

# **The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.**

**An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech)**

**22nd Infantry Regiment**

**Viet Nam Veterans**



**Together Then.....Together Again!.....**

**Thanks for Being There...&...Welcome Home**



Editor: David Allin, DMOR A&HHC 69-70

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website [www.vietnamtripledeuce.org](http://www.vietnamtripledeuce.org) for current contact information.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the Atlanta reunion a letter was read to the members at the business meeting stating my resignation from the Board of Vietnam Triple Deuce, and the Position of Chief Locator. I felt that new leadership was due, mainly because I had grown to hate the job of Chief Locator. Being turned down time after time by guys who did not want to be a part of our group for whatever reason had extinguished the fires needed to hold that position and I was not doing anything resembling a good job in that responsibility. Bill Schwindt had provided a list of 200 names and contact info, and it was not used by me past a couple of dozen frustrating phone calls because it triggered a round of PTSD in me that was very hard to deal with. I finally sat it down and haven't picked it up since. In this newsletter you will find an article about a letter campaign that may produce positive results, or may not. But it is a step in the right direction, and involves a group effort in finally creating an accurate list of those who do want to be members of VN222 and those who do not. Good luck to you Points of Contact, and thanks to you Lynn.

I have agreed to fill an "Interim" position of President of VN 222 until the position can be filled by the Board. There needs to be a guy who follows up the few new finds we do get these days, and write a letter for each newsletter. I have enjoyed those parts of the job immensely for most of the last 20 years. There are other responsibilities that come up, but locating will not be one of them for me. I'm going to be one of the first to welcome any new Brothers the locating creates, and will follow up those contacts, but finding them will now be a group effort by the organization, not one man's quest. Heck, I might even be the old goat standing in front of the next business meeting trying not to make a fool of himself in front of his "other family". Thanks to the Board for another chance...

**Dick Nash, A. & HHC 69**

## NEWSFLASH

The Board of Directors has unanimously approved the appointment of Dick Nash as President of the Vietnam Triple Deuce. Once it became clear to us that Dick's resignation had to do with his position as Chief Locator, (see Dick's explanation above) Dan Streit asked Dick if he would return as President. The position had not been filled by the Board because we did not have a suitable candidate. Dick agreed, the motion was made to the Board and quickly passed. We are all feeling good that Dick's absence was brief and that he has returned to the President's position.

**Jim May, Prov., Co. 1968**

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A break in format for the comments: one of the co-editors (my wife, Vera) would like to say a few things about the Women's Event at the Reunion.

Contrary to public statement, I did not volunteer to head up the ladies activity. I was drafted. My first action was to find a willing and able co-chair. Lana Marceaux from Gueydan, Louisiana helped in so many ways. It was a great opportunity to work with the gentlemen from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society (Mark Woempner and Martin Oeklaus) I think between us we broke every rule of how to host an event and had a grand time doing it. My friends helped me come up with many prizes and a few others were donated. Our theme was Heroes on the Home Front. While our main goal was to have fun while the guys were in their meeting, we also wanted to share experiences and offer the respect due to the veteran in our life.

The financial support from the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS went to provide each woman a souvenir t-shirt.

The fact that several women approached me and volunteered to serve on the planning committee for the women's activities at the next reunion speaks volumes. After conferring with Mark, the plans for the women's activities at the next reunion include having a committee of volunteers. Belinda Baker of Belton Texas will be the chair. Lupe Rosales from San Antonio, Texas and Jane Gallagher from Leesburg, Florida will assist her. Lana and I plan to provide whatever help is requested of us.

**Pictured left to right, Streit, Baker and Marceaux.**



**Dan Streit DMOR  
(with Vera Streit HMOR) D/69**

## REUNION IMPRESSIONS SHARED

This offering is just a thumbnail report on my impression of the 2018 Atlanta reunion. I'm certain that other reports will go into much greater detail than this piece.

Gail and I had an uneventful flight to Atlanta. While waiting for the hotel shuttle **Dan McDonald, Alpha Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1968-1969** came along but without his two faithful labs. Dan told how one of the labs had been killed during a home invasion. Golden, his 17 year old lab, was now accompanied by Pringle, a shepherd mix. It was good to see Dan but learning of all the upheaval in his life was unsettling. Anyway, we all got to the hotel. It was my turn to check in, and while doing so a bottle of Modelo Especial, as if by magic, appeared on my left. It wasn't magic, it was **David Milewski, Charlie Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1967-1968** who'd placed the Model on the counter. David had been sitting at the bar with wife Judy, **Bill Bukovec, Bravo Co., 1<sup>st</sup> BN, 1966-1967** and **Ed Schultz, HHC, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1967-1968** when they noticed that Gail and I enter the hotel. I knew where I'd be going once I got my luggage into the room. We sat at the bar and greeted other friends as they came along. I retrieved the merchandise boxes and Guidon cases from the secure room behind the reception desk and, with some help from my friends, brought everything to my room. **Paul Birschbach, Charlie Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN 1968**, had placed the Guidon stand in the Hospitality Suite, so I brought the Guidons cases to the Hospitality suite where **Ben Anderson, Alpha Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1968-1968** interrupted his displaying of the 25<sup>th</sup> ID's AO maps to help me assemble and display the Guidons. That done, I rejoined the unofficial greeting committee at the bar where plans for dinner were being discussed. David, Judy, Ed, Gail and I got into a Uber car and went to a Mexican restaurant for dinner. The talk was about the reunion and how we all hoped that it would be well attended by the **AFG-IRAQ 22<sup>nd</sup> Vets**. We ate too much.

Day two, Thursday, began with a bite to eat and then setting up the PX. I display at least one of everything available but leave a lot of the inventory in my room. It means going back and forth as items are needed, but it does provide for a better display and better control. Members continued to arrive and once checked in; they gravitate to the Hospitality suite looking for friends. I had the opportunity to discuss VN 222 business with other VN 222 Members. In particular, the upcoming efforts to contact as many VN 222 Vets who'd been Members or had been contacted but did not joined. Opinions and suggestions are important and many were offered.

Thursday evening found us in the banquet room for the official opening of the reunion. Tradition says that the youngest Member present and the oldest Member present join in the carving of the Hemmingway Turkey. The youngest Member, **Anthony Santiago, Charlie Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 2012-2015** was joined by **Ed Kaspernak, Alpha Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1968-1969** and **Ed Schultz, HHC, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1967-**

**1968**, both are 83 years young. **Bob Babcock, Bravo 1<sup>st</sup> BN., 1965-1967** was asked to explain the history and significance of the Hemmingway Turkey to any and all who were not familiar with the reasons for opening reunions with this ceremony. Bob provided the background and then went on to explain, in a heartfelt manner, why the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society exists and how important it is to see to the continuation of the Society so that future generations of 22<sup>nd</sup> Vets will be able to gather with others who understand and share a common interest that few others would be able to understand. Thank you Bob! I wish your message had been taped so that it could be placed on the Web Site and viewed by any and all New Finds who might wonder what the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society is about.

It was back in a Uber car for the Milewskis & Mays and off to a steak house for dinner. Once again, we ate too much. Friday started with more to eat and then it was on to Ft. Benning to visit the National Infantry Museum and the Walk of Fame where the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Monument is located. We visited the Museum proper at our leisure prior to visiting the Monument. **Jim Nelson** presented a painting he had done for **Nick Dragon, Charlie Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> BN, 1967-1968**. Nick asked that Jim offer the painting to the Museum because it was a place where the everyday activities of Soldiers who served in Vietnam could best be preserved. The painting, **Someone Had To Do It**, portrayed Nick burning latrine waste. Nick was given this job after his return from the hospital where he went when he was wounded at Ap Cho during the Tet Offensive.

For many, this was their first look at the Monument. It is an impressive display honoring every Soldier who was KIA while serving with the Regiment. I took the **WW II, VN 222** and **AFG-IRAQ** Guidons which were posted at the Monument and were used by many with their photo taking. After our return from Ft. Benning, I spent time in the Executive meeting and then went back to the PX table. More Members and guests were coming in, including **AFG-IRAQ Vets**.

The Friday evening buffet was well attended. After dinner DMOR and HMOR presentations were made. DMOR awardees were **Roger Frydrychowski, Charlie Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1965-1967**. Roger was not able to attend, however, **Dominic Rondinelli, Charlie Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 2013-2014**, offered to present Roger with his DMOR award. Both Roger and Dominic commanded Charlie Company. The second DMOR recipient was **Casey Newton, Alpha Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 2002-2006**. **Joe DiChairo, HCOR, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN CO, 2002-2004**, read Casey's Silver Star Citation as part of the presentation. Casey is truly a warrior and a credit to the long line of warriors who have served in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment. **Ashley Shepard** was the sole HMOR recipient. She was so recognized for her many years of tireless efforts with 2-22, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Family Readiness Group. Ashley has been recently recognized by President Trump for her unselfish efforts in supporting our Active Duty Soldiers. Next came the ORA awards. As usual, the story-

telling regarding encounters with the now infamous Vietnam Red Ants had the group laughing and cringing.

Saturday morning saw the 22<sup>nd</sup> Business meeting and the VN 222 Business meeting held. The activities, both present and future of both organizations were discussed. Once the VN 222 meeting was opened I read, per **Dick Nash's** request, a letter to the group in which Dick announced his resignation from the Board of Directors and President of Vietnam Triple Deuce. Dick's letter can be read in a piece that appears in this edition of the Newsletter.

The VN 222 election was held with Jim Nelson, Dan Streit, Paul Birschbach and me re-elected with Chuck Weidner joining the Board.

The Ladies Event was a BIG success; special thanks go to Vera Streit and Lana Marceaux for making it so.

The Saturday evening banquet was well attended with more Members joining the group. The count of **AFG-IRAQ Vets** was 31. You will note that I have made several mentions of the **AFG-IRAQ Vets**, this is because these young 22<sup>nd</sup> Vets are the future of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society and, as such, it is important that they understand that the Society is as much their Society as it is for WW II or Vietnam Vets. I can state, with certainty, that WW II and Vietnam Vets are looking forward to the increase in AFG-IRAQ Vets membership and participation in reunion attendance as well in managing the affairs of the Society.

**Lon Oakley** spoke at the banquet. As he did when he spoke at the visit with the Active 22<sup>nd</sup> Soldiers at Ft Drum, Lon mixed the serious with humor to keep his audience tuned in. Lon's message of the importance of the Society in providing 22<sup>nd</sup> Veterans from all eras the opportunity to meet with, support and find the common thread that brings us to better understand ourselves was well stated. Thank you, Lon.

Before the banquet was over, **Mark Woempner, HHC, 1<sup>st</sup> BN, 2001-2003**, the President of the Society, invited all of the kitchen and wait staff members to present themselves to the group so that they could be properly thanked for the fine food and service they had provided during the reunion. These fine people received a standing ovation from the Members and the Guests.

Sunday morning was filled with 'so-longs' and 'see you in Dallas in 2020,' the site of the June 2020 reunion, as Members who had to catch early flights departed the hotel. The Memorial Service was led by **Skip Fahel, Bravo Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 1967-1968**. I was asked to read the names, Company, Battalion and War of all of the Members who had passed since the last reunion. Reading the names of these men, men I have come to know, was more difficult than I had imagined. Skip, in his usual manner, displayed the rolling scroll of all of the Regiment's KIA's. It is during of this display that Members speak out the names of those

that they dearly remember who were KIA or since passed. **Jackie Belcher** led the group in the singing of *Amazing Grace*. Thank you, Jackie.

See you in Dallas,  
**Jim May, HMOR**,  
Prov. Co. 1968

## ORDER OF THE RED ANT CEREMONY HELD

As has become a reunion tradition, the ORA was awarded to 22<sup>nd</sup> Veterans at the Atlanta Reunion. Those in consideration were presented to the group at the Friday evening buffet by their Sponsors. Each, in turn, told his story of the Red Ant encounter(s) endured. The group, many of whom



relive their encounters with the Mogators while listening to the stories of others, showed their approval of everyone in consideration. All nine were awarded their ORA Medals and Parchments. The nine are: **Dave Allin**, Alpha, 2/22, 1969-1970, **Bill Christ**, Delta, 3/22, 1970-1971, **Leroy Ferguson**, Alpha, 1/22, 1970-1971, **Jim Lally**, Charlie, 2/22, 1968-1969, **Tom Largent**, Charlie, 2/22, 1967, **Jim O'Leary**, Alpha, 2/22, 1968-1969, **Joe Stull**, HHC, 2/22, 1969, **Bill Williams**, Charlie & HHC, 2/22, 1968-1969, **Rob Zylman**, Charlie, 1968-1969.

**Jim May, HMOR**  
Prov., Co. 1968



## THANK YOU OFFERED

To all I am honored to be in receipt of the "Distinguished Member of the Vietnam Triple Deuce" award. The plaque will be displayed prominently in my home.

Thank you so much for the Honor.

Steve Irvine, B / 68-69

## DID YOU ATTEND THE REUNION?

Do you have pictures to share on our website? If so, please forward them to the webmaster: [svirvine@gmail.com](mailto:svirvine@gmail.com). Send as jpg or gif and I will convert to the right format. Any information you have that identifies the picture, or names of attendees is much appreciated!

## LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

First, thank all of you for your service and sacrifice. We owe you a debt of gratitude

I am looking for anyone who may have served with my uncle **Robert Eugene Romero**, HHC, 2ND BN, 22ND INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION) in Vietnam.

He was a medic who died in Binh Duong on December 3, 1969. I never met the man but am very interested in speaking with anyone who may have served with him. Thank you for your time.

Chad Blakely  
[blakely737@gmail.com](mailto:blakely737@gmail.com)

## REMEMBERING ROBERT FULLMER

Chad Fullmer is the Nephew of **Robert Fullmer**, Killed in action June 6, 1969. He was in a night logger outside of Dau Tieng when they were hit. He and three others were killed (probably by mortar). **Terry Jenkins** and **John Craig** were the two other KIAs that evening. Robert Fullmer was awarded a bronze star for Valor as a result of his actions before dying. If anyone can add information to his tour of duty, please send a note to the webmaster at [svirvine@gmail.com](mailto:svirvine@gmail.com) and I will forward the information to Chad.

Any information would be appreciated, including his platoon or squad designation, information about the night of June 6, 1969, or comments. If you knew Robert and are

willing to share anything you may also include your email/ phone number which will be forwarded to Chad

Thank you  
Steve Irvine, B / 68-69

## NEEDING HELP TO LOCATE

**Willis "Bill" Cobb** would like to locate a couple of vets he served with in Headquarters Company in 69-70. They are **Jerry Dominy** from either Gary or Carthage, Texas, and **Bob Hurd** from Chicago. Anyone who can help is asked to contact Bill at 252 827 4352 or write to him at 307 North 9<sup>th</sup> St. Pinetops, North Carolina.

Dick Nash, A & HH/ 69

## HARTT HOSPITALIZED AND TO REHAB

Gary Hartt (A co. 2/22 Vietnam) was hospitalized late in November and plans were for him to move to a rehabilitation unit in the hospital. The November 25 message stated " Right now he's starting PT rehab for coordination due to his swelling legs from a fall and low blood count. "

Mad Doc Matz, Clarence Simpson, and Gary's wife Scarlett will provide updates.

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother... Henry V (Act IV) - William Shakespeare

Deeds Not Words

## SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT

On October 8, 2018, at the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia, the painting, *Somebody's Got to Do It*, was presented to Scott Daubert, museum director. The museum also has another painting by Jim Nelson, *Trapezoid*, which is a combat historical painting. The recent acquisition owned by Nick Dragon, was painted by Jim Nelson twenty years ago and was included in 19 shows nationwide. The commissioned work is one of the best liked paintings by Vietnam Veterans. It depicts Nick Dragon of Hazel Park, MI, and Greg Hall of Calumet, OK. Both served 1967-68, based at Camp Rainier, Dau Tieng, Republic of South Vietnam. The painting shows a base camp latrine. Each day soldiers were assigned to the distasteful task to remove the drums for the burning of the waste. The waste was doused with diesel and aviation fuel and set on fire. A soldier (in this painting Nick Dragon) had to monitor the fire, occasionally stirring the contents to ensure that it had air and would properly burn. The odor is something that most veterans that served in Vietnam can remember. It took Nick four months to talk Nelson into painting the scene. Jim Nelson painted it from memory.



Nelson's work is now in permanent collections in 13 military museums. Also present at the ceremony were Mark Woempner, President of the 22 Infantry Society, and Skip Fahel.

**The Next Best Reunion Ever is being planned for the Spring of 2020 in Dallas. Start making your plans to attend now. You won't be sorry!**

## A MOVING CEREMONY

On November 9, 2018 our local Charter School held a Veterans Day Assembly to honor all of the veterans in our semi-rural California location. It was heart-warming. Hundreds of children ages 5 to 8<sup>th</sup> grade attended, with about 50 local veterans. The children all stood, hands over hearts, and said the pledge of allegiance. Led by a wonderful teacher, the children proudly sang the National Anthem. We all received one or more personalized cards from the children thanking us for our service, along with an appropriate fresh flower. They recited poems, sang other songs, and in the end, all of them walked out of the assembly after first shaking our hands, looking us in the eye and thanking us for our service. I shook over two hundred hands that day, and there was a smile on every face. To cap it all off, one of the teachers announced that her daughter had joined the Marines. There were tears in a lot of eyes that day. There is hope for America when children like this are being raised by patriotic parents and teachers.

**Steve Irvine, B/ 68-69**

## NEW CO-EDITOR NAMED

Isn't it amazing that when one Brother's load gets too heavy, another walks beside him and helps him carry it. Dick Nash referenced the burden his PTSD was having on his contributions to the organization. Likewise, keeping up with the duties of Newsletter Editor and maintaining the current Triple Deuce Rosters, my level of performance was not personally satisfactory. My PTSD was overwhelming. I asked a qualified member for assistance and without hesitation he said yes. You will be hearing a lot more about David Allin. He was A Company 25th ID 69-70. For now he will be receiving articles you would like to submit for newsletter publication. His e mail is

dnjallin@comcast.net.

**Dan Streit D/69**

**If you receive the newsletter in the printed format and there is a 2018 on your address label, your dues are due.**

**Ed. Note:** I was contacted by Bill Moriarty, Retired Marine. He was trying to get factual information about someone KIAed in Vietnam. In an internet search for the unit indicated on the grave marker Moyer found the Triple Deuce website. When he called me, I referred him to **Bill Allison**. Bill had him contact **Jim Nelson**. The following is an article from a local newspaper reprinted with permission.

**County's only known Vietnam-era combat death**

## A VETERAN REMEMBERED: 50 YEARS LATER



to Gibson's surviving Army friends from California, Nebraska, Alabama and Kansas for their help in making sure he was not forgotten.



Valor etched in stone — Corporal Gibson's name takes its place among the list of the county's lost sons.



Thirty miles from Saigon — US Army Corporal John A. Gibson is shown deployed in the Binh Duong Province of South Vietnam shortly before he was killed in combat on Nov. 25, 1967. The Grandin resident's name was recently added to Carter County's veterans' memorial, the only Vietnam combat casualty listed on the monument.

Another name has been quietly added to the Carter County Veterans' Memorial— 50 years after the young man fell while in service to our country. The honored veteran is US Army Corporal **John A. Gibson**, a Grandin man who was killed in combat on Nov. 25, 1967 during the Vietnam War. Assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, Corporal Gibson was serving as a machine gunner in the Binh Duong Province of South Vietnam in the fall of '67. Military records state that Gibson was working as part of a small unit tasked with recovering the bodies of two fallen soldiers lying in a thick tangle of vegetation when his unit came under intense fire from an enemy bunker hidden in the undergrowth less than 100 feet away. During the ensuing firefight, Corporal Gibson was killed when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Though only 19 at the time of his death, the young soldier had fathered a daughter, Michele Wilder of Ellsinore. Tragically, his death came before her birth. Gibson's body now rests in Doniphan. In addition to being added to Carter County's "Doughboy" monument, Gibson is also memorialized on "The Wall," the National Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC. His name may be found on Panel 30E, Line 84. Gibson has the distinction of being the only known Vietnam War combat loss from Carter County. While his name should have been added to the memorial years ago, details of his service were hard to come by until recently. The recovery of Gibson's service information is thanks to research by Bill Moriarty and the Van Buren American Legion Post 333. The Legion expresses thanks

A fallen veteran remembered — Michelle Wilder, daughter of US Army Corporal John A. Gibson (killed in combat during the Vietnam War), receives a posthumous combat infantryman's badge and purple heart on behalf of her fallen father, as well as a Gold Star Flag for her own family. Gibson —along with many other locals who have served our country— was honored during East Carter R-2 School's annual veterans' assembly held Friday morning. Also pictured are ECHS Student Council representative Sean Sullivan (embracing Wilder), as well as R-2 High School Principal John McKinney (left foreground) and Superintendent Dr. Richard Sullivan. John Gibson's story was featured in the July 12, 2018 edition of The Current Local, made possible with the help of veterans' advocate Bill Moriarty. Van Buren R-1 School's veterans' assembly is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 8 beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the new gymnasium

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## INACTIVE MEMBERS PROJECT INITIATED

The Members present at the Triple Deuce Business Meeting were told about a project to re-connect with Inactive Members. Inactive Members are Vietnam Triple Deuce Vets who were either contacted but did not join or who were once Active Members but dropped their membership.

The purpose of the Project is based on the Mission of the Vietnam Triple Deuce, to bring those who served together back together. The more in common that the Active Member has with the Inactive Member the better chances are in fulfilling our mission.

The project will involve mailing questionnaires to the nearly 700 Inactive Members asking that they tell us why they are not Active Members and to seek their opinions and requests that might bring them to Active status and to join us at the next reunion. The questions have not yet been decided upon, however, **Lynn Dalpez** has agreed to be the lynchpin for the project. The mailing will have a stamped addressed return envelope so that the questionnaires can be easily returned to Lynn. Lynn will examine the questionnaire and seek out any required information with regard to those who wished to find a Buddy, but didn't. Or, learned that the Member is deceased or whatever else might be asked about by the Inactive returning the questionnaire. Lynn will then forward the information to the Point of Contacts for the respective Companies for further development. At this point the POCs may contact the Inactive Member directly or seek out someone who served in the Company in question for assistance. Assistance will be sought from someone who served in the Company at the same time as the Inactive Member. It is the Board Members' belief that the closer we get to making contact with those who have the most in common in the Inactive Member, the better the results will be.

This project will be undertaken in early January 2019. This will give us time to formulate the right questions, get the mailing process finalized and not interfere with Holiday mail and activities.

So, if you receive a call from your Company POC asking that YOU contact an Inactive Member from the same time frame as your dates in Triple Deuce, please be prepared to assist.

**Jim May, HMOR**  
Prov., Co. 1968

## THE REAL RED ANT STORY TOLD

My first Vietnam Triple Deuce Reunion was 4-6 October 2018 in Atlanta. On the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup>, I attended my first presentation of the Order of the Red Ant. I had been given advance notice of the event the evening before. Therefore, I was not entirely surprised when Ben Anderson sponsored me as a recipient. However, after hearing the Red Ant stories of the other recipients, I was awed and somewhat concerned about relating my Red Ant story. I did manage to say something, but it wasn't the real story.

Before I tell you the real story, I want to dispel what I believe is a myth. During Ben's introduction, he stated that in September 1968 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of Alpha Company Triple Deuce got a new leader, "a lieutenant with red hair". By then, Ben had had me stand up, and I'm sure most of the audience was thinking "What hair?" Well 50 years ago there was hair up there and it was red. Back then, some of the troops in 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon thought this was important. They noticed that the Red Ants bit them but not me. And a legend about red hair began. You see, I was the only red-head in the platoon and Red Ants never bothered me. As time passed, other members of the platoon had their incidents with Red Ants and I still didn't have any. The legend grew until the Platoon was convinced that these Red Ants could actually see in color. To them, anything that was red was Red Ants and they never attacked themselves as that would be a form of species suicide. This idea made sense because the jungle growth was always green. Except for Red Ants there was no red in the jungle. But that is not the real story, it's only a myth. Here's the real story.

As I said that night in Atlanta, this is going to be a different kind of Red Ant story. You won't hear me saying I had to drop my pants to try to get the ants off me. As Ben said, I was the lieutenant, an officer. And an officer would never do anything like that in front of the troops!

But let me back up and start from the beginning when I first encountered Red Ants. I went to Basic Training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, Advanced Infantry Training at Fort McClellan in Alabama, and Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning in Georgia. All of these were in the southern United States, places with more than their share of unfriendly insects. But I don't remember having to deal with any Red Ants there.

My first meeting with Red Ants was in Central America, Fort Sherman in Panama. All the Infantry officers had to go to Jungle School there, before Vietnam, to learn how to survive in the jungle. Among many other bad things in Panama were two kinds of ants; big nasty black ones that just loved to bite, and bigger nastier red ones that lived to bite. The red ones were called Mo-Gators. They are distant, i.e., far away, cousins of the Red Ants in Vietnam. I



don't know what the "Mo" stood for, but the "Gator" part was because once they bit you, they wouldn't let go, even when you killed them. This is just exactly what alligators do. They bite and don't let go until they drown their prey. Everybody in the class was warned to watch out for them and stay away at all costs. The sergeants teaching the classes and overseeing the training exercises told the lieutenants that Mo-Gators would seek out officers to bite them, so we should be especially watchful of them. Some of the lieutenants believed them and some didn't. They thought the NCOs were trying to give the officers a hard time. Those that didn't pay attention paid for their mistake. Some of them almost cried when dozens of Mo-Gators kept biting them.

I only had one direct encounter with Mo-Gators and quickly learned to detect and avoid them. This was my first lesson in surviving in the jungle. I was lucky. It was daylight so I could see them and I only got bit a couple of times. I was able to move away quickly and then stayed away. One incident was definitely enough! I don't know if the sergeants were kidding about the Mo-Gators looking for officers to bite, but I did see officers being bitten by ants all over them. Actually, I never did see these ants bite anyone but officers at Jungle School. Of course, all the students were lieutenants. And the sergeants obviously knew how to avoid the ants, so that proves nothing about Panama Red Ants choosing to bite officers rather than the troops. But they certainly did bite officers.

Anyway, now I'm in Vietnam at the in-country officer receiving station somewhere near Saigon. In-coming and DEROS-ing officers were all mixed together waiting for flights in and out of country. One of the captains waiting there came over to me and said, somewhat tauntingly "I can tell from the look on your face you are an FNO. You just got here from Jungle School, didn't you?" At first I was a bit taken a-back. I didn't know what an FNO was. But by the way he pronounced it, I didn't think I appreciated the reference. But he was a captain, and I had just been to Jungle School, so I replied "Yes". He then said in a slightly more friendly tone of voice: "I see that you are an Infantry lieutenant. That means you are going to the field, not to a cushy rear area job. As a lieutenant, there are lots of things you have to be concerned with. Obviously you need to worry about the NVA and the VC. Good luck with them. And the Vietnam jungle is a carbon copy of the Panama jungle. But there is one difference here, that's the Red Ants. The Red Ants in Panama are totally wild. They will attack anyone. The Red Ants in Vietnam are somewhat different. I won't say they are civilized, because they definitely are not. Actually, militarized is a better term. This country has been at war, more or less, for hundreds and hundreds of years. That is tens of thousands of generations of Red Ants. And over that incredibly long period of time, the Vietnamese Red Ants somehow learned to distinguish the troops from the officers. The Red Ants also learned that it wasn't smart to bite the officers because if they did, the officers would get their troops to find and kill them. The Red Ants also

learned that it was OK to bite the troops because the officers only yelled at the troops to "get away from the ants and move out". When the Red Ants attack, you have to loudly order your troops to "Get Away from the Ants and Move Out! The Red Ants will still attack and bite the troops, but they will leave you alone ... guaranteed." With that, the captain left to catch his plane back to "The World".

I was a little confused. I wanted to believe the captain's Red Ants story. It would be really nice if true. But I doubted that an insect could be that smart. I thought he was having some fun with an FNO, whatever that was. Anyway, the captain was right about one thing. I wouldn't be getting a rear area job, so I'd find out soon enough.

The look on my face must have changed to frustration after the captain left because a much more friendly lieutenant came over and started talking. He had done his time as an Infantry Platoon Leader and was going home. He told me I didn't have to take being told I was an FNO from anyone, even if they out-ranked me. He told me that FNO stands for Friggen (not the other "F" word - we were officers and wouldn't use that word) New Officer and is a total insult. He also told me the eight most important words for an Infantry Platoon Leader in Vietnam were:

**Get Away From The Ants and Move Out !!!**

**Jim O'Leary, A /68-69**

## **NOVEMBER 8, 1968 REMEMBERED**

Some 50 years ago I was in Vietnam assigned to the 2/22 Mechanized Inf., A Co. 2nd Plt., 2nd Sqd.

Alpha Co. was split up that day when the dismounts were Eagle Flighted out of Fire Support Base Wood II and the tracks stayed back. The tracks departed to a location in a clearing somewhere in the Boi Loi Woods in order to set up a laager site which was to be the dismounts' destination later that evening. We were to remain at this location for a few days. Now the story unfolds.

Capt. Makita was the C.O., I was told, and we had picked up **Earnest Plattner** of the 44th Scout Dog Platoon and his dog to come along. I had only been in country for a couple of months and hadn't got use to the heat and humidity, and I thought I was going to die from it that day.

It didn't take long before the dog began to alert. Each time the dog alerted we would stop and recon the area. This continued most of the day and each time we found signs of Charlie having been in the area but no Charlie. The jungle and RED ANTS were thick in most of the area which made our progress slow and exhausting.

It was starting to get late and we were still far away from our objective. The jungle had gotten even thicker, to the point that we were forced onto a trail. The dog continued to alert and we continued to recon the area when he alerted. We moved on and the dog alerted again, but before we had time to react all hell broke loose. We all assumed the prone position and were pinned down, trying to become part of the earth with our helmets covering our heads while the brush was being mowed down by the incoming gun fire just inches above us. The guy behind me (John Fletz) reached up to break off a limb that was hanging down on his neck with RED ANTS on it, and when he did he was shot through the palm of his hand. By the time we could regroup and begin to return fire it was over. The guy in front of me had been shot in the face and his eyes were full of blood so he could not see. I low-crawled to him and began trying to clean his face and assure him he would be ok. I bandaged him up the best I could and got him as comfortable as possible. I then noticed the Scout Dog was nervously pacing about appearing dazed and confused. I crawled up to the dog and carefully lowered him to the ground. He was confused, disorientated and extremely nervous. Come to find out his handler, Earnest Plattner, was KIA. **Captain Makita** had been shot several times and the medic, John Lutze (Attached from Delta Co.) was KIA. I also learned later that **James Hardman** and **Don Hertrich** had also been killed.

We had several others that had been wounded so we began chopping down the bush in order to make a clearing for the medevac helicopters so they could come in and take the KIA's and wounded out of this hell of a place. By the time we got everyone medevac'd out it had gotten dark. The next thing I heard was the acting CO (Don't know who that was either) called out to say, "2nd platoon, 2nd squad, you got point." I looked around and all that was left of my squad was me and my squad leader **Jim Heaser**. Needless to say you know who was chosen to lead us out of this dark and smelly area. Jim pointed me in the right direction and off we went. We could smell the stench of where Charlie had set up camp. We learned later that I walked them right through the middle of their camp. It was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face and the only thing I had as a directional point was the honking of a horn from one of the APC's that was at the laager site we had left from earlier that day. We slowly worked our way into a clearing and realized we had finally made it to our objective. The barbed wire, Claymores, and napalm had already been put into place so we knew we would be here all night.

The squad leaders went to their squad leaders meeting while the rest of us got a hot meal and some well-needed rest because we knew we were in for a long night. The squad leaders finally returned from the meeting and indicated we had a good chance of getting hit that night but we had to send out listening post anyway. Well, guess what: 2nd and 3rd squads had LP duty so guess who had LP from the 2nd squad. Jimmy Terrell, from the 3rd squad, and I prepared to go out on the LP and luckily we had a

standup, sand bagged bunker that had been dug earlier that day. We had claymores and napalm to our left and right. We also had a radio to squelch to check in with the APC's. Needless to say Jimmy and I were scared stiff and stood back to back in the bunker in order to assure ourselves we would not go to sleep. Hours went by and we were seeing things move that were not even there. All of a sudden, around to our left about a quarter of the way around the perimeter, a drum of napalm and a couple of claymores were set off and the fifties started to roar. We could not see any movement but could hear sounds of Charlie walking in our sector. A few minutes went by and it was all quite again. We had no idea what all the firing was about but as long as it was quiet, Jimmy and I were as happy as anyone could be stuck out in a 48 X 24 inch bunker in the ground. After what seemed like forever the sun finally started to come up and it would not be long before we could get out of this hell hole we had just spent the last eight hours in. When we got the signal to come in we quickly gathered our belonging and returned through the barbered wire as fast as we could.

When we got back to the APC's the rest of the guys had already begun to pack everything up, for we were leaving and some of the other platoons were going to do a recon of the area from the night before. We found out later they had found RPG's lying around the area in front of the bunker Jimmy and I were in.

On Nov, 9th **Lawrence DeWitt** was KIA, attacked in his night position.

The location was reported to be in the Boi Loi Woods 5km east-northeast of Xom Bar Don 19681108.

This is what I remember of that day and if anyone out there remembers that day or that may be able to identify any of the wounded please send a shout out to me because it is a day in my life I just can't forget, and I have so many unknown answers about what took place.

**Charles "Butch" Jones** (crbutchj@aol.com)  
A / 68-. 69

# REUNITING WITH AWOL DAUGHTER

2018 has been a busy year for me. First my super wife and I celebrated 50 years of marriage in April and then on June 22, 2018, Scarlett and I became great Grandparents with the granddaughter's birth of twins a boy and girl. On Tuesday July 3, 2018, I received a life changing phone call. A woman was calling and said she believed that, she could possibly be my daughter. She told me who her mother was and I was in love with her mother, Linda Drews in 1966. In the way of background information to understand this better, I must talk about my pre-Vietnam Army experience. I was drafted on Dec 7, 1965 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of infamy) and about 3 days before Christmas we boarded an airplane from New Jersey to Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington. We arrived about 3 AM and the next morning, they told us that basic training would not start until Jan 3, 1966, so we could have leave to go home for XMAS and New Year's. In order to get leave, we had to have a paid airline ticket. Most of the guys did not have money to fly home to the East Coast or Midwest, where all the new draftees were from. (I was not in the army even one month and got screwed by them)

We received 2 weeks leave in March 1966, and 4 days were wasted in travel time. While I liked my fellow draftees, I hated the confinement of the ARMY. When I got a weekend pass in around April or May of 1966, I went to the Ft. Lewis bus terminal and saw all the GI guys getting on the buses to Seattle and Tacoma. A bus for Portland pulled in and no one boarded except for me and this guy that was with me. He turned out to be a Mama's boy from NYC and after 2 trips with him, I replaced him with my buddy Lou Gross from Michigan. I was not very sure where Portland was located, but it was where there were not a lot of GI's, and I sure needed a break from the 24/7 routine. Anyway after all these years, details are a little fuzzy, but Linda Drews and I hit it off right from the first time and just about every time I had a weekend pass, I would go see her. We were in love and the sex and companionship was great. Around July 1966, we knew our unit was headed for Vietnam. We knew some of us would die over there, but at 19 to 21 years of age, you seem to live more for the moment and do not think long term. So all the guys were looking forward to the normal 30 day leave you get when you go to an overseas assignment. So once again the Army tries to screw us. But this time we were more defiant, I kind of was the ringleader and 60 guys in the company, planned to go AWOL for the full 30 days. However, many were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half so only about 30 were AWOL for from 3 to 16 days. Our attitude was, how will they punish us send to Vietnam? We are already going. Needless to say the result was, I was given a special court martial on the ship to Vietnam reduced in rank to E-1 and fined about \$480, and supposed to go to the stockade but the sentence was suspended. We got our final leave sometime in July 1966. I spent 3 weeks in New York and

was getting hounded by the company CO by letter and phone to return. Finally, my parents were afraid I would get in deep trouble, so I left New York and flew to the west coast and stopped in Vancouver, WA to see Linda. I called the guys at Ft Lewis barracks and they told me we were all getting court martialed so there is no hurry to come back and get put on extra details.

So I stayed with Linda another 7 days. She had her 2 sons, Billy about 4 and Marty about 2. She had told me she was divorced and had kids and I did not have a problem with that. In retrospect, she had her kids there to see how we would mix together. On the day before I was leaving, after having sex, she tells me that it was unprotected and she wanted to have my baby. I told her, after Vietnam we will see about getting married but I cannot commit to anything now. After boarding the ship for Vietnam for a 20 day voyage, I wrote letters to Linda and mailed a pile when we got to Vietnam. On arriving in Vietnam, I got some letters from Linda, but then they stopped. I never heard from her again.

It turns out that Tammy is my daughter and while my wife, Scarlett of 50 years would occasionally joke that there was a possible little Gary around. I was not listed on Tammy's birth certificate as her father. Instead William Drews was listed and according to Tammy, when I was going with Linda, she was still married to him. I would not have dated her, if I had known this. Finally, when Jim McCool divorced Linda, he told Tammy that he was not her real father and she would have to find out from her mother who her real father was. Tammy asked me why I thought she stopped writing. I said that I thought maybe she just had to have the man by her and not off somewhere else. It was just my speculation but Tammy felt I had hit it right on as Linda was a party type girl past age 40. Tammy's mother Linda would not tell her who the father was. But then about a year later at around age 16, Tammy ran away from home. Her family wanted her to return to Arkansas, but she told her mother she would only come home if Linda would tell her the name of her father. She told Tammy the name and that I was from Long Island, NY. Tammy was looking for 30 years with no luck and then a couple of months ago, got the DNA test from "23 & me" Tammy got the names of about 1000 close DNA matches and came upon the daughter of my cousin Val Marz. Val's daughter gave Tammy my phone number but no told me she would call so it came as a complete surprise. Tammy was born Feb 24, 1967 while I was in Vietnam and clueless about Tammy's existence until July 3, 2018

Tammy has been a single mom and raised 3 kids ages 32 Cody, Maria age 23, and Fabian age 18.

Cody has 3 sons and an adopted daughter. Maria is in college and just finished her junior year. After graduation, she plans to work for the FBI in forensics. Fabian just graduated from high school and plans on attending college. He is taking some summer college courses to get a Head start. Tammy is planning to try ad come to Oregon in September if possible. We have pictures of Tammy and

our oldest daughter, Jessica around the age of 8-10. They are splitting images of one another. I just purchased a "23 & me" kit to cross reference DNA. It came back that Tammy was 49.9% related meaning she is my daughter.

While not good for Tammy who thought she was an only child for quite a few years, Linda Drews did me a big favor by not writing me. Being with her, would have much heartache and misery. First, I would not have married the love of my life, who put up with my unknown Vietnam PTSD for many years. Then to hear some of Tammy's stories about Linda's mothering skills. Linda was living in a SAN DIEGO apartment and left the 2 and 4 year old boys alone. It was 3 days before they were found. Bill Drews then got divorced from her and took the 2 boys to live with him. In 1969, she then married a guy named Jim McCool 3 weeks later. Tammy was then 2 and Linda shortly thereafter dumped Tammy with her Aunt Barbara for over 6 months. Tammy is coming Sept 15, 2018 for a week visit. I am excited to meet her.

**GARY HARTT, A/65-67**

## HELLOES & COMMENTS

Roger W. Frydrychowski  
Rec Pit & C Co. 4th ID, Sept 65 to 67  
804-677-4464  
[graypros@aol.com](mailto:graypros@aol.com)

### **Christopher A. Lefteroff**

C. Co. 25th ID, March 68-March 69  
313-292-7456  
[cleft47@wowway.com](mailto:cleft47@wowway.com) "I was one of the cooks for A,B,C & HQ tracks in the field for 8 months. I would like to hear from anyone who remembers me."

## GUEST BOOK HITS

### **James Denney**

Location Kokomo Ind.

Arrived at Cu Chi headquarters during Tet 68. was assigned to Alpha Company 2/22 Commanding officer Capt. Crocker. Platoon Sargent Jim Heaser. Stayed with A company for one year was with Capt. Crocker when he was killed by an over head mine believe his RTO whip antenna tripped it I then went down to long binh at the depo. Some of the other guys I can remember are Tex and Fred Galus. Sorry if I spelled any names wrong has been a long time. Jim Denney

Posted on Tuesday - Aug 21, 2018

### **James Denney**

Location A Co. 2nd. Plt. 2nd. Sqd. May 1969

Was on the track when Butch slammed it into the tree red ants went everywhere first time bitten since I was new guy on the track. Thank you Butch for the wonderful memory I got naked to along with **Jim Heaser**. Stay strong  
Posted on Tuesday - Sep 18, 2018

### **Bill "Mad Doc" Matz**

Location Nashville, Tn.

**Gary Hartt** Aco. 2/22 4th div. (Original Nelson Walker boat person in Vietnam). is in the hospital. Best wishes Gary. Get well soon.

Posted on Monday - Dec 3, 2018

## NEW FINDS

### **Thomas R. Largent**

9300 Childress Rd.  
West Paducah, KY 42086  
270-519-2516  
[tlargent@comcast.net](mailto:tlargent@comcast.net)  
C Co. 4<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> ID's Mar 67 to Dec 67

### **James A. Newell**

580 Westfield Way #6  
Pewaukee, WI 53072  
414-257-2266  
[jnewell1@wi.rr.com](mailto:jnewell1@wi.rr.com)  
Bravo Co., 1968, 25th ID.

## TAPS

Douglas Talbert  
Keedysville, MD  
B Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 66 to 67  
Died 6-7-2016

As a sergeant in the US Army, Doug was awarded the [Purple Heart](#) for his injuries sustained in Vietnam.

After serving his country, Doug was employed by Safeway as a meat department associate. For decades he was Self Employed Home Improvement Professional.

He was not a member of ether organization.

### **Jim R. Franklin**

Henderson NC,  
B Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID, Sep 68 to Aug 69  
Died May 22, 2018

Jimmy passed away on May 22, 2018 at the VAMC Hospice Center in Durham, NC. He was the victim of PTSD and Agent Orange along other complications that went along with it. He fought a good fight but could not overcome it. Just wanted you to know. He is finally at peace. By his wife Karen