albert (Bert) Hampton

I served in the 196th in 1967-68 as a pilot in the 196th HHC aviation section. I flew three different brigade commanders during my tour, including General Linnell, Col. Gelling, and finally Col. Kroesen. This was all primarily in Ole 860, the ship shown on the February 2022 cover of the Charger Journal magazine.

We originally had three UH1s and four OH23s. Every ship had battle damage. Number 860 was reserved for the brigade commander as his C&C platform.

All that aside, I would appreciate having a copy of the old bird. If there is any chance you could share a digital version to



one of my e-mail addresses, I would be ever so grateful. I will see to it that the picture is disseminated to as many Charger crew members as I can, including still living CWOs Moore, Simperts, Priscandaro, plus retired Gen. Loop (then Lt. Loop, the Brigade Intelligence Liaison Office) who flew daily on brigade aircraft and often on 860, Charger 6.

I cannot begin to express the flood of memories seeing this ship has brought to me. Thanks for featuring her. I may be contacted at 618-558-3271 or bert.hampton691@gmail.com.

Vietnam Recall By Jim Friedrich

I started my Nam tour in December 1969 with the 1st Infantry Division north of Saigon; I was transferred up to Co. B, 2/1st Infantry, 196th LIB, at Hawk Hill when the 1st Infantry Division left Nam.

As I recall, I began with B 2/1 in March, and was probably in B 2/1 at time Charles Gill was wounded, but likely in a different platoon. In any case, we wouldn't have had much time to meet.

Here are some names 2/1 veterans might recall, such as... Al Gobeille, Doug Franz (Jiffy Pop) died of pancreatic cancer at age 63, Gary Coker, Jimmy Cantrell, Hank Noha, Doc Lally, Louie DomMartin, Jim Gibson (KIA/June/Quang Tin Phuoc), Dennis Levis (KIA/July/Kham Duc), Skeet, Ron Gilbert, Lt. Genereaux (Bravo CO early-mid 1970), Lt. (Scott?) Klein. Wish I had a longer list.

I was with B 2/1 into fall, and saw action on and around Hill 251 early, then Quang Tin Phuoc (June), Kham Duc (July), and LZ Judy (August) - where we witnessed a Chinook shoot-down that killed 29 (most of D 2/1) in the Hook, and two on the ground. Our platoon brought the body bags back up the hill, the last few were tagged "parts." That sticks with a person.

I also brought back a Nam legacy, Agent Orange exposure, and highly aggressive prostate cancer, which seems to have been successfully treated. They knew it was bad stuff, but they used it anyhow, thanks a lot.

Mail Call



Dear editor,

I am sending a photo of a cartoon drawing from my fellow Charger and artist Ed Bahor. Ed was the illustrator for the 196th Charger newsletter with the 10th PI Detachment while I was in Vietnam. He has given permission to use his artwork. Several of his watercolors have hung in the West Virginia state house. Thanks again for your work on the magazine.

Frank Elston



Dear editor,

I have been a member of the 196th LIB Association for many years and am happy to follow news of our Charger Brothers. I was with the 10 PI Detachment, HQ Company, from 1967-68. I was the editor of the 196th LIB Charger newspaper from August 1967 to August 1968

Per your request for story ideas, I am attaching an article about the "Vietnam Army Grunt Museum" in San Antonio. It was established by Michael Lynd Sr., an infantry officer, who served with Charlie Company, 2/1 Infantry, from 1968-69.

SAN ANTONIO VIETNAM MUSEUM HONORS 196th LIB CHARGERS

By W. Frank Elston

Thanks to the dedicated work of a San Antonio 196th Charger, a Vietnam War Museum opened in October 2020. Michael Lynd Sr. opened the museum as a way to honor his Charlie Company 2/1 members. During his tour in Southeast Asia from 1968 to 1969, the infantry officer participated in Operation Fayette Canyon in Quang Nam Province as part of the 196 Light Infantry Brigade.

The San Antonio Vietnam museum consists of 2,000 square feet of space filled with memorabilia and artifacts from his time as a 196th Charger "Army grunt" in Vietnam.

The free museum includes a mannequin outfitted in Army field gear. It features a helmet, M-16, grenades and other gear an infantryman needed to survive in the Vietnam jungles. The various artifacts were donated by Lynd and other Vietnam veterans.

To help tell the Vietnam story, Lynd has included interactive kiosks created to enable Vietnam veterans visiting the museum to tell about their experience. During one of my visits to the museum, Lynd asked me to tell the story of my friend PFC George Gonsalves. We were part of the 10th PI Detachment, HQ Company stationed at Chu Lai in 1968. I was the editor of the 196th Charger newspaper and George was my best reporter. George was with Company C 2/1 taking photos and writing stories about these brave soldiers.

Unfortunately, George was killed on January 5, 1968 along with 40 Charlie Company members when they were over run by the 2nd NVA Division. He had sent word to me that he was going to spend one more day gathering notes for stories for news releases and the Army Times. George asked me to hold his pay until he returned. (This account is part of my diary written in Vietnam.)

I encourage my fellow Chargers to visit this special museum when they are in San Antonio. Michael Lynd has done a marvelous job helping tell the story of our 196th LIB so future generations will never forget the many sacrifices of our brothers. He welcomes all visitors and regularly conducts private tours.

The museum is located at 4499 Pond Hill Road in northcentral San Antonio. It is on the first floor of the Lynd Co.—a multifamily property management firm—where Lynd is Chairman and CEO. The website which tells the complete story is www.vietnamgrunts.org.

Dear editor,

I just received the February 2022 Charger Journal. Great Job. Pictures and articles are outstanding. The cover was worth framing.

Paul Yeckel

A-3/21 FDC 81 mm Mortars 1967

~ continued on page 30

**196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE REUNION
SEPTEMBER 25-OCTOBER 1, 2023
HILTON DAYTONA BEACH OCEANFRONT RESORT**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 – EARLY BIRD ARRIVALS

1400 - 1900 **Reunion Registration Open**
1200 - Hospitality Room Opens

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

0730 - 0830 **Reunion Registration Open**
0845 - 1200 Daytona Speedway Tour
1200 - Hospitality Room Opens
1300 - 1800 **Reunion Registration Open**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

0800 - 0930 **Reunion Registration Open**
0815 - 1630 Kennedy Space Center Tour
0800 - 1430 St. Augustine Tour
1200 - Hospitality Room Opens
1400 - 1800 **Reunion Registration Open**
1700 - 1800 Banquet Seating Reservations Deadline (instructions will be in your registration packet).

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

0900 - 1100 General Meeting
1130 - 1230 Memorial Service
1200 - 1700 Hospitality Room Opens
1300 - 1700 Group Photos (more information provided at reunion)
1700 - 1800 Cash Bar/Social Hour
1800 - 2100 Banquet Dinner
2100 - 000 Music and Dancing

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

0900 - 1000 Church Service
Farewells and Departures

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities, please note that the mandatory registration fee (\$20.00 per person) is 100% non-refundable regardless of the cut-off date. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the entire non-refundable registration fee (\$20.00 per person). **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

Thursday, September 28, 2023:

DAYTONA SPEEDWAY

Get up-close and behind the scenes at the World Center of Racing! Tours last about 60-minutes. All tours include a behind-the-scenes look at the World Center of Racing. Learn from our talented Tourologists about what makes Daytona so special, from our rich history of racing on the beach to the 31-degree high banks you see today. Also, learn what it takes to be a NASCAR driver with a visit to the drivers meeting room where you'll watch an educational video about how to conquer Daytona International Speedway. Visit the historic start/finish line and ride down pit road to get a close-up view of the pit stalls. Finally, celebrate your visit with a photo opportunity in Victory Lane!. Following the tour, your group can access the new Motorsports Hall of Fame of America, showcasing spectacular displays honoring all forms of motorsports: Stock Cars, Sports Cars, Open-Wheel, Motorcycles, Drag Racing, Land Speed Records, Powerboating and Aviation.

**The start/finish line and pit road experiences are dependent on-track activity and will not occur if there are events scheduled.*

0845 board bus, 1200 back at hotel

\$86/Person includes bus, escort, admission, IMAX film and guided tour.

Friday, September 29, 2023:

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

America's space exploration comes to life at Kennedy Space Center. Upon arrival, enjoy time in the Visitor Center before viewing one of two IMAX films available, currently Journey to Space and the new 3D movie, Asteroid Hunters. Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex is the only place in the world where you can walk under the largest rocket event flown, touch an actual moon rock, experience the International Space Station and stand nose-to-nose with Atlantis and become immersed in true-to-life spaceflight. Celebrate the people and accomplishments of American's incredible 30+-year shuttle program while viewing an expansive collection of memorabilia. The tour also includes a guided tour of the facility aboard one of their buses. Get up close and personal for a drive-by view of the launch pad, experience the historic Apollo 8 launch and marvel at a massive 363-foot-long Saturn V rocket at the Apollo/Saturn V Center. Save time for shopping at the gift shop and enjoy lunch on your own at one of several eateries including Orbit Café, Moon Rock Café or Red Rock Grill, to name a few.

0815 board bus, 1630 back at hotel

\$135/Person includes bus, escort, admission, IMAX film and guided tour. Lunch on your own

ST. AUGUSTINE TOUR

Aboard private trolleys, learn how St. Augustine became the "Oldest Continuously Occupied City in the United States." Listen to stories of Magnolia Street, known as one of the most beautiful streets in America. You will hear of Henry Flagler and his three wives and see many of the buildings that Henry had built. Marvel at the Spanish architecture and many historical sites. You're sure to enjoy this fully narrated tour of St. Augustine, covering more than 100 points of interest and over 500 years of history. Not only will it be educational but entertaining as well! After the tour, stroll down the restored St. George Street, lined with quaint shops, art galleries, and restaurants. You're also free to tour some of the historic buildings you saw on the tour (admissions on your own). You may want to see Castillo de San Marcos, a fort built by the Spanish over 300 years ago. Enjoy free time on your own for shopping, lunch, and exploring before returning to Jacksonville.

0800 board bus, 1430 back at hotel

\$84/Person includes bus, escort, and guided trolley tour. Lunch on your own. (weekdays)

Driver and Staff gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please be at the bus boarding area at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All tours require a minimum of thirty-five people, unless otherwise noted.

NOTE: There is a limit of one hydraulically lifted scooter or wheelchair per handicap accessible bus. If you use a scooter but can climb the steps to board the bus, either you and/or a person traveling with you must be able to put the scooter in the bus's luggage compartment. Due to liability issues, drivers and tour guides cannot assist with scooters.

Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort

386-947-8024 – Hotel Reservation Department – Available during the hours of 8am-5pm (holidays may affect these hours). You may be directed to a Hilton Reservation Call Center if the hotel representative is unavailable.

866-536-8477 or 1-800-Hiltons – These will send you directly to a Hilton Reservation Call Center

Location

100 North Atlantic Avenue
Daytona Beach, FL 32118

Reservation Information

Please call the number above and reference the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. You can visit the following booking link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/dabdhhf-196lib-c59c22bc-943c-431a-9c96-23caa6851b6a/>

NOTE:

Should your room block show as sold out at any time, please advise your guests to click the **Book a Room** box on the landing page and then **Edit Stay** on the following page to change the dates. This will allow your guests to search for available rooms on alternates dates during your event dates.

Group Name: 196th Light Infantry Brigade

Reunion Dates: Tuesday, September 25 – October 1, 2023

Rate:

Standard – Single or Double Occupancy - \$129+ applicable taxes

Triple Occupancy - \$139+ applicable taxes

Quad Occupancy - \$149+ applicable taxes

Current taxes are 6.5% sales tax plus 6% occupancy tax – rates are subject to change

These rates will be offered, based on availability, to attendees (3) days before and (3) days after the event.

Hotel Cut-off Date: August 28, 2023. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

Cancellation Policy: Room cancellations must be made at least 48 hours in-advance or you will be charged a one-nights room and tax cancellation fee.

Parking & Shuttle Information

Current, standard parking are as follows:

Self-parking - \$15.00 per day/per vehicle – Reduced from \$30.00 per day/per car

Valet-parking - \$40.00 per day/per vehicle

RV- parking - \$75.00 per day/per vehicle

Bus-parking - \$100 per day/per vehicle

The hotel does not offer shuttle service to and from the airport.

Wheelchair Rental

ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call (888) 441-7575 or visit www.scootaround.com for details and to make reservations.

Reunion Registration

To register for the reunion please re-visit www.events.afr-reg.com/e/196th2023

196th LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE ASSOCIATION REUNION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. If a valid email address is provided, a receipt will be sent electronically. Otherwise, your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.events.afr-reg.com/e/196th2023. Credit card transactions will be charged a 3.5% processing fee. **All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 25, 2023.** After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 196th LIB**

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision/Addition <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/25/23</i>	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>TOURS</u>			
Thursday, 9/28: Daytona Speedway	\$86		\$
Friday, 9/29: Kennedy Space Center OR	\$135		\$
Friday, 9/29: St. Augustine	\$84		
<u>Banquet</u>			
Saturday, 9/30: Banquet dinner <i>(please select your entrée below)</i>			
- Pan Seared Chicken	\$55		\$
- Grilled NY Strip	\$71		\$
- Vegetarian – Eggplant Tower	\$37		\$
REGISTRATION FEE – Mandatory per person to cover administrative expenses	\$20		\$
<i>WANT TO PAY YOUR DUES?</i> Annual \$20, Lifetime \$196			\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR NAMETAG

FIRST _____ LAST _____

UNIT _____ YEARS WITH UNIT 19 _____ - 19 _____

FIRST TIME ATTENDEE YES NO

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

EMAIL _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____ PH. NUMBER (_____) _____ - _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

PAWN OF WAR

By Kirk Fechette

*As the sun shines down its morning rays,
a village goes up in a violent blaze.*

*While breakfast is being set on the table,
on the other side it's not so stable.
Bullets flying all around,
as yet another man goes down.*

*As mother lies down in her bed,
praying to God her son's not dead,
he dodges bullets near his head.*

*As time goes by, hope fades,
while a soldier's fear turns to rage.
He's fighting for freedom, but as time goes by,
he just fights to stay alive.*

*He survived the war, he is alive.
but his brilliant mind has died.
On the trek home, looking to the sky,
he tries his hardest not to cry.*

*Scars. On the surface he has none.
No bandage can mend the damage done.*

*He saw friend after friend fall to the ground,
and he'll never forget that sound.
The moans and groans of life as it ends
Why not him? Why his friends?*

*He returns home, bag in hand,
mother glad to see her man.
to him he is a man no more,
just another pawn of war.*

Dedicated to: Kenneth O. Bigelow and all of his comrades from the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

Talking About The War

By Gary L. Noller

Last August I attended a family reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It is the first opportunity for us to get together since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After an evening meal my nephew Brian approached me and began a lengthy discussion. He said, "Uncle Gary, I saw a photo of you in the family scrapbook. It was of you and grandpa at the Wichita airport when you came home from Vietnam. How come you were so skinny?"

I had to chuckle at his inquiry. But he was correct in his observation. I entered the Army at 235 pounds and 19 months later I got out with a weight of 165 pounds- a 70 pound loss. I stood six feet, two inches tall, and my rib bones were visible under my skin.

I replied to Brian, "We did not get much to eat and we walked everywhere we went and we did not have much rest. We were all very lean."

Life in an infantry unit was very harsh. We carried everything on our backs to include weapons, ammunition, food, water, shelter, tools, and personal items. We marched off the firebase into the mountainous jungles and often did not return for two or three weeks.

We packed as much food as we could but this was often only one good meal a day. There was a choice between taking a can of beans and franks or taking a hand grenade. Often the choice was against taking more food and in favor of taking more firepower.

My favorite C-ration meal was a can of spiced beef spooned onto the top of crackers. I always saved this for last and ate the more unfavorable meals such as turkey loaf first.

One morning I eagerly opened a can of spice beef only to encounter a dead roach floating on the top of the meat. The decision was not hard. I used my spoon to flick the insect off into the brush and proceeded with my highly anticipated reward. It was as delicious as I expected it to be.

We planned on a resupply by helicopter every three days but sometimes this stretched to five or six days. On one occasion a typhoon prevented resupply by air and we managed to go ten days without any replenishment of



C-rations. One fellow soldier ate an entire box of Cepacol cough drops while another drank a half-full bottle of Heinz 57 sauce.

During this food outage I saw lizard crawling up a nearby tree and was able to catch it. It looked like and felt like a deflated football but with a long tail. My squad leader, Tommy Poppell, and I discussed eating the reptile. After holding it captive for a couple of hours we decided to turn it loose. Neither of us knew how to properly cook a lizard.

Brian and I talked for about an hour. The topics mostly involved lifestyle in Vietnam and went on to include sleeping arrangements.

He was surprised to learn that on my last night in Vietnam I slept on a concrete sidewalk at the out-processing center at Cam Rahn Bay. He asked, "Why did you have to sleep outside on a hard sidewalk?" I replied, "The place was jammed packed. I was told there were no available bunks and I should go sleep anywhere I wanted." At least it was not raining.

I am glad my nephew and I had this discussion. He is genuinely interested and should have some first-hand account of what it is like to be in a war. His approach to begin with asking about eating habits was a good way to open the conversation.

I remember talking with my uncle Floyd Allison about his war service in Europe in World War II. At a family gathering I asked him if he had ever been in France. I know he was in Belgium because he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. But I did not know if he had been to France. This started a conversation that lasted the rest of the day and I learned much about his service.

Most veterans will provide some details about their war service. But they often have to be asked gently and always without judgment. Once started, the veteran should be allowed to talk as long as they choose to talk. The listener needs to be prepared to hear some fascinating stories about life at war. The veteran and the listener will both benefit from the talk.



[Photo credits: Author with his father, Walter S. Noller, at Wichita airport by Wanda Noller Sartorius, sister. Author eating C-rations in Vietnam by Jack E. Curtis, Artillery FO.]

SOMETHING ABOUT COURAGE

By Gary M. Jenkins

It was 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 7, 1969. This is Pearl Harbor day in the United States. If I were at home, I would be relaxing after attending morning worship services. I was a member of a small country church near our log home. Later I would have enjoyed a good home cooked meal prepared by my mother.

I was not at home. I was 10,000 miles from home looking out the door of a UH-1 "Huey" helicopter flying over the lush green jungle of South Vietnam. I was on my way to join an infantry company operating in I Corps area of Vietnam. My journey had started thirteen months earlier.

The date I left home was October 29, 1968. After saying farewell to my mother, I got into my yellow and black 1965 Mercury Comet. I was on my way to meet a bus that would take me to Jacksonville, Florida. I was to be examined and inducted into the U.S. Army. My plans were to stop at my father's office and say good-bye. We had worked together while I was in junior college. We sold oil and gasoline on the wholesale market.

After rounding the last curve before his office, I took my foot off the gas, turned on the right blinker and pulled to a stop. Leaving my car, I bounded up the three wooden steps into his office. I don't remember much of our conversation, but I am sure Daddy gave me some good advice. He was from the "old school," be as good as your word and have the courage to do the "right thing." He instilled those values into me at a young age.

There was one memory of that morning that burned into my brain like a branding iron. When he said farewell, his voice began to crack and tremble. Normal for someone whose only son is about to go to war, but my father did not show much outward emotion. He was struggling hard to keep his emotions in check. My mother was a more emotional person but seemed calm when I left. She was very strong in the faith that I would be OK. Daddy was not as sure. They had been married twenty-one years before I was born, and like any parent, they did not want to lose their only child. If it had been my son, I don't know if I could have shown the courage they possessed.

As the helicopter began to circle and the sound of the blades changed pitch, I looked down to see my companions for the next nine months. For a young man about to enter a combat zone, I was calm. In the back of my mind was a scripture verse I learned in Vacation Bible School. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" from Psalm 56:3. Many times I have had to call on that verse.

Once we landed, I secured my M16 rifle and rucksack, slid out of the helicopter and walked to the command

post to report for duty. On the way I passed the sunburned combat veterans that made up Charlie Company. They had seen their share of combat. Seven months earlier one of their medics had earned the nation's highest award for bravery, the Medal of Honor. Upon closer examination I realized they were not any different from me. They were young men whose plans and families had been disrupted by the war in Southeast Asia. They were doing their best to serve their country, complete their required year of service, and return to their families.

After the usual welcome I was assigned to third platoon. I picked up my gear and began to shuffle toward their area of the perimeter. Once I arrived in the platoon area, I met the men that I would care for and lead for the next nine months. I was to be their platoon sergeant.

The duties of the platoon sergeant are many and varied. One of the duties I liked best was to get to know all the men in the platoon. Bernard Bray was one of the men I came to know as a friend. His appearance disguised the fact he was a man of physical and moral courage.

At first glance, Bernie and I seemed very different. He had been in Vietnam four months. I had just arrived. I was from Glenwood, a small rural South Georgia town. He was from Brooklyn, New York. Bernie was drafted. I joined. He was Roman Catholic. I was Southern Baptist. Before being assigned to Vietnam he received the minimum four months of training, I had received the same training plus NCO School, Ranger School and Airborne School, more than a year of the Army's best training, I was two ranks above him. All that didn't matter, we had some things in common. We were both strong in our Faith. Our lives depended on the platoon members and each other. We both wanted to finish our tours and return home safe and sound.

Bernie impressed me with his dedication and courage to his Faith in small but important ways. One night several members of the platoon, Bernie and I were sitting around a small fire. Our objective was to see who could make the best hot chocolate with ingredients from our C rations. Drinking hot chocolate was one of the few pleasures we had while in the field. I noticed Bernie was not drinking any chocolate. "Bernie, why aren't you drinking any hot chocolate?", I asked. He replied I gave it up for Lent. "What is Lent?", I inquired. He explained, "It is the period preceding Easter, which is devoted to fasting, abstinence and penitence." To the average person this does not seem like much, but to an infantryman with not much to look forward to, it was a great sacrifice.

Another time one of the men had a Playboy magazine. Someone said "Bernie turn to the centerfold picture and hold it up so I can get a snapshot of you. Bernie

emphatically refused. He said, "I will pose for a picture but the magazine will be closed." Again he showed his courage in standing up for his belief.

The morning of May 25, everything went wrong. While leading the company, my platoon ran into an ambush. The point squad was pinned down at the edge of an open area. As we provided covering fire the lead squad jumped up and ran to safety, leaving their rucksacks. Our order was to retrieve their equipment.

The battle dragged on all day. By mid-afternoon the squad I was leading succeeded in getting to the other side of the ambush site. The rucksacks we were seeking lay before us. I was hot, tired and frustrated. Because of my frustration I started to walk into the open area to retrieve the rucks, but a hushed voice said, "You had better run." I have always believed that voice was Divine intervention. It saved my life.

I told the men to follow me, grab a rucksack, and run for the clearing on the other side. We must have caught the Viet Cong by surprise. I was half-way through the clearing when the bullets began to fly by me like angry bees looking to sting. The dirt the bullets kicked up reminded me of the war movies I had seen as a kid, but this time it was real. The man directly behind me and I made it to the other side. Several men were wounded. Bernie lay mortally wounded on the field of battle. Bernie's courage to follow orders and be an example to his fellow soldiers had cost him his life.

Jesus said in Luke 17:36, "Two men shall be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left." Why was Bernie taken and I was left? I don't know why Bernie was taken, but I have some idea why I was left. It was so I could teach in the public school system for 28 years and be an example for countless young people. After retiring, I am fortunate to be an example to men of all ages in the state prison where I teach. Jesus needed me to be a Deacon in the church I grew up in. He needed me to teach a Sunday School class. He needed me to continue to serve my country for eighteen years as a National Guard officer. He allows me to serve as chief of a volunteer fire department.

Jesus reminds us in Luke 12:48, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Bernie and I were given much the day Bernie's life was taken. Bernie's gift was his example and courage that live on in my life. My gift is to continue to live and complete the tasks Jesus has for me.

As I go about trying to fulfill the work God has for me, I will always remember Bernard Bray and the courage he exemplified, both in life and death.

[About the author: Gary Jenkins served with Co. C, 3/21st Infantry, 196th LIB, Americal Division, in 1969-1970.]

Information from the Coffelt Database

Name: BRAY, Bernard

Home of Record: New York, New York

Birth Date: 08/16/1948

Death: 05/25/1970

Age at Death: 21

Remains: Recovered.

Burial: LONG ISLAND NATIONAL CEMETERY, NY

MILITARY DATA

Service & Component: Army (Selective Service)

Service Number: xxxxx3845

MOS: 11B20 = Infantryman

Rank: SP4 = Specialist Four. Pay grade at loss E4.

Unit of Assignment: C CO, 3RD BN, 21ST INFANTRY, 196TH INFANTRY BDE, AMERICAL DIV, USARV

Start Tour: 08/05/1969

Incident Date: 05/25/1970

Length of Service: Unknown years

Casualty Data: Casualty codes: A1-H-7. A1 = Hostile, died outright, H = Multiple fragmentation wounds, 7 = Ground casualty

Casualty Location: Province code 04. Country code VS. Quang Tin Province South Vietnam

UTM grid reference is AT954230

Event: MEETING ENGAGEMENT 5 KM E-SE OF HIEP DUC VILLAGE 19700525

Sources: AMERICAL CasLog #70-3342 by name, unit, date; DA2496 (RMN 31) - Americal TOC Log 25May #36 by grid, unit, incident. Province changed per grid.

Known awards: Purple Heart, ARCOM

Record last updated: 03/12/2020

On the Wall at: Panel 10W Line 094I

Managing Editor's Message

By Gary L. Noller

Please send your stories and news articles for publication in the Charger Journal. They can be sent to me by email attachment to gnoller@aol.com. I can also receive postal mail submissions at P.O. Box 294314, Kerrville, TX 78029. Photos are also welcome and should be high resolution for acceptable reproduction in the magazine. I am happy to answer any question you may have about submitting your contributions. Most likely the next magazine will be prepared in February 2024 so the deadline is January 31.

12MAY69 9 US casualties are
2 KIA & 24 WIA on LZ Center
3 KM to LZ Center HQ for 3/21 Inf.

12MAY69 40 Sappers KIA at
196th LIB HQ at LZ Baldy
24 KM North of LZ East

14MAY68 A 1/6
CMOH award to
McCleery

11JUN69 27 Sappers KIA
at LZ East (Marine's 16JUN69)

11JUN69 less than a month after the Nui Yon battle CMOH
recipient James McCloughan was the only medic on LZ East.
He survived the overrun of LZ East and treated over 30
wounded. He and Ed Masedo placed all 17 KIAs in body
bags. It was McCloughan's most gruesome experience.

07MAR69 19
WIA on Emer
for D 3/21. T

14 MAY69
PF Outpost
Overrun w/30 PF

12May69 - 2 enemy
companies show of
force to defenders at
Tien Phouc.

19MAR69 A 2/1st
CMOH award to
McMahon

BT

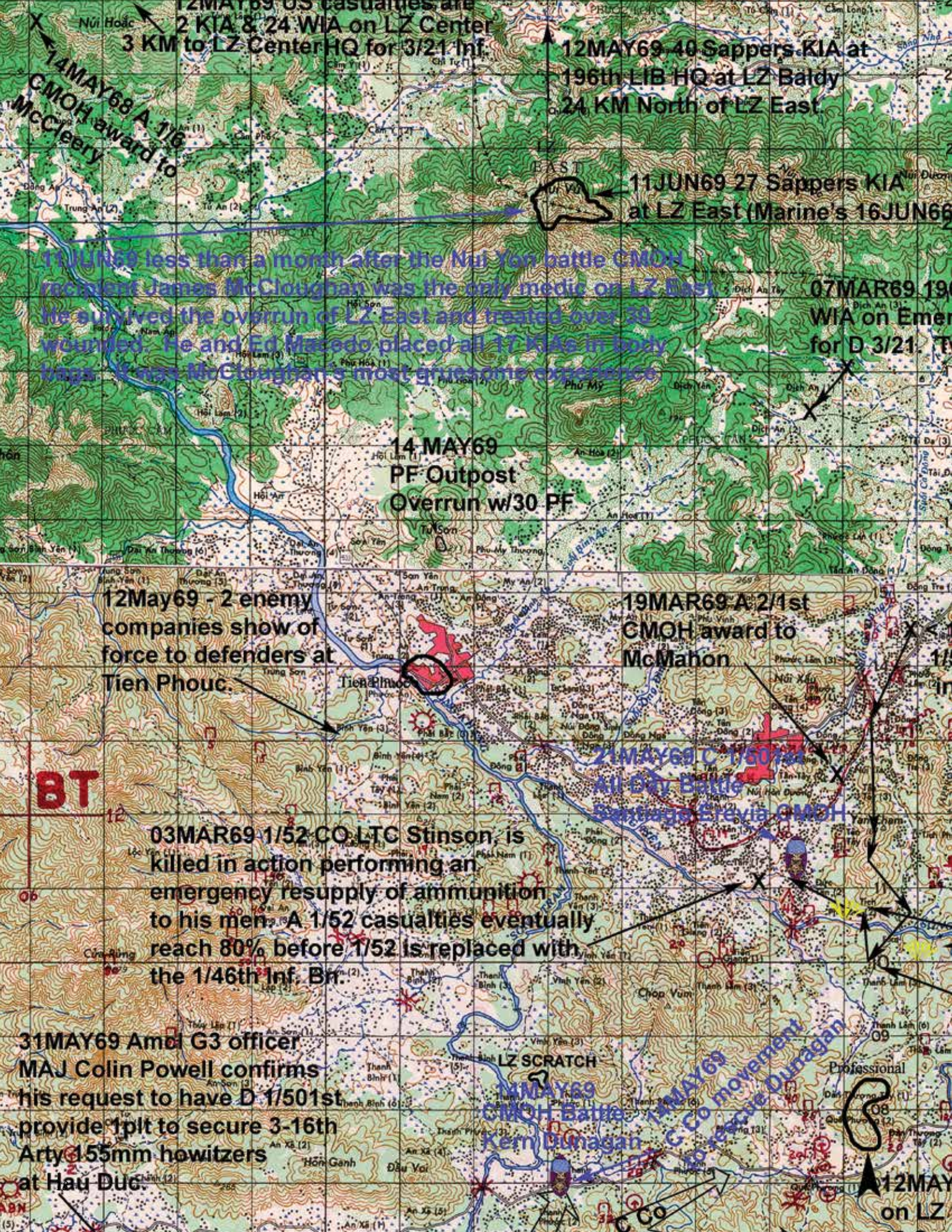
21MAY69 C 1/50
All City Battle
Santiago Eryia CMOH

03MAR69 1/52 CO LTC Stinson, is
killed in action performing an
emergency resupply of ammunition
to his men. A 1/52 casualties eventually
reach 80% before 1/52 is replaced with
the 1/46th Inf. Bn.

31MAY69 Amol G3 officer
MAJ Colin Powell confirms
his request to have D 1/501st
provide 1plt to secure 3-16th
Arty 155mm howitzers
at Hau Duc.

11MAY69
CMOH Battle
Kern Dunagan
13MAY69
C Co movement
to rescue Dunagan

12MAY
on LZ



This is only a partial display of the entire map created by Les Hines. The original has about three times as much coverage.



CMOH site)
1st CO GEN Kroesen
agency Ammo resupply
no KIA & 31 WIA

13MAY69
C 3/21st
5 MIAs
12MAY69
MAT5 Team
Overrun

12MAY69
C 1/1st Cav Rgt
receives RPGs
1st Bde 101st
Airborne Div.
arrives 15MAY69

12 JUN 69 B 2/17 Cav (Air)
Aerosol insertion
CMOH award to medic
Joseph Galy La Pointe

2 CMOH Awards
14 MAY 69 Daniel Shea
13-15 MAY 69 James C. McCloughan
both medics from HHC 3/21st Inf Bn
serving with C 3/21st Inf Bn

16MAY69
501st Bn
insertion

26MAY69 Two USAF
B-52 Airlights

19MAY69 B-1-501 Locates
Tunnel Complex

12MAY69 5/46th Bn CO
LTC Barnes is KIA from
Mortar attack on LZ Gator
28KM away

69 NVA Assault
Professional

25 KM to
Americal
Division HQ

From the editor:

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, prepared the map displayed on the previous two pages. It shows locations and notes related to Operation Lamar Plain.

This battle took place in May 1969 in Quang Nam Province in the area to the south and west of the provincial capital of Tam Ky. Much action was near the district capital of Tien Phouc. It involved forces of the Americal Division and the 101st Airborne Division.

Fighting was extremely heavy with many casualties on all sides. Several American soldiers earned the Medal of Honor during this battle. Americans were successful in defeating the enemy but only after a protracted battle lasting several weeks.

The map shows notes of battle events and locations. Tien Phouc can be located just above the horizontal center line about one-fourth of the distance from the left edge of the map. A road can be seen in the direction from Tien Phouc and to the upper right of the map. This is the road to Tam Ky. Chu Lai is on the coast almost due east of Tien Phouc.

Several years ago, Rick Olson, former National Finance Officer for the ADVA, completed extensive research on Operation Lamar Plain. He wrote a story published in the Americal Newsletter, forerunner of the *Americal Journal* magazine. It is reprinted at this time and coincides with the action shown on the map prepared by Les Hines. Olson's story details the action of Captain Kern Dunagan, commander of Company A, 1/46 Infantry, and his receipt of the Medal of Honor.

Hines' map shows the locations of Medal of Honor actions of six soldiers. They are Thomas Joseph McMahon, A/2/1/196 Inf., 19 March 1969; CPT Kern Wayne Dunagan, A/1/46/198 Inf., 14 May 1969; Daniel John Shea, HHC/3/21/196 Inf., 14 May 1969; James C. McCloughan, HHC/3/21/196 Inf., 13-15 May 1969; Santiago Jesus Erevia, C/1/501 Inf., 21 May 1969; Joseph Guy La Pointe, B/2/17 Cav., 2 June 1969. Erevia and La Pointe served with the 101st Airborne Division.

To assist with the defense of the district and provincial capitals, the Army placed the first brigade of the 101st Airborne division under the control of the Americal Division and ordered them to the area of Tam Ky. This unit came with much needed aviation assets to include air cavalry.

As Olson tells near the end of his story, this action received very little publicity at the time. Most likely the big news of the day involved the third brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. This unit was heavily involved at Dong Ap Bia, also known as Hill 937, also known as Hamburger Hill. This action, known as Operation Apache Snow, battled enemy forces that held extensive positions on Hamburger Hill. It received daily media attention and became an iconic battle of the Vietnam War.

Operation Lamar Plain Story

By Rick Olson

This story is about a combat event that happened in May, 1969 in the area around the fire support base named LZ Professional. It is a reconstruction of events from declassified official records as well as the personal recollections of veterans from Americal units who were involved.

Sources include Americal Division after-action reports, 1/46 Infantry daily staff journals, the Operation Lamar Plain after-action report filed by the 101st Airborne Division, Medal of Honor documentation, and an August 1993 Vietnam Magazine article titled Recon Zone Alpha written by John Hayes.

US Infantry Battalion Under Siege

On May 12, 1969, the North Vietnam Army (NVA) began a major offensive throughout the Americal Division area of operations at LZ's Baldy, Center, and Professional. One of the most intense attacks occurred in the "free-fire zone" around LZ Professional patrolled by the 1/46 Infantry. The attack on LZ Professional escalated into a Tactical Emergency (TAC-E.) on May 15, 1969 when a full airmobile brigade of the 101st Airborne Division was dispatched into the area.

The 101st Airborne's, 1st Brigade brought a force of two infantry battalions, the 2nd Squadron /17th Air Cav, teams of OH-6A "Loaches" armed with 7.65 mm miniguns, AH-1G Cobras (aerial rocket artillery), a 105mm Artillery battery, a company of UH-1 Hueys, and a section of CH-47 Chinooks and a team of Air Force forward controllers.

The 1/46 Inf. battalion was placed under the operational control (OPCON) of the 101st brigade, which was in-turn OPCON to the Americal Division. May 15 became the start of a joint Americal/101st Airborne effort named Operation Lamar Plain that continued until mid-August 1969.

From May 12 to the conclusion of Operation Lamar Plain, US casualties counted to 125 US KIA, 460 US WIA, and 1 US MIA. Most of these counts were sustained in intense combat during the month of May.

The Americal units directly affected were the 1/46th Infantry companies and C Battery, 1st/14th Arty, which maintained 105mm artillery atop LZ Professional. The 101st Airborne Division units directly affected were the infantry companies of two battalions, the 1st/501st Inf. and 1st/502 Inf., a helicopter assault unit, B Troop 2nd Squadron /17th Air Cavalry.

A Massive Show of NVA Firepower and Endurance

On a moonless night, at 0220 hours on May 12, 1969, LZ Professional, defended by Co. D, 1/46 Inf. and Btry. C, 1/14 Arty, was surprise attacked an NVA sapper unit from the V-16 NVA Sapper Battalion. On the morning after the attack the remains of twenty NVA sappers killed in action were left stranded in the perimeter line barbed wire.

The LZ received a continuous barrage of incoming

mortar rounds and rocket fire from a recoilless on the adjacent hill 497. The intense incoming prevented carcasses of the dead NVA from being removed from the LZ's perimeter wire. They were left to rot in the hot sun leaving a horrible smell and sight.

As the day wore on, conditions on LZ Professional had become severe. Any medical evacuation required significant air support to temporarily douse incoming fire. Defense of the LZ required constant day and night air support, including the awesome firepower of AC-47 "Spooky" fixed wing gunships circling the hill.

The NVA also set up a substantial battery in the area immediately surrounding the LZ. An estimated 15 to 20 anti-aircraft (12.7mm) positions which were strategically placed where two or more guns could fire simultaneously against aircraft. For several days, anything airborne near the LZ would face a virtual continuous wall of salvos. As an aircraft flew over the area it would be fired at from one or more NVA guns' and when it would move out of range of one NVA gun, another would begin firing from an adjoining position, and so on.

NVA anti-aircraft firepower was so effective that in the period of just a few days, it disabled most of the B, 2/17 Air Cav unit. On one day, the damage to B, 2/17 aircraft was so severe that only one helicopter of out of 28 aircraft was reported in flying condition. (For more information about 101st Airborne aircraft damage, refer to the "Recon Zone Alpha" article mentioned above.)

Overwhelming Odds for A Co. 1st/46th Inf.

At the same time that LZ Professional was under heavy fire, NVA units from the 3rd Regiment, 2nd NVA Division stunned outnumbered 1/46th Infantry line companies fighting near the firebase. A severe attack began at 0810 hours on May 13, 1969 when the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd NVA Regiment (estimated to be 250 to 300 men) engaged Co. A, 1/46th Inf. and the attached E. Co. Recon platoon, a total US force of 91 men.

The Battle Continued for 35 Hours

On May 13, Co. A, under the command of Captain Kern T. Dunagan, was attempting to clear a high ground area immediately north of LZ Professional when the NVA engaged. Throughout the day, Co. A took intense fire. It was able to medevac out some wounded around noon.

By 1645 hours an emergency re-supply helicopter landed in the perimeter. Its assistant pilot was shot in the head and later declared KIA. At the same time, Dunagan was knocked flat on his back and seriously wounded with a mortar fragment in the jaw.

Under this attack, Dunagan was forced to pull his men into a defense position for the night. He assured that all dead and wounded were inside of the perimeter. For the rest of that day and night, any further medical evacuations for Co. A became impossible to accomplish.

On May 14, at 0530 hours, an AC-47 "Spooky" was diverted from the defense of LZ Professional to support Co. A. It enabled a medevac mission to evacuate one US KIA and 13 US WIA. Dunagan's company was in still in serious trouble and faced great danger.

The enemy was reported to have behaved as if losses were unimportant. The NVA had moved in so close in proximity to Co. A that a US soldier's ability to fire at the enemy was severely restricted in order to avoid hitting comrades.

Dunagan had correctly sensed that Co. A was being attacked by a major NVA force. He realized that he must again link up with the Echo Recon platoon which had been separated from his company. He personally began walking point for the company, which was highly unusual for a company commander. He established the link-up with the recon platoon by 0930 hours.

Cpt. Dunagan was wounded for a second time by AK 47 fire while he dragged

a disabled soldier to safety. Despite his inability to speak clearly because of the jaw wound, Dunagan kept calling in air strikes.

The strikes delivered napalm and 500 pound bombs on enemy positions.

Co. C Attempts a Futile Link-up With Co. A

At 1105 hours, Co. C, 1/46 Infantry was ordered to force march to the aid of Co. A and to link-up by 1500 hours. Co. C encountered intense mortar and automatic weapons fire and took numerous casualties. At one point a platoon of Co. C got to within 20-50 meters of Co. A, but could reach no further.

Dunagan tried to move his men closer to Co. C, but the first two men were cut down in the middle of a stream bed. The blood of the fallen men turned the flowing water red for fifty meters and was clearly visible to pilots of aircraft overhead. Dunagan made still another attempt to link-up with Co. C. Another enemy position opened up and his five lead men were quickly killed.

Realizing the futility of the attempted link-up, Dunagan dropped his pack and ordered his men to crawl back into the stream bed. At 1630 hours he realized that he had left the classified cipher gun to the KY-38 secure radio set in his pack.

Dunagan instantly recognized that the entire US Army radio security could have been compromised by the loss of this equipment. Despite his wounds and without hesitation he crawled back out into an open area under intense hostile fire and recovered the cipher gun.

His company's casualties had risen to about one half of its men. The NVA continued an intense attack of mortar rounds and grenades. Co. A had to get out of its indefensible position by nightfall or risk loss of the entire unit.

At 1715 hours, Dunagan, through the Battalion Commander, LTC Underhill, made a desperate decision. He decided to utilize a smoke screen to enable his men to make a break across open rice paddies for Co. C's position 300 meters away.

Because of the intense attack that had been going on against LZ Professional, supporting artillery did not have enough HC smoke rounds on hand. It was necessary to use highly dangerous white phosphorous rounds to build up and maintain a sufficient screen.

The Escape Under Smoke

Dunagan moved throughout his position and readied men to lighten loads and destroy any useful property. He demanded that no wounded be left behind. He gave directions and organized the men in groups around a man with a compass.

All of Co. C's machine guns were given targets off the flanks of Co. A's route of withdrawal. Gunships were directed to fire over the heads of the withdrawing company as the artillery smoke screen was laid.

It was immediately apparent there were not enough uninjured men left to carry both the wounded and the dead. Dunagan and LTC Underhill made the agonizing decision that the dead must be left.

After assuring all wounded men were assigned a carrying party and the smoke had been built up to sufficient density, Dunagan led his company out across the open rice paddy to the position of Co. C. The NVA sensed that Co. A was getting away and directed fire out across the open field. However, the smoke suppressed its effectiveness.

After almost all of the men were accounted for, it was discovered that a six man carrying party led by 1LT Tamantha (the FO) had been hit by a 155mm white phosphorous round. Upon learning of the situation, Dunagan, with complete disregard for his own life, ran back out into the rice paddy to assist in their recovery.

Dunagan found a badly wounded Sgt. Robert Tullos, a squad leader in the recon platoon, with a missing foot. He shoulder-carried Tullos back to safety, being forced to stop and rest along the way due to his own painful wounds. Upon returning with Tullos, Dunagan started to return to the rice paddy to bring back yet another missing man. He was stopped at the perimeter's edge when it was determined the man had already been recovered.

At 1815 hours, medevac missions began. The last medevac was completed by 1845 hours. The Commanding Officer of Co. C, Lt. Walter Brownlee, had to force Dunagan to get on the last medevac chopper. Still in the bush were twelve men missing in action but all presumed dead.

The Battalion Commander, LTC Underhill, had to order Dunagan to the hospital for medical treatment as Dunagan did not want to leave his troops. It was later determined that Dunagan's jaw wound caused him to lose two teeth and numbed his face. His arm had bone splinters numbing his fingers and he had a hairline fracture of one of his ankles.

By the end of May 14, the field strength of the Co. A and the E-recon team had declined to a count of 47 men. On the next day, May 15, the Americal Division declared a Tactical Emergency.

Award of the Medal of Honor

Some fourteen months later, a memorandum was written documenting bits and pieces of information outlining the circumstances of what had happened with Dunagan's unit. On July 20, 1970, a letter was sent to the HQ, US Army, Pacific, from Lt. Gen. William P. Yarborough, Deputy Commander in Chief. The letter contained one sentence: "Recommend approval of award of the Medal of Honor". The award was for Cpt. Kern W. Dunagan, Commanding Officer of Alpha Co., 1st/46th Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, for heroic action in May, 1969.

Witnesses to the Action Who Were Listed in the MOH

Recommendation were: David A. Waltz, 1Lt, Co E, 1st/46th Inf.; Thomas N. Tamanaha, 1Lt., D Btry, 1/14th Arty; Joseph S. Dolock, 1Lt. Co. C., 1st/ 46th Inf.; Pete Gonzales, Psg., Co. C., 1st/ 46th Inf.; Brian P. Shaw, Sp/4, Co A., 1st/ 46th Inf.; Richard M. Belanger, Sp/4, HHC Co., 1st/ 46th Inf.; Walter W. Brownlee, 1Lt., Co. C., 1st/ 46th Inf.; and Roy J. Ginder, Major, USAF

The actions of Cpt. Dunagan were probably the most heroic of any single individual in this 1969 combat event. The predicament endured by Co. A was presumably the most severe of that endured by any unit involved in this fighting.

Many other units of the Americal and 101st Airborne also took significant casualties. Btry. C, 1/14th Artillery sustained serious losses, which reduced its ability to maintain artillery support, and necessitated its replacement on LZ Professional by Btry. B, 1/14th Artillery. The 1/501st Infantry companies were engaged in a savage day-long battle near LZ Professional on May 18th. Co. D, 1/46th took numerous losses on the perimeter of LZ Professional on May 12.

Unfortunately, all of the incidents happening to these and other units involved in May 1969 cannot be covered in this writing due to space constraints. However, their significance must not be understated.

Despite the TAC-E declaration, the insertion of an 101st Airborne force, the high US casualty counts, and the significant damage and destruction of US aircraft, this fierce combat episode was given only minor amounts of public news media coverage in 1969.

Another brigade of the 101st Airborne was engaged in the "Hamburger Hill" battle at almost the same time. The more famous "Hamburger Hill" battle had significant news coverage and some of it was very visibly negative due to high numbers of US casualties. Speculation existed that the 101st was reluctant to take additional unfavorable publicity and it discouraged or diverted news coverage of the Operation Lamar Plain story.

Perhaps, in time, we may learn even more of the background of what was happening to all of us who were involved in this intense event some 30 years ago in May 1969.

Her Only Son

By Gary L. Noller

The Vietnam War claimed the lives of almost 60,000 American military members. One out of six of the casualties died from non-combat causes. Accidents factored heavily in this statistic.

In the summer of 1970 I served with about 100 other soldiers in Company B, 1/46th Infantry. We performed perimeter security on a firebase deep in the mountainous jungles 30 miles south of Da Nang. We spent much of our time filling sandbags, building bunkers, digging trenches, and keeping things clean. We acted as the general labor force for the base.

In early August a CH-47 Chinook helicopter approached the base with a delivery of drinking water. The helicopter carried a 400 gallon water trailer suspended underneath by web slings. A minute away from the landing pad, the water trailer unexpectedly broke from its slings and dropped into the Song Trahn River.

On August 4 a call was made for volunteers from Company B to go to the river and rig the water trailer for extraction. A squad of about ten soldiers gathered ropes and other rigging and prepared to accomplish the task. One of the soldiers was PFC Glenn Raymond Gilbert, 22. of Voorheesville, New York.

Glenn and I trained together at Ft. Knox and arrived in Vietnam at the same time. We were not close friends but knew each other well enough to stop and chat from time to time. He volunteered to go to the river and help retrieve the lost equipment.

I asked him, "Why did you volunteer to do this?" He replied, "I am tired of filling sandbags and digging trenches. This will be something different to do."

The squad departed and made it way down the steep side of the hill to the bank of river. About 30 minutes later an urgent radio call came from the squad radio.

The radio operator said, "We need help right away. We have a guy who is being washed down the river. We are trying to get to him. Are there any helicopters that can help with a rescue?"

Glenn was lost. He was reported as missing-in-action for eleven days. On August 15 a group of South Vietnamese soldiers found his body in the river several kilometers downstream. A helicopter returned his remains to the firebase for identification.

A squad leader came by and asked, "Noller, you knew Gilbert, didn't you?" I replied in the affirmative. He inquired, "Will you help make an identification?" I declined. Others identified the body as that of Glenn Gilbert.

Gilbert was the only son of Warren and Margaret Gilbert. They operated a small farm a short distance west of Albany, New York. They had one other child, Patricia. Glenn worked on the farm and then took a job in town. With no deferment, he entered the Army by way of the draft.

The Army informed the Gilbert's of the circumstances

of their son's death. They knew he did by drowning while attempting to retrieve lost equipment. He received the Good Conduct Medal and a Bronze Star for Merit. Most likely he also earned the Infantryman Combat Badge for his brief service in the Vietnam War. The family buried Glenn at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Margaret Gilbert wanted to always remember her son. She became active in the American Gold Star Mothers and served as the Albany chapter president and as the New York state president. She also participated in the VFW auxiliary and the American Legion auxiliary. She was always there to help in any manner she could. She comforted hospitalized veterans and other parents of war dead.

Each Memorial Day she donned the distinctive white dress worn by American Gold Star Mothers. She rode in parades and attended veterans functions. She displayed a Gold Star Mother license plate on her car. She joined the Tri-County Council of Vietnam Veterans and became close to veterans of the Vietnam War. They became her adopted sons.

Warren Gilbert passed in 1992. Margaret lived to the age of 87 and passed in 2014. She outlived her only son by 65 years. Her daughter remembered her mother with the words, "She was proud to be there, to represent everybody that had passed that were in service, and then sad knowing that my brother was one of them."

Glenn Gilbert was born on November 13, 1947. He was exactly one month younger than I. I think of him often and of the tragic way that he perished. The Army abandoned the attempt to recover the lost water trailer. It is probably still rusting away in the Song Trahn.

My mother was not a Gold Star Mother, but my grandmother was. The loss of a son, especially an only son, can never be fully recovered. The sorrow lasts forever.

This Memorial Day I will remember those lost due to war. PFC Glenn Raymond Gilbert will be one of them.

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PFC Glenn Raymond Gilbert, 22

Voorheesville, New York

11/13/1947 to 8/04/1970

Panel 08W, Line 082

Co. B, 1/46 Inf., 196 LIB

Non-hostile, died while missing

Ground casualty, drowned

Song Trahn River

Quang Tin Province

Hau Duc District

FSB Mary Ann

Humping the Pig

By Don Counter

Illustrated by Ed Gittens and Bill Pfau

During Basic Combat Training (BCT) there were attention-getting talks about the short life expectancy of officers, radio telephone operators (RTOs) and M60 machine gunners. Then during Infantry-Advance Individual Training (AIT) the topic was spoken of with more frequency by drill sergeants with recent combat experience. They emphasized that each of these soldiers stood out in the tropical landscape making them the preferred "targets of choice" by the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. The key to survival was maintaining a low profile, blending in, and with due respect for life... saluting officers in the jungle was an absolute NO-no!

Upon graduation from AIT we were granted leave, then it was off to the foreign soil of South Vietnam with the realization of being newly ordained infantryman who would be required to dramatically further develop our newly acquired skills.

Being assigned the Military Occupational Skill 11-Bravo (MOS 11B) was not a cherished assignment but referred to as the kiss of death. Those select few who became RTOs or a M60 machine gunner got an even shorter end of the Infantry stick.

Each of the two enlisted positions, RTO and M60 gunner, carried the biggest and heaviest loads, which added to their being identified as prized targets. It is a curious fact that the PRC-25 radio with its battery weighed the same as the M60 machine gun with 100-rounds of linked ammo.

For the sake of comparison the M60 and the PRC-25 each weighed 23-pounds while the M16 rifle weighed six pounds. Each of these bulky and critical pieces of equipment individually weighed the same as four M16s.

It became apparent that being assigned the PRC-25 radio (commonly referred to as the prick) or the M60 machine gun (affectionately referred to as the Pig) was determined by virtue of one's height and build. The taller fellows got the M60 machine gun while shorter, stout and muscular men, inherited the radio. There were no tall RTOs because no officer wanted a bull's-eye target tethered to his hip.

It seemed that the weighty mass of the M60 was routinely coerced, handed off, involuntarily volunteered or shoved onto the newest guy (funewgy) to the platoon; often times without benefit of a transition period.

The M60 machine gun was 43-inches of elongated steel weighing in at 23-pounds and was commonly referred to as the "Pig" because of its bulk and its consumption of ammunition.

This weapon required an extra pair of hands due to its weight, ammunition and an extra barrel. Even with increased strength and stamina it was more than difficult for an individual soldier to go it alone. According to the proverbial operational manual or



text book guide this crew served weapon required the support of an assistant gunner and an ammo bearer.

The weapons dimensions and dangling accouterments made for awkward and clumsy portaging in a tropical landscape that was constantly fighting against you. It was a frustrating terrain that provided every opportunity to cause you to trip, stumble and fall and appear as if you were walking blindfolded. Adding to the difficulty with undergrowth, getting entwined or snagged on branches made for total frustration followed by cussing and swearing at the struggle to get untangled and work yourself free from every wait-a-minute vine that tore at clothes and flesh. There was unanimous agreement that the designer of the M60 never carried or experienced it in a jungle environment. All of this added to the uneasiness of being an over-sized target.

The M60 was carried in a variety of positions and methods: balanced atop the left or right shoulder while holding onto one of the bi-pod legs, suspended from a nylon shoulder strap sling, slung at port arms, by the so called "executive" carrying handle, or cradled in the crook of an arm and supported at the hip. There was a definite learning curve as you attempted to stoop, walk and weave through the vine ridden landscape with the weighted mass. Discovering your center of balance was a challenge and you alone had to figure it out because nobody could do it for you.

It seemed that no matter which carrying method was used with the Pig it was a cumbersome and strained shoulder process. Each carrying method was temporary. No one position was ever comfortable for very long, which required a constant repositioning of the Pig. With a 74-pound rucksack heaped on our backs and a heavy and lopsided weapon each step was a balancing act; and we were referred to as light infantry. After a couple of missions the M60 gunner began to realize the benefit of cooperating with the terrain rather than to fight or subdue it. In due course with adjustments and experience some center of gravity or equilibrium could be attained and you managed the intimately extended appendage. Nevertheless there was no escaping four-lettered words when walking face first into a giant spider web.

In the depth of the thick and tangling jungle we inched our way one foot step at a time across maps. Constantly hampered by entanglement with vines that caused us to get hung up. There was always something to cut, stick or lacerate the skin. A sharp whack from a branch was irritating but branches that sprung to smack you in the face were startling.

There was no competition to appear stronger or to out-do one another by humping the Pig. The reality was that humping it was a rigorous endeavor and more like getting issued a plow and you were the mule. Any illusions of being movie matinee heroes, the likes of John Wayne, were quickly diminished as faulty perceptions.

All too frequently the M60 gunner would be included in additional reconnaissance patrols simply because every patrol leader recognized the heightened benefit of the Pig's awesome firepower.

Some machine gunners carried a Colt .45 caliber pistol at their side for a mission or two then chose to rid themselves of the unnecessary weight, and responsibility of cleaning yet another weapon.

Every few months we returned to the division rear area for stand down, which included weapons and equipment cleaning and turned-in. The freedom to walk without the Pig or a rucksack for a few days was liberating. It was curious how you'd grow



accustomed to something that you struggled with, then have to compensate without it. Without the lopsided weight my gait changed; there was a propensity to lean to the right. A few days later we'd return to the jungle and have to re-coordinate your jungle stride.

A starter belt with 25-30 rounds of linked ammo dangled from the left side of the feed tray and was the best way to keeping the machine gun armed and at the ready. Right hand dominate shooters worked best to avoid hot brass. I was not aware of any left handed gunners.

Keeping it and its accouterments from getting caught or snagged on anything resulting in a jam was an ongoing concern. Crawling and wading in the depths of the jungle fully exposed one to a gritty and infectious environment. Whether from rain, sweat, or mud, the build up of gunk required constant attention to cleaning and oiling to prevent corrosion, the weapon jamming, misfiring or locking up.

To remain operationally functional the weapon was field stripped (dismantled), thoroughly cleaned, and oiled on a daily basis. Depending upon conditions and exposure to dirt and grime a twice daily cleaning was not uncommon. Weapon maintenance was the means to support life. It was a weighty appendage that required constant and special attention, it even had its own toothbrush.

In a world where every pound impacts the struggles of life, dumping the metal ammo can and wearing the linked 7.62 ammo cross one's chest Poncho Villa style was preferred as a lighter weight solution to providing quick access to the bullets.

This "Hollywood" method of transporting the ammunition fully exposed it to grit, sweat, and soil.

I knew of only one assistant gunner who dutifully carried a protectively waterproof six pound metal ammo can containing two 100-round pouches of immaculately clean 7.62 ammo at the ready in his left hand. It truly was a balancing act because he carried a six pound M16 in his right hand. With a knowing grin he said it was his way of counter balance and maintaining correct posture.

The challenges associated with humping the Pig were many, below are four examples: *Malfunction*, *Misfortune*, *Mislaid* and *Mishap*.

Malfunction

It had rained continuously for two days when the platoon slowed, then momentarily halted on a steep somersault slippery incline. It seemed that most everyone in the platoon had stepped on the same spots and had the same hand holds grasping trees, branches or limbs anything that offered support or helped to maintain footholds along the worn path.

Movement was at a temporary standstill. Then the gesture of an upward and extended arm with a clenched fist was mimicked down the line of infantry soldiers. The motion signaled a silent request for the machine gun which equated to the verbal announcement of "Pig man-up." From the very rear of the formation the muscular six foot two gunner maneuvered forward, inching his way up the slick incline.

He was brand new and had unceremoniously inherited the Pig due to his height and physical stature. This was his first mission and his very third day in the jungle. Because of personnel shortages he did not have the support of an assistant gunner and someone was overheard to say "just wing it."

Eyes only glanced as he slogged up the muddy trail. As he neared the top he lost his foothold, slipped and forcefully fell face forward slamming the front sight of the machine gun through his upper lip. It was a nasty fall, leaving him slightly dazed. Within minutes blood was seeping through his bushy "Tom Selleck" mustache.

A medic was quietly requested to evaluate the injury. The soldier slowly collected himself and after many minutes eventually resumed the slippery struggle to the top. Once there, the platoon leader directed him to position the machine gun and fire away at an unseen target. It was his time to shine but when he pulled the trigger the weapon didn't fire. A visual examination of the weapon revealed that the black steel and rubberized plastic shoulder stock assembly, commonly referred to as the "butt plate", was missing.

He returned back down the steep trail with his weapon and eventually located the stock assembly, reattached it, and retraced his steps back up the slippery path. As the proverbial "new kid on the block", the return hump back up the same hill was humbling and physically challenging. After maneuvering back up the incline, he took his previous position and like a blind man shooting at an elusive burglar in the dark, he fired indiscriminately.

Minutes later the medic re-looked the gunners thick mustache, which was now matted with drying blood, and issued a few more over sized aspirins. As the platoon continued on their foot march one of the seasoned grunts walked by and said in a hushed and sarcastic tone, the great catch phrase "the needs of the Army take precedence and the war continues despite your discomfort."

The unit was under-strength on infantry personnel and with the current rates of attrition, manpower shortages were prevalent. The reality was there would be no going to the rear for stitches. In war bodies are crucial and you learn to endure setbacks.

Misfortune

After a couple weeks of hospitalization with a severe bout of malaria, this tall broad-shouldered infantryman was returned to the field to his previous position as the Pig man. Aside from a noticeable 23-pound loss the illness had taken a toll on his body; his strength and stamina had diminished.

The jungle was steamy at times suffocating at others. Weaving through the woven web of jungle vines, over-stepping the snake-like, above-ground roots was leaving many physically strained. Now amid a blazing sun, intense humidity and stifling heat and the strain of the bulky M60 the abrupt uphill walk kicked his butt. He felt like an over-worked pack animal.

The Pig was getting caught up on everything in the low jungle tangle and was cause for his ultimate exhaustion. At that moment in time a "shake-and-bake" buck sergeant shouted, "quit dragging your ass and hurry up!" In total frustration and with both arms over the head, he hurled the M60 down the hillside; an impulsive act he immediately regretted.

Without saying a word, his newly assigned and solidly built assistant gunner descended the steep incline, retrieved the bulk of steel and calmly shouldered the weapon which now had a slightly drooping left bi-pod leg. "Just tell me what I need to do" he said to the totally exhausted M60 gunner. That sharing of "teamwork" serves as the basis for their life-long bond that continues today.

As an added note, no one ever again told that beast-of-burden to "hurry up."

Mislaid

After a three day stand down at the division rear area the routine was to be driven out in deuce and a half (2 1/2) ton trucks to the Tam Ky heliport airstrip where we'd form up by group, then sit and await the eventual arrival of rotary-winged aircraft for an air assault insertion into the jungle. With the typical hurry up and wait delays, infantry soldiers destined to be air assaulted into another unknown portion of the jungle would temporarily lean back against their rucksack with their assigned weapon readily available and within arms reach, eventually remove their boots and socks to expose the feet to some healthy sunshine, pull out a paperback book and momentarily let the mind drift.

As usual, locals appeared en-masse with toothy grins,

outstretched arms and pleading hands. There was no trading, it was the same bothersome "you souvenir me" routine. The requests were constant and never quelled, just tempered with cigarettes, accessory packets or a C-ration. You were cautious not to let your guard down because among the hungry hands, hustlers and thieves were always present.

Eventually the unit would be notified that seven helicopters were inbound to pick them up for their mission. At a high state of rushed excitement the soldiers collectively assembled around their individual gear, re-checking their equipment (web-gear, rucksack, helmet and weapon), mentally preparing themselves for expedient loading onto their assigned aircraft. In perfect formation the helicopters landed with rotor blades spinning at a one hundred-percent RPM ready for immediate lift off. With a sense of urgency the grunts sprung to action, boarded and nervously switched thoughts to the landing zone... would it be hot or cold?

After insertion and amid the jungle foliage a seasoned staff sergeant suspected that something was wrong and out of place. He blurted out, "soldier where's your machine gun?" The response from the husky private was, "I left it back on the helicopter air strip."

With the wisdom of a sage, this "old school" sergeant, on his second infantry tour in Vietnam, immediately radioed back to the airfield to have the missing squad weapon located, retrieved and flown out to the jungle operation.

This school of hard knocks sergeant knew first hand that the youthful draftee was "genuinely a good kid" and as a leader "it's all about taking care of your own." He intervened to keep the situation below the radar to deflect any unpleasant fall out from higher ups. The military motto of "Mission First, People Always" succinctly describes his efforts to essentially rescue the hips of this young soldier.

That young soldier faithfully carried the Pig to the very end of his year long tour and has not forgotten the protective action taken by his insightful sergeant.

Mishap

The platoon was tasked with escorting a group of refugees through the jungle to a relocation camp; a tasking that would take the better part of a full day. The villagers were, sort of prepositioned between us soldiers. Then out of the blue the platoon leader walked up and handed a toddler to the Pig man stating "he's yours!"

Standing well over six foot with great strength in his arms and shoulders, he was proof that physical stature and being the ideal fit had complications. While supporting the M60 machine gun with his right arm, the gunner now cradled the little guy in his left arm. Adding to this curious sight for sore eyes the toddler had clutched in his right hand the inert remains of an iguana and with each lumbering stride of the gunner the lifeless creature annoyingly swung and flopped without pulse against his rucksack.

Twice along that hours-long jungle trek the toddler released a warm shooting stream of piss on the M60 gunner. With each drenching of urine, the soldier's simple and unvarnished response was "That's life in the jungle, Tarzan." Proving there actually was a humorous side to the war.

This is dedicated to every fellow grunt who with balance and poise endured the challenges of humping the Pig.

God Bless the Infantry!



First Mission—Day One

By Don Counter

The afternoon before the mission we were provided two simple wood buildings in the company area at the Americal Division base in Chu Lai. The buildings were identical, screened window with a framed screen doorway entry into an open space that was filled with bunk beds. There were no foot lockers, personal space or wiggle room – it was a place to sleep on a first-come first-served basis. After dusk, as the days free-time activities were dwindling, people slowly filtered in to secure a bunk. An hour or so later someone eventually flicked the lone light switch off for a much needed night's rest.

Nevertheless there was commotion outside. The boisterous activity and loud voices continued unabated, most of which was a result of nervous anticipation and the consumption of alcohol. Periodically people fumbled in, flicked the lights on, searched for a bunk to crash on, often followed by intermittent grunts and groans for someone to turn the damn lights out. There would be no peaceful night's sleep in this transit building.

At dawn we were roused out of bed for another stupid-ass formation. We were directed to gather our two bedding sheets and pillow case, drop them off at the supply room, secure our personal gear and weapon, then gather outside the area of the administration office and supply room to field-strip and clean our individual weapons, receive ammo, varied devices, and rations, consolidate our equipment, load magazines with fresh ammo and fill our canteens from a nearby water buffalo. Somewhere between all this activity you'd eat breakfast- a canned C-ration. We jam packed our rucksacks with: food, gear, water, and additional ammo, equipment and explosives specific for the mission. Each man in full gear was calculated to weigh-in at approximately 240-pounds; nevertheless we were referred to as "Light Infantry" foot soldiers.

Around mid-morning we loaded-up onto deuce-and-a-half trucks and were convoyed to an airfield in Tam Ky.

In the Aviation world "**weight**," is a major consideration and carefully measured with respect to its distribution and that which is deemed the maximum allowable. It seems we were virtually cargo that lugged its own baggage... Welcome to the Infantry.

Along the flight line we were assembled and pre-positioned to await the arrival of the six helicopter "lift" and our specifically assigned "chalk" (aircraft). There we sat on the ground, leaned against our individual ruck and waited.

Amid our group there was quiet apprehension and uncertainty as to whether we would be dropped into a hot or cold landing zone and the tense facial expressions of the seasoned soldiers was noticeable and served as

evidence of their concern. Eventually word circulated that artillery was prepping our intended insertion point and blasting the surrounding area with explosive rounds. This would be my very first mission.

Our choppers arrived "on station" and with blades rotating at full RPM the crew chief/door gunners stepped out and away from the aircraft, gave a thumbs up to the pilots and then waved us on. Collectively we arose, crouched to lower our posture to safely clear the helicopter blades, then hustled and climbed aboard our respective aircraft.

On my side of our aircraft the M60 machine gun was noticeably suspended by a bungee cord as opposed to being affixed to a support mount. Whether it was impromptu or purely "John Wayne style," this technique permitted an extended scope and almost limitless range of motion of firing but...the elastic support configuration was risky. In the event of a sudden banking movement or turbulence it could result in unintentionally putting 7.62 bullets into the aircraft skid, rotors or even the pilot.

When the airlift was loaded up with three "feet dangling" grunts seated in each of the open doorways and another infantryman sequestered inside, the door gunner/crew chief gave a thumbs up to the pilots, jumped back on board. Taking their respective positions, the birds lifted off. The six choppers flew in straight line formation with Cobra gunships on either side as escort and to provide cover in anticipation of the insertion point being a "Hot LZ".

There were no cheesy grins or high-fives, it was a somber thirty two minute flight gazing at the vast green landscape and wondering.

Hand signals indicated we were nearing our landing site/insertion point and the six helicopters split into two groups of three birds. We were in the first group and scheduled to land on a tall grassy plateau.

We were mentally prepared to offload with punctuality to minimize ground time and allow the second group of three birds to land, drop off troops and fly off.

As our helicopter flared, with the nose of the aircraft up to make its approach for landing, a cloud of red smoke billowed on ground. Everyone was instantaneously on alert; it was the signal for a Hot Landing Zone! Our bird hesitated and hovered approximately ten feet off the ground. All senses were on overload for a booby-trapped LZ. There was nervous excitement, shouting and then with an overpowering sense of impatient urgency the door gunner motioned for soldiers to hurriedly off load-mid air. Tension was high and it became evident that the aircraft was not going to land. The M60 gunner blasted away with his machine gun.

There was a bewildered look in most every one's eyes as the private seated immediately next to me, (a sturdy farm boy and former lineman for either Oklahoma or Nebraska

State college) removed his steel helmet and began slamming and beating the door gunner. It seems that the door gunner with the "loose-geosey" bungee corded M60 had inadvertently shot the Private directly in the foot.

Amid the urgency to off load our aircraft, there was a mad scramble to retrieve the four metal cans of M60 ammo from the wounded soldier's rucksack and remove the linked ammo draped around his shoulders, then hastily redistribute his 1,000 rounds among others in our group.

To avoid being literally pushed out by the door gunner I jumped off from the skids of the aircraft and plunged into the prop washed sea of elephant grass, and landed with a thud, stunned and vulnerable.

From the jungle growth emerged a weathered and wire-eyed soldier, with shirt sleeves down, who motioned for us to gather. He then herded us through the elephant grass to a hasty rallying point.

We arrived to a loosely assembled group of soldiers, mostly nervous newbies. I dropped to one knee to stay low to the ground and examined my exposed forearms which were lacerated, bleeding and stinging as if alcohol was rubbed into an open wound.

One of the new comer's (green weenies) began scuffing the leather tops of his boots. The effort to create a worn and less spanking new look was quickly mimicked by another newbie in the ultimate struggle for the illusion of inclusion.

Amid the experienced grunts wearing faded and well worn uniforms, we stood out in our "fresh off the shelf" jungle fatigues, boots and untarnished gear. Despite the self conscious feeling of being greener than the vegetation, we were reminded that, as privates fresh from Basic and AIT, we were still pissing stateside water and we were just another rotation of inexperienced replacements.

We were eventually led to a jungle hillside that was being cleared for an eventual helicopter resupply landing area. Several freshly fallen trees and tree stumps marked the area. A chainsaw buzzed steadily then, without the proverbial "t-i-m-b-e-r," a massive tree came crashing through tree branches and slammed to the ground on the downward slope. I was bewildered and while attempting to taking it all in I positioned myself next to a sizable fallen tree, figuring I could utilize it for cover and concealment. On the crest of the forested hillside a black 500-gallon rubber water bladder blivet (referred to as an elephant rubber) sat as graceful as a Volkswagen Beetle in the middle of the jungle.

A gruff voice shouted, "Come ere newbie!" Hoping the hollering was intended for someone else I didn't acknowledge. A demanding "Cum ere mutherr-fu**err" got my undivided attention. A crusty soldier locked eyes with me and motioned for me to respond to where he was standing. As I approached, he directed me pick up the

ax and begin hacking at the very tree he stood next to. I dropped my rucksack in place, leaned my M-16 against it and he walked away, taking my place at the fallen tree. In less than sixty seconds we had exchanged places. I slammed the ax into the tree. WHAM. A sharp cracking sound resonated, the fellow instantly dropped. Men were shouting but I couldn't see anyone; everyone was hugging the ground. He had been standing in the very spot where I had stood just seconds before. There are few things as subtle as the accuracy of a bullet.

Without hesitation a soldier with a distinctively elongated bird feather in his bush hat went in lone pursuit of the elusive sniper. My impression was, "what courage, determination and guts." He was an imposing figure, a powerfully built work horse and obviously attuned to the environment. Although Carlos Maldonado was his given name he was simply known as Panama, his country of origin. He was composed, fearless, self-assured squad leader and in no way a thrill seeker. He was not only impressive but his presence engendered confidence and reassurance to the group. With life experience in the Panamanian jungle he knew how to keenly read the tropical terrain, like we knew the streets we had lived on. He would pluck vegetation from the jungle and eat them. The muscular figure stood out in a powerful and positive way.

Later that afternoon I was attached to a small group of soldiers and routed a short distance to a night's encampment where hooches were already set up. I realized that everyone, but me, had been paired up with a hooch mate. A sergeant pointed to a section of ground and indicated that I was to set up there for the night. As I began rigging a poncho rain cover, the sergeant asked if I had a mosquito net. I answered to the negative and eventually someone tossed me a bundle of the netting. It was my first experience with a mosquito net. I generically assembled a workable configuration. My sleeping space was just inches away from the trash sump filled with empty C-ration cans of varied sizes, some flattened, others still in cylinder shape some opened at both ends, all with raggedly sharp lids exposed.

As others were opening their C-rations and preparing a meal I overheard conversation about our landing zone earlier in the day. It turned out that it was not a Hot LZ, but more like a drop zone. The alarming red smoke grenade on the LZ was a mishap and created when it accidentally separated from someone's web gear and got activated. In the curious follow-on chain of events the aircraft never landed and the injured soldier never got off the aircraft which must have made for a rather bumpy ride for the bungee corded machine gunner.... all the way to the rear for medical treatment.

As darkness grew, the transition from sunset to pitch black was as abrupt as flicking a light switch. The day

became silent and the night seemed to intensify even the minutest of sounds. I crawled beneath my makeshift home: a poncho with mosquito netting. Having grown up in the City of Los Angeles I was totally inexperienced with camping in the woods and bedding down on the ground did not come easily.

This was no youthful exploration. I was now venturing in a foreign land one with a reputation for being brutally harsh and unsafe for travel. I was at the beginning of leading an inevitable life of long walks that thread through a jungle with a dink behind every bush, rock formation and tree. I found myself all alone. I pulled my camouflage poncho liner up to my face as if to say "Goodnight Nobody."

Whispers dissipated, restless movement settled to a hush and progressively men were motionless from exhaustion.

There was no switching off the light and going to sleep. There was stillness, it was quiet enough for the jungle to be heard. Sounds are amplified and grow bigger as your mind is kept awake. I laid awake questioning the intensity of being someones moving target for a week or a month – a year was unimaginable. I then drifted into a light, erratic sleep.

I was nudged awake for my shift at guard duty by an experienced soldier. The two of us low crawled to our hour-long night trail over-watch position. Even with the freshest of batteries the red filtered lens of my flashlight did not penetrate the blackness. There was no foxhole, the two of us laid there directly on the ground, shoulder to shoulder, as prone as possible with the machine gun between us. He on the left, I on the right. I said nothing but had concern for the potential of being on the receiving end of hot brass spewing from the M60 machine gun ejection port (located on the right side of the weapon). How does one dodge blazing shells flying at a rate of fire of 600 rounds per minute from landing in your shirt? Ouch.

Listening intently I was alerted to the slightest of sounds, in the darkness every sound was new and disturbing to me. They were all unfamiliar sounds to this city kid's nerve racking learning curve. With the crackle and snap of branches as something moved through the landscape the hair on the back of your neck stood up. I leaned in closer and whispered... "what was that?" Then with all senses fully engaged and fingers on the triggers we were ultra aware of each and every sound. Our senses became alert to every crackling twig, and the movement of anything was amplified, real and imagined. Being new and scared you were aware of the slightest twitch of a branch or minuscule sound. Listening for the slightest stir, anything that disturbed the night or our senses. Lizard, monkey or a nocturnal dink? On the alert when the buzz of the forest transitions to stillness and dead silence. At night the slightest noise could indicate danger lurking but it could play tricks on you. Do you pop a flare or squeeze the trigger, fully alerting the sleeping men?

There was hesitancy to interrupt much needed sleep coupled with risking humiliation, ridicule and scorn if it simply amounted to your fear as a FNG. Ears cocked, the absence of sounds was an indicator to nature as well. It is the incomprehensible quiet that gets to you. Those eerie-quiet and tense hours spent with a sense of aloneness as if abandoned on guard duty, questioning oneself to awaken and alert others, a weight that you didn't want to be the one who causes others to awaken due to a false report caused by your fears. The scary shift over I crawled back to my first nights jungle sleeping configuration and fell asleep from exhaustion.

The distinctive popping sound of a trip flare and the immediate illumination jolted me awake. Then with the attention getting startling SWISH sound of a hand activated parachute flare the remote jungle site was temporarily illuminated and the immediate landscape was filled with distorted images and moving shadows. It was more spooky than the fabled "camel's nose in the tent." When an M60 machine gun fired on full automatic it was pure sensory overload. It was a mad scramble as bodies rustled from beneath their netting and scattered on the ground. With weapon in hand and a bandoleer of ammo I rolled and became tightly entangled in my mosquito netting. Dazed and frozen, questioning what the hell was going on, I unintentionally rolled directly into the trash pit. When the intensity of the situation settled, it was determined to be a firefight with no one; the trip wire had been set off by a wild (Viet Cong) pig. I untangled myself from the collapsed mosquito netting, crawled to my gear and just laid there amid the incessant buzz of mosquitoes, the combined smell of bug juice, a rotting jungle and sweat; trying as best I could to make sense of it all. I questioned how long I'd make it through this raw daily life as an infantryman. With so much adrenalin pumping through my veins there was no way I was going to sleep.

I realized that Hollywood's glamorous images of war was as much a distortion as John Wayne, who was actually born as Marion Robert Morrison, and I was not part of the movie actors guild wherein the hero always comes home alive. This place had the potential to be downright harmful.

In the morning I noticed jagged cuts and lacerations to my shirt, pants and skin. It appeared as if I had had a free style wrestling match with an electric can opener.

In short order a hushed roar of laughter was generated over the FNG who rolled, got tightly hung up in his mosquito net and ended up the trash sump, with a white elongated inside wrapper from a Bit O' Honey candy adhesively stuck to the seat of his pants. Yes, there was blood and it was a memorable sight but no Purple Heart for this event.

Reality set in – I have 347 days remaining in my year long combat tour.

The Silence is Deafening

By Jim Craig

Hot and muggy. No light in the bedroom. Pitch dark. Trying to sleep. Seems like hours again. Ahhh..... getting drowsy. Laying on my back. Like to sleep on my back. Outline of ceiling

fan. We're coming in. Lowest ground around. Dry paddy area. Not even a dike anywhere close. The chopper is setting down. Wide open area. Treeline is within 200 meters and no cover anywhere. Hope they're not in the treeline. Wop-wop-wop-wop. Jolting sensation. Several times. Bumpy. Crew chief nodding. Incoming. Want us to jump the last 10 feet to ground. Not going to set down after all. Other choppers same way. Hope it's cold. Hope it's cold. Hope it's cold.

Turn goddam alarm off. Too loud. Quiet. 7:00 AM. Get up. Night sweats again. Wrinkled sheets. Nice shower. Get to work. Late..... Sun's hot and in my face. Bad traffic going home. Oldies station on car radio. Close to You by the Carpenters. Whaaaaa-ahuhau---close to you, whaaaaa-ahuhau---close to you. Pouring down rain. Windy. Pitch dark. Alone. No noise. Once in a while 16 and AK fire in the distance. No light. 2 :00 AM. Metal culvert on end serving as cover on top of bunker. Sandbags all around. Old ponchos hanging behind. Windbreak. Sitting on old ammo cans. Wearing poncho over head. Cold. Wet. Lonely. Arty guys talking softly 50 meters behind me and to the right. Thin air. Can hear for miles it seems. Fire. Long rows of wire. Nothing out there. Mad minutes. Everybody firing. Two magazines. That is enough. Will have to clean up brass tomorrow. Watch the red light. Guy's cussing me. Dinner. Wife bowling. Cable TV. Movies no good. Documentary. Same old stuff. To video store. Battle of Midway. Henry Fonda. Glenn Ford. Charlton Heston. Perfect guy for the part. Victory. Glorious. Rewind. To bed. Ceiling fan again. Cold capsule. About 1/2 hour. Sleep good tonight. Toss and turn. But just wait. Pill will work. Drowsy. Good. Finally..... Choppers. Helipad. Dropping off bodies wrapped in ponchos. Also body bags. Feet showing from ponchos. My boots. Looks just like my boots. Alpha Company guys. Been in the shit. Wonder where they're at now. Hope they don't send Bravo Company. Depressed. Stuffing C-rats into ruck. Last day on the hill.. Anybody heard about tomorrow yet?

Goddam alarm. Quiet. Lay awhile. Get up. Work. Shopping. Mall. Hundreds of people. All ages. Old people walking along slowly. Hanging on to each other. VFW. Never understood us. Young people. Teen-agers and young children. Never been told. And worst of all. My age group. Yuppies. Demonstrators now in pull over sweaters and loafers with tinted eye-glasses. Mr. middle class. Don't belong to any group. Only other Nam vets. Subculture. Other groups still don't understand that. People coming and going. Milling. GI, you want buy Coca-cola. You want pot. You want boom-boom. Fi do11ah, GI, Fi do11ah

boom-boom, GI. Goddam Dinks. How much Mama San. How much number 10 ring. \$20 dollah too much, Mama-San. I give \$8 dollah-no more. What is the warranty on this camera, maam? No just looking, thanks. I'll try the other camera shop. Wife's birthday. Ignorant people. Can't help it. Not their fault. Just don't know. Just don't know. Home. Dinner..... No rice tonight. Remember maggots. Ballgame tonight. Box seat. Alone. Wife and family not interested. Color guard. Army Knights parachute team. Sharp. Applause. People shaking their hands. Unreal. They're soldiers. People like them. Unreal. First inning..... Cold beer and hot dog. Home team behind. Come on bunt him over. Dumb. Would have had man on third and one out. Dumb. Mass exodus. Crowded parking lot. Busy traffic. Oldies station. Leaving on a Jet Plane by Peter, Paul, & Mary. Chu Lai. Standdown. Filipino band. Not bad. Nor good though. Anythings better than the bush. All my bags are packed - I'm ready to go..... Favorite song of grunts..... cause I'm Leavin on a Jet Plane, Don't know when I'll Be Back Again, Leavin..... Home. Late show. Apocalypse Now. Bu1lshit. Switch station. Nothing good. To bed. Hotter tonight. Relax. Relax. Relax. sleep. sleep. Want to sleep. Must be hours. Dead quiet..... ceiling fan.. wop-wop-wop-wop....Fina11y....can't stand this total silence..... Drowsy. Sleep. Good.....

[James G. (Jim) Craig, 66, died on April 24, 2012 in an accidental fall while touring Vietnam with other Americal Division veterans. He served as an infantryman with Co. B, 3/21st Infantry, 196th LIB, in 1970. Shortly after his death, Donna Craig, Jim's widow, sent me a file of Jim's writings. Jim wrote as part of a therapy program that helped him come to grips with his service in Vietnam. --Editor]

~ continued from page 9

Dear editor,

Thanks for taking on the 196th publication. You have opened it up to a range of stories and anecdotes.

My time with the 1/46 Infantry was at the tail end of US field engagement, I have minimal expectation of reading familiar names. "Buzz" Sherwood's story on page 28 of the Charger Journal number 36 (February 2022) is a joy to discover.

I was his RTO, and knew the men in his anecdote well. Sherwood's story ends on a question, perhaps inadvertently. I know the answer, as "Rock" and Warner played that prank more than once. ("Here, catch!") I dove into the brush as shrapnel of laughter splayed overhead.

I pass through Charles Warner's hometown of Craig, Colorado and think of him, and his dark humor. I also have many recollections and stories of Lt. Sherwood. Could you please forward this email to him, that he may reply?

**Thomas Cameron, SP4
1st Plt., C Co., 1/46, Sep 71-Aug 72**

The Lotto

By Jim Craig

The camouflage canvas cover over your steel pot showed your time in country. Your calendar started with the month you came in. Then each month was colored in as it went by. You could tell the short-timers, They had most of the months colored in. They were really counting the days. It was the only thing you could look forward to. Unless you won the Lotto, Nobody wanted to win the Lotto. But if you won it, you wanted to win it sooner than later. You could save yourself the hassles and all the hard times if you won the Lotto sooner rather than later. Winning the Lotto meant you were out of there, back to the world. It wasn't that hard to win. The odds weren't really that bad, And the Lotto was expense free. There was no waiting once you won. You got priority transportation. None of the lifer hassles before you got on the plane. And of course, you would be famous. All your buddies and anyone else who cared to drop by could read your name on the wall with the other Lotto winners. And your name was there for all time. You never knew when the next Lotto drawing would be. Sometimes there was more than one winner. As I said, the odds weren't really that bad to win. You didn't even have to pick a number. But you did have to be present to win.

A Poem

By Jim Craig

*Eight scared shadows move through the night,
Not knowing what horrors might lay ahead,
Seeking protection to stay out of sight,
Wondering if the next day would find them dead.*

*Alone with their thoughts they wait for their prey,
Noiseless and awake their nerves are distraught,
For in darkness the enemies' tracers may stray,
To hit one of the shadows that dodged for naught.*

*It is so completely dark and dangerous a game,
That those who are players are not eager to rush,
In joining their comrades when they hear the name,
Of what is dreadfully known as the night ambush.*

The Pucker Factor

By Jim Craig

It had been cloudy off and on all day. With the air so thin you could hear a cough a mile away. And now the clouds were evidently back because the usual bright stars were not out tonight. Not a one, The result was total darkness. Catchy lay on his back looking up at nothing, He could hear the mosquitoes but they weren't really landing on him. Too much bug juice. He felt oily. Sweat beaded on the bug juice that was rubbed all over him. Even his face. Especially his face. Suddenly there was a loud pop! To his right about 50 meters a trip flare burst and burned in the quiet black night. It sizzled and nobody moved. Ping! Ping! Several frags were in the air he knew. He rolled over quietly and reached for his 16. And as he crawled slowly into the hole the frags exploded and at the same time another flare went off over behind him across the perimeter, He heard small metal sounds around him as each man pulled his ammunition into the hole with him. What are the odds of two flares being hit by some small animal at about the same time on opposite sides of the perimeter? None. There must be more than just a couple of them out there.

He knew Rolltop was on his left in the hole beside him. He could hear him breathing but couldn't see him. It was too damn dark Any minute now the whole world's gonna go on automatic and all hell's gonna break loose. More frags across the perimeter, Nobody's bitin'. Squat in the hole. Wait. Over his left shoulder about 10 meters he could hear somebody break squelch on the PRC-25. But he couldn't hear anybody talking. Just waiting. His anal cavity could pass no air -in or out. His mouth was dry. How will they get us out of here in this darkness if we get hit? No sounds now. Just Rolltop's heavy breathing. Fast breathing but no talking: Wait.

The sun was coming up and he realized he'd fallen asleep. Guys were stirring, It was daylight. Nothing had happened. Some blood trails as they left the laager area. That's it. Another night in paradise. His asshole was raw.

-Jim Craig

Siouxland Freedom Park

By John Mansfield

My Vietnam service started with B/4-31 Infantry for a month. When we moved to LZ West I transferred to A/4-3 Infantry as a platoon leader and then later XO. This was from September 1967 to October 1968.

I work as a volunteer for Siouxland Freedom Park. I have worked as a speaker at several functions. I have been mostly assisting in fund raising for about 12+ years. I have helped conduct ceremonies for March 29th and was featured in a local TV program. I served on the committee that determined local veterans that are featured on our Freedom Rock. I also have some items that are to be donated to be in the interpretive centers, have written letters about SFP that were published in our local newspaper, and helped in other and various ways.

I would like to tell veterans about the purpose of Siouxland Freedom Park and invite them to visit the park at any time.

In today's fast-paced world, it's far too easy to take the gift of freedom for granted. Siouxland Freedom Park (SFP) is a 55-acre riverfront public park in South Sioux City, Nebraska, dedicated to remembering and honoring, the contributions of veterans from all services and all conflicts. Siouxland Freedom Park also is the backdrop for special events and observances featuring veterans.

Anyone is welcome at Siouxland Freedom Park, free of charge. Currently the park consists of the following exhibits:

- 1) A half-scale exact replica of the Vietnam War Memorial found in Washington, D.C.
- 2) A dog park in honor of fallen South Sioux City native and dog handler, Navy Seal John Douangdara. Douangdara along with 29 fellow service members and his War Dog, Bart were killed when their helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan on August 6, 2011.
- 3) A one-of-a-kind Freedom Rock. Recently six Service Branch benches were installed around the Siouxland Freedom Rock,
- 4) A newly completed, Interpretive Center, which in the future will feature displays and

state-of-the-art electronic exhibits showcasing veterans and the sacrifices so many have made.

Planning is well under way for a Korean War Memorial at Siouxland Freedom Park. Thanks to sponsors, donors, participants and especially to our veterans, this memorial will hopefully be dedicated next year.

Siouxland Freedom Park is actively fundraising to bring the Interpretive Center to life, to complete the Korean War Memorial, to maintain the park and to expand as needed in the future.

Please accept this invitation to come visit the park and see what we are doing to honor America's veterans.

Additional biographical information about Col. John L. Mansfield USA (Ret).

Born and raised in Sioux City, John is a Vietnam veteran, he also deployed to Guatemala, Hungary and various training tours in Japan, Korea, Norway, and Germany. He served as an officer in the Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve for over 30 years, retiring as a Colonel in 1997.

He has a Business Administration Degree from Westmar College (Iowa) and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Shippensburg University (Pennsylvania).

He is a Graduate with Honors from the Army Command and General Staff College and also a Graduate from the residence course at the Army War College.

He has published two articles on Leadership and Moral Courage, and a short poem. A book about his Vietnam experiences titled ***Twenty Days in May; Vietnam 1968*** was published in 2008.

His awards and decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with "V" device, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device. He has earned the Combat Infantry Badge.

He and his wife Sandy, a retired Clinical Nurse manager, have been married for over 53 years. They have two children and five grandchildren. He may be contacted at John L. Mansfield at arctic6@aol.com.

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*Additional cabins and suites available on request and subject to availability.

Day Date Itinerary

1 - Sunday, Oct 1, 2023 Orlando (Port Canaveral), FL

2 - Monday, Oct 2, 2023 Perfect Day Cococay, Bahamas

3 - Tuesday, Oct 3, 2023 Cruising

4 - Wednesday, Oct 4, 2023 Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

5 - Thursday, Oct 5, 2023 Philipsburg, St. Maarten

6 - Friday, Oct 6, 2023 Cruising

7 - Saturday, Oct 7, 2023 Cruising

8 - Sunday, Oct 8, 2023 Orlando (Port Canaveral), FL

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196th Patches – Full Color	\$6.00			
196th Brigade Crests "Ahead of the Rest"	\$6.00			
<i>Newly Authorized Uniform Item</i> 196th CSIB Pin (Combat Service ID Badge)	\$20.00			
196th LIB Outside Window/Bumper Sticker	\$4.00			
196th LIB Patch Lapel Pin	\$6.00			
Classic (White) 196th LIB T-shirt Available sizes - 5XL, 4XL, 3XL, 2XL, XL, L, M	\$18.00			
Total:				



Ship To Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, St, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Order by mail:
 196th LIB Association
 Dave Eichhorn - Treasurer
 328 Deming Road
 Fleming, OH 45729-5019

Make check payable to: 196th LIB Association
Follow-up or questions about merchandise:
 Quartermaster - Rich "Doc" Mosher, rpm196@hotmail.com, 847-922-6011

THE 196TH RING

The 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association has worked with Jostens to create a Prestige Ring for Veterans of the 196th. This ring will only be available thru the 196th Association.



CHOICE OF QUALITY

Jostens offers you 4 distinct metal alloy categories: 10K, 14K, or 18K Yellow or White Gold, Lustrum, and Questra.

18K Gold is the ultimate prestige metal, enjoy its brilliance for a lifetime.

14K Gold is rich and elegant with a durability you'll appreciate.

10K Gold is our most popular quality and an excellent choice to commemorate your special years.

Lustrum is an affordable alternative if you want the bright qualities of white gold.

Questra gives your ring a priceless golden look and a brilliant surface that is so durable it carries Jostens exclusive lifetime warranty.

Whichever alloy you choose, each has outstanding durability and wearability characteristic backed by Jostens reputation for quality.

JOSTENS FULL WARRANTY

For The Lifetime Of The Ring.

Every Jostens Military Ring is designed and crafted to exacting quality standards.

Jostens warrants the ring to be free from defects of material and workmanship for the life of the ring. Any ring not meeting these standards will be replaced if necessary, with an identical ring without charge.

In addition, Jostens Full Warranty provides these special benefits for the life of the ring without charge:

Resizing will be performed without charge.

Defective or broken simulated stones will be replaced without charge.

Refinishing will be performed without charge.

SEND ORDERS TO:

196th Light Infantry Brigade Association
c/o Dave Eichhorn
328 Deming Rd
Fleming, OH 45729-5019

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel. Number _____

196th ORDER FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> White Lustrum\$260.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Karat Yellow Gold\$919.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Karat White Gold\$919.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Questra\$354.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 Karat Yellow Gold\$1,334.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 Karat White Gold\$1,334.00	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Karate Yellow Gold\$2,102.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Karat White Gold\$2,102.00	
Engraving (inside ring)			
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) Initials _____ (FREE)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Name (or other) _____ add \$15.00			
21 LETTERS & SPACES			
Stones <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth <input type="checkbox"/> Facet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Garnet (Jan)	<input type="checkbox"/> White Spinel (April)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby (Jul)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rose Zircon (Oct)
<input type="checkbox"/> Amethyst (Feb)	<input type="checkbox"/> Shamrock (May)	<input type="checkbox"/> Peridot (Aug)	<input type="checkbox"/> Topaz (Nov)
<input type="checkbox"/> Aquamarine (Mar)	<input type="checkbox"/> Alexandrite (Jun)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Blue (Sept)	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Zircon (Dec)
Encrusting on Stones (available on smooth stones only).....add \$15.00			
<input type="checkbox"/> Infantry	<input type="checkbox"/> MP Crossed Pistols	<input type="checkbox"/> Artillery	<input type="checkbox"/> Crossed Bayonets
Finger Size _____			Sub Total
Your correct ring size maybe obtained at a jewelry store			7% State Sales Tax
ALL BIRTHSTONES ARE SIMULATED Sales Tax Must Be Added Order Must Have Finger Size Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.			Shipping (per ring)
			Total
			\$5.95

196th Light Infantry Brigade Association

Dave Eichhorn, Secretary
328 Deming Rd, Fleming, OH 45729-5019

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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U.S. POSTAGE

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196th Light Infantry Brigade

