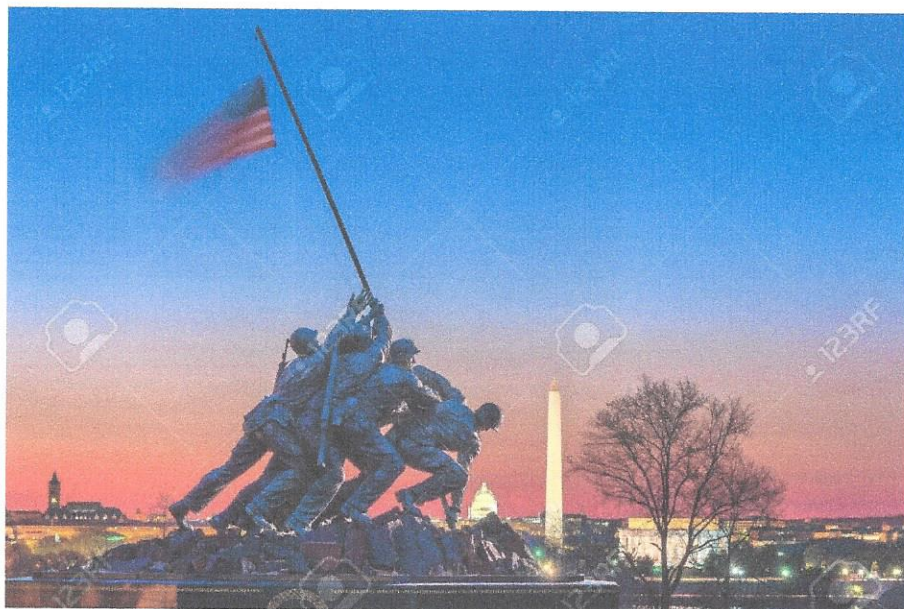


To The Marine Corp

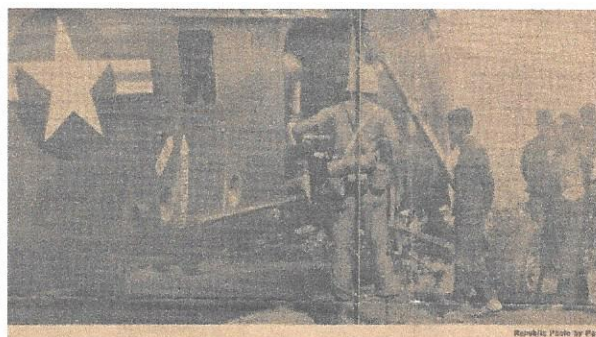
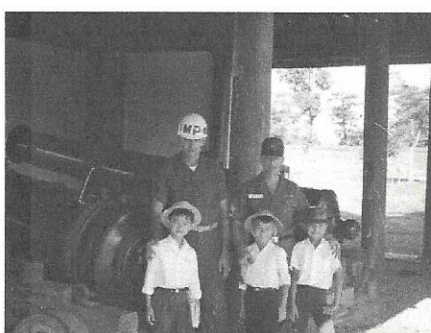
March, 1962



How do you get
From Here



To Here



Entering the Marine Corp

As I have mentioned before, at the time we were all subject to the draft. At some point, in order to stay at Iowa State, I had to get deferments from the local draft board. This was easy but of course, the draft board had my name and seemed to be extra vigilant in making sure that I was going in the service. Even before I graduated, a group of us went on a bus to Camp Dodge in Des Moines, for our draft physical. Of course I passed and there was no escape.

I was graduating in the end of winter quarter and I already had my orders for the army. I was walking down the lower level of the Memorial Union when I passed by the Marine Corp booth. A Marine Corp Captain was standing in the aisle and he threw his arm over my shoulder and told me I looked like would make a good Marine officer. All I had to do was take a short test and I could join the Marines. All it amounted to was to go through 3 months at Training and Testing (T&T) at Quantico to become an officer, then another 6 months at Basic School at Quantico and that was it.

While at Iowa State, at the time ROTC was mandatory for the first 2 years. I had been in Air Force ROTC and one of my instructors, Col. Harold Fischer, had been Iowa's only air ace from the Korean War. Naturally, listening to his stories, I decided that I wanted to be a fighter pilot. So in talking to the recruiting officer, he reassured me that I could also become a Marine pilot. It would all be simple and easy. I told him I already had my draft orders but he said he could take care of that.

So I signed up for the Marines. I was a draft-induced enlistee. I've often wondered how much of this decision came about because of Uncle Donald's experience. I was only 5-6 years old at the end of WWII but I did have a few memories of the war and Uncle Donald's experience.

Whatever, I was in the Marine Corp and I quickly received my orders. I graduated on Feb. 22, 1962 and left for Quantico on March 12, 1962.

Harold Fischer Jr., 83; pilot was Korean War ace, POW



Harold E. Fischer Jr. greeted his parents for the first time in more than two years in Swea City, Iowa, after he returned to the United States from a Chinese prison camp. (Associated Press/File 1955)

By Rebekah Davis

Washington Post / May 12, 2009

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Text size — +

WASHINGTON - Colonel Harold E. Fischer Jr., 83, a highly decorated fighter pilot who became one of the top Air Force aces of the Korean War before being shot down by the enemy and imprisoned for more than two years by the Chinese, died April 30 at a hospital in Las Vegas. He had complications from back surgery.



Discuss

COMMENTS ()

Mr. Fischer grew up on a farm in Iowa and enlisted in the Army after two years at Iowa State University. He transferred to the Air Force in 1950 and achieved a remarkable combat record during 105 missions. He was credited with

shooting down 10 Soviet-made MiG-15 fighters, enough to qualify him as a double ace.

In his last dogfight before his F-86 Sabre Jet was hit by a Chinese fighter pilot, Mr. Fischer downed his 11th MiG. He parachuted into enemy territory just north of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China, on April 7, 1953.

Mr. Fischer, a captain at the time, was taken by Chinese soldiers to a prison outside Mukden, Manchuria, where he would spend the next 25 months. Three other American pilots were being held in the same prison. The four made

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headlines across the United States as a symbol of Cold War tensions, their imprisonment continuing months past the signing of the armistice and cease-fire that stopped the fighting July 27, 1953.

Nine months into his captivity, Mr. Fischer said, he used a nail to dig a hole through the wall of his cell and escaped. Intent on stealing a MiG, he was deterred by a guard and then tried to reach the railway station, where he was recaptured and placed in solitary confinement.

He and the other pilots were released May 31, 1955, after being tried by the Chinese in a mock trial in which they were found guilty of participating in germ warfare and immediately deported to the United States.

The release of the aviators might have been a strategic move by China to reduce tensions with the United States that had risen sharply during an early crisis over the Taiwan Straits, said Doug Lantry, a research historian at the National Museum of the US Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

Harold Edward Fischer Jr. was born May 8, 1925, on a farm outside Lone Rock, Iowa. From a young age, he had an interest in aviation and often spent his 10-cent allowance to buy issues of Flying Aces, a magazine about World War I. He later accumulated model airplanes and launched them from a windmill on his family's farm.

After his release from prison in 1955, Mr. Fischer returned to Iowa State University to pursue a master's degree in industrial administration. During the Vietnam War, he flew 200 missions, primarily in helicopters. His final active-duty assignment, in 1978, was with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

His decorations included the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He leaves his companion, Tsai Lan Gerth of Las Vegas; four children, Harold III of San Antonio; Dana L. of Ames, Iowa, Kurt of Tivoli, N.Y., and Clint of Ankeny, Iowa; and five grandchildren. A daughter, Katherine, died in infancy.

Lantry, the historian, said of Fischer: "He not only survived an incredible and strange ordeal but went on to pass his knowledge of what he learned on to future airmen. That is one of the reasons he's so important to the Air Force. He gathered an awful lot of knowledge of how to fly, how to fight, and how to survive."

Mr. Fischer eventually found out that Chinese ace Han Decai was credited with shooting him down in 1953.

"When I found out that Han had been given credit for me, I tried to contact him through Chinese embassies," Mr. Fischer said. "In 1996, I joined a group of [World War II-era] Flying Tiger pilots who had been invited to visit China. There, I met General Han and presented him with an F-86 model. We've met again since then. And we have become friends." ■

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1. Received these orders at _____ on _____
 at the following hour _____
 (Place) (Date)
 (Time)

LOY E. COOK
BY DIRECTION

Arrival at Quantico & T&T

As you can see, we arrived at Quantico at about 11:00 in the evening and were hustled into what were called cattlecars. These were rudimentary buses with hard seats, the last word in efficiency. All of a sudden, we seemed to have become an irritation to the NCO's who were herding us around. We were issued Marine Corp issue clothing and escorted to our squadbay. Aside from being impatient and impolite, all went well. I didn't sleep much and about 5 the next morning, it began. We had become maggots. We had become members of B company, 4th platoon.

Spoiler alert- Of the original 40 members of our platoon, 31 graduated to become 2nd Lieuts. Which figures out to be about 77% graduation rate.

So much for the recruiting officer's reassurances about how easy it was. Worse, if you washed out, you didn't go home, you were now signed up for 3 years as an enlisted man. Needless to say, I was in a constant state of worry that I would become one of the failures. And it seemed very arbitrary. If the NCO's got it in for you, you could be gone.

But as time went on, I seemed to be surviving. No-one seemed to have me in their sights, no one was harassing me. But I allowed myself to become confident. Big mistake. It was after a couple of months and we were sent to the firing line for rifle qualification. I enjoyed the snapping in, the shooting, the work in the butts. And my shooting was going well. The grades are sharpshooter, marksman, and rifle expert was the highest. Unfortunately, on qualification day I shot a 189, unqualified. I became the biggest maggot in all of Quantico. All of a sudden my inspections were unsat., I was singled out for the worst kind of abuse. I actually thought that it was over. But I believe that somewhere in the high command, the platoon NCO's were overruled and it was decided that they weren't going to throw me out because I didn't qualify with the rifle. And because it was getting late in the program, we had already been sized for our officer uniforms and this could be a problem.

But there was to be one more humiliation. We had 2nd Lt.s as platoon commanders although it was rare to ever see one of them. Anyway, as I was racing up to the squadbay, one of these Lt.s braced be up against the bulkhead. I was informed if they had had just one more week I would have been gone. He informed me that he felt that he hadn't done his job. His job was to root out our birds like me. It was just a shame that the Marine Corp would have to put up with a maggot like you. All the time I'm shouting "Yes, Sir" at the top of my lungs as was protocol. By the time it was over and I got to the squadbay, I could see that my platoon mates had heard the whole thing. No-one said anything and they averted their eyes.

Oh, I suppose I looked good at graduation, and Lloyd & Dorothy came to visit, and I was commissioned a 2nd Lieut. But I had been hurt, partly because of my own failure.



"B" COMPANY
TRAINING AND TEST REGIMENT
MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

FOURTH FLATOON

NAME

NAME

X ASHLEY Kermit C _____	X McILWAIN John F _____
✓ ATKINSON III James E _____	X McKINLEY Clark A _____
X BOLING Frank V _____	✓ MONROE David C _____
X BURKS Brian J _____	✓ NEGELE Thomas J _____
✓ X CHAGNON John F _____	✓ NOYES James H _____
X CLUFF Michael L _____	✓ OWENS Louis W _____
X COOPER Joseph F _____	✓ PETERSON Carrol F _____
X DAVENPORT Roy L _____	X RIDDLE Ernest B _____
X EDMUNDS Charles F _____	X SAHNO William _____
X FEELEY Jr. Leo T _____	X SAVELL Don D _____
X FLYNN Daniel B _____	X SCHWENDLER Carl G _____
X GRIFFIN James D _____	✓ SCOTT Dennis N _____
X HALL Charles H _____	X SPARKS James D _____
X HAMMES Richard B _____	✓ X SUTTON Rollin A _____
X HENDRIX John W _____	X STIMSON Harry E _____
X HENRY Billy C _____	X STUCKEY James E _____
X HILL Solomon P _____	X STOLPMAN Ronald B _____
HILLIS Claude D _____	X TURBAK Charles D _____
X JAMES Richard M _____	X VAY Leslie R _____
X LECHTENBERG Jerome E _____	X ZETZMAN Wayne F _____

✓ X Shekkin

Name STIMSON, H.E.	Plt 4	Co B	Class 3070C		
Type of Observation: Close ☐ Casual ☐ Incident ☒	Situation: GEAR ADRIFT	Date 3 MAY 62			
LEGEND: 1-Poorest; 2-B Ave.; 3-Ave.; 4-A Ave.; 5-Best					
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
COMPARATIVE INTELLIGENCE—assimilates and utilizes instruction quickly; readily grasps technical military information; sees all aspects of a problem; alert.	X				
COMMAND PRESENCE—bearing and neatness create a positive favorable impression; appears composed and confident in front of troops; firm, clear voice; uses acceptable language.					
PERSONALITY—a likable person; gets along well with his peers; sincere; enthusiastic.					
JUDGEMENT—usually makes proper decisions; actions are carefully considered, not based on impulse.	X				
TACT—capable of directing others with a minimum amount of friction or resentment; considerate; courteous.					
INITIATIVE—perceives what must be done and commences a course of action; seeks out and readily accepts responsibility; keeps informed of daily schedule, uniform, and duty assignments; resourceful.		X			
DEPENDABILITY—consistent from day to day; possesses a high sense of duty and is exact in details; does his job whether being observed or not; perseverent.	X				
DECISIVENESS—makes decisions promptly and expresses them clearly and forcefully; does not become erratic under stress or in emergencies; positive.					
FORTITUDE—possesses the physical and moral courage to face danger or criticism with firmness and calmness; possesses the mental and physical stamina to endure fatigue, distress, and hardship.					
ATTITUDE—constantly trying to improve himself; accepts constructive criticism without resentment; willingly and readily follows orders; attentive; highly motivated.	X				
REMARKS:	OVER-ALL PERFORMANCE RATING: 1.2				
YOU LEFT YOUR NOTEBOOK ON YOUR BACK WHILE YOU WERE AT CHOW. YOU HAVE BEEN HERE 8 WEEKS & STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENTION TO DETAILS REFER TO STUDENT REGS PARA 0311.2					
SIGNATURE J.C. Sullivan		Rank 2/LT		Initials	

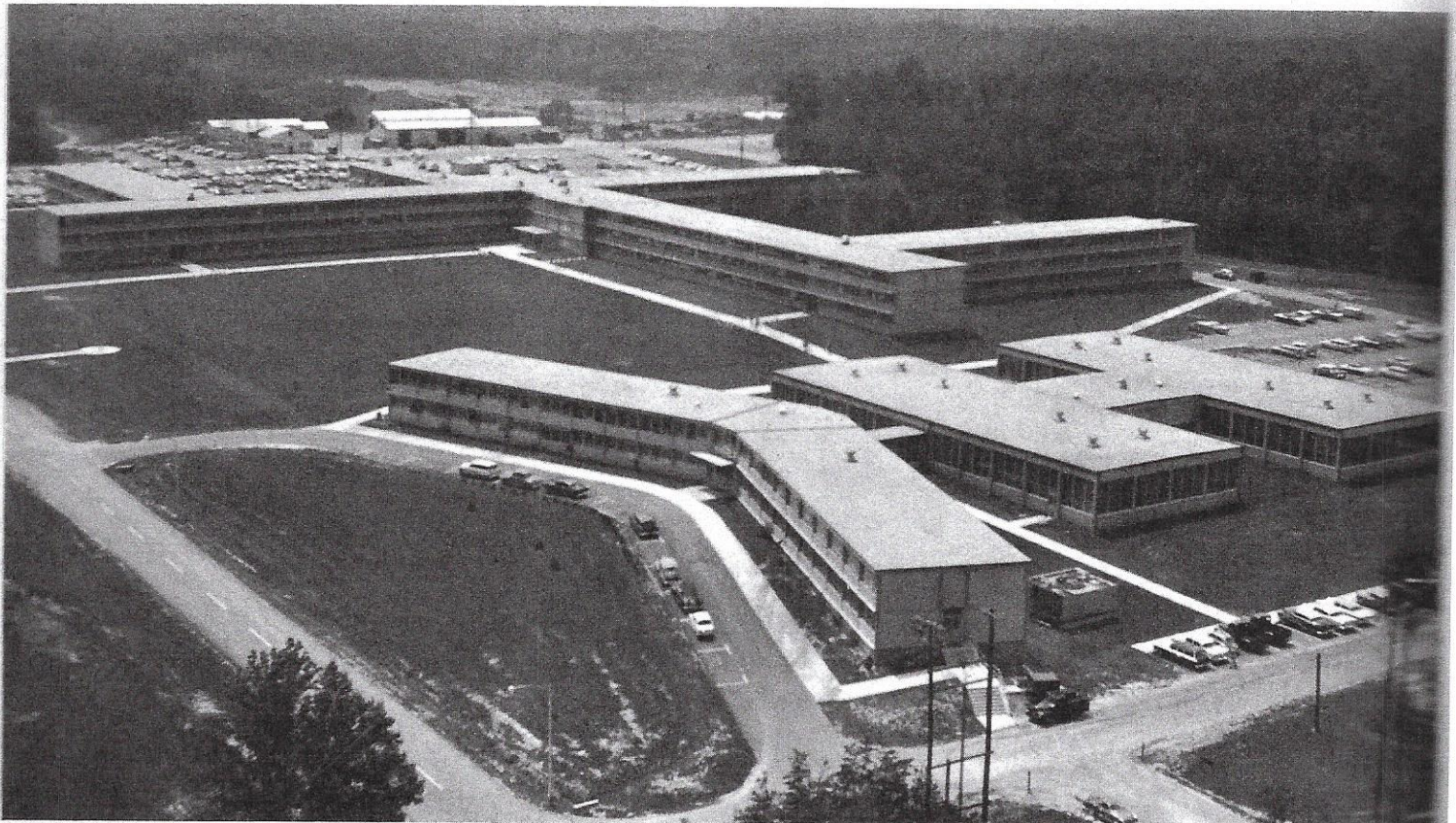


Officer country

Here, after graduation from college, we begin the six-month Basic School as Marine Officers

The mission of the Basic School: "To educate newly commissioned officers in the high standards of knowledge, esprit de corps and leadership traditional in the Marine Corps with particular emphasis on the duties and responsibilities of a rifle platoon commander."

The rifle platoon is the bed-rock of the Marine Corps, and every Marine ground officer receives this training. This is leadership training at its finest and no matter what your job, you'll put these high standards to work.



Basic School

Basic School at Quantico was definitely military with lectures, physical training, and everything you would expect in a military installation. On the other hand, the BOQs were two man rooms, the usual routine was classes in morning and afternoon, and the evenings and weekends were ours to use as we saw fit.

Of course, without a car, we usually had to carpool to get anywhere. And it was possible to travel alone by getting to the train station where we could travel up and down the coast. One of our favorite weekends was to travel to Ocean City, Maryland where we often stayed at the Myrtle Hotel, which was not exactly what you would expect as a hotel but served our needs.

Also, during this time, I made several trips to Washington DC, either by myself or with several others. I visited the capitol and the Smithsonian and several monuments. I also went down the coast to visit Williamsburg and the battleship North Carolina.

All in all, Basic School was a kind of relief after T&T. I also had very complex eye examination and was accepted for flight school at Pensacola. I also sang in the men's chorus and we did perform somewhere in Washington, DC.

We also had our first "flap". We were at Norfolk and checked into quarters for amphibious training at Little Creek when the Cuban Missile Crisis hit. We had to move into other quarters because the civilians were being evacuated from Guantanamo. So the evening was spent gathered around the TV listening to President Kennedy warning the Russians. The babies were crying in the lower level as we tried to get some sleep. And of course, the rumors began. We would be immediately returned to Quantico, graduated, and sent to the fleet.

Of course, as you know, the flap died down and we returned to Quantico, although we didn't get our amphibious training. The day we arrived at Norfolk, ships lined the piers, and there was great activity. The morning after the President's speech, every major ship was gone, taken to sea and dispersed for protection. Ergo, no amphibious training. I learned one thing from the Cuban missile crisis. The military can look pretty sleepy but when aroused, it can act very fast.

Graduation was on the horizon and I was feeling very good. Bad idea. The occasion was the Marine Corp Birthday ball and I signed up to be a rope-bearer. In the meantime the opportunity came to go up to New York for R&R with several other Marines with a fellow Marine who came from Manhattan. Of course, I had the conflict with the Birthday Ball. So someone found a replacement for me as rope-bearer and we were off for New York and a friendly welcome from our hosts.

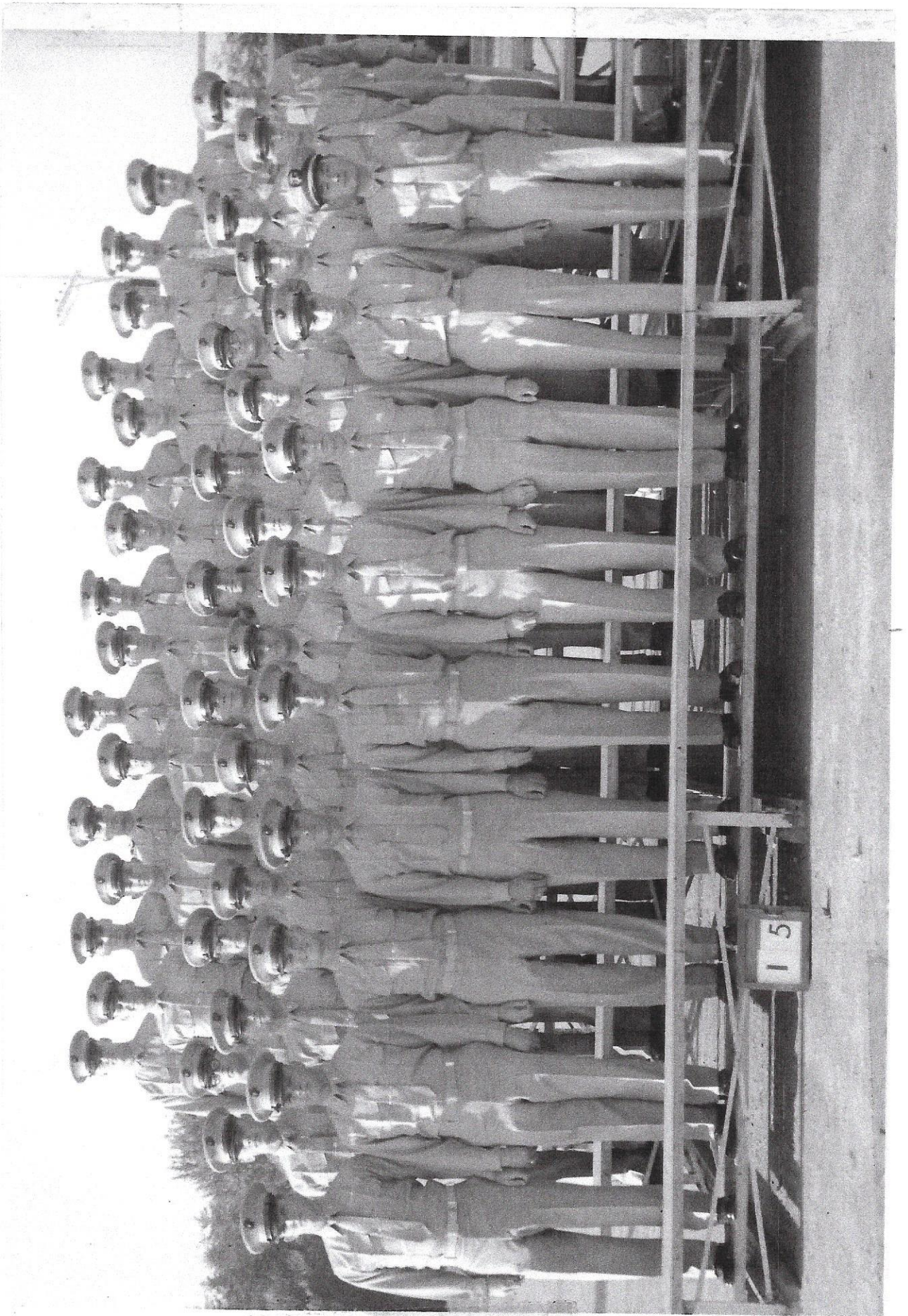
The next Monday morning I was called out of class and had to brace at attention while I received a terrible dressing down. As you probably have guessed, my voluntary replacement had found other things to do and didn't go to the Birthday Ball. Once again, I was a disgrace to the Marine Corp, I was a maggot that had somehow had slipped through the cracks. That was

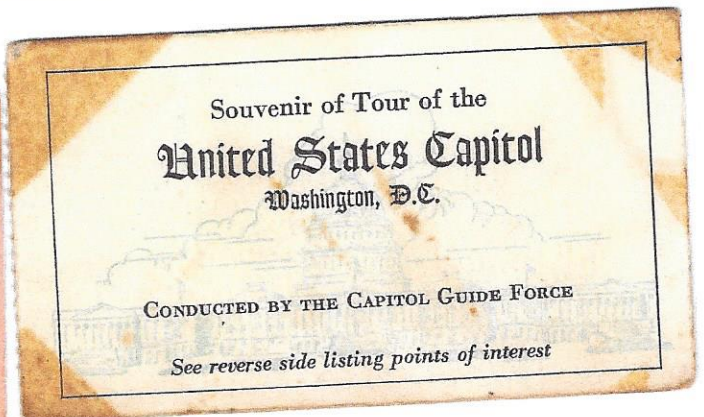
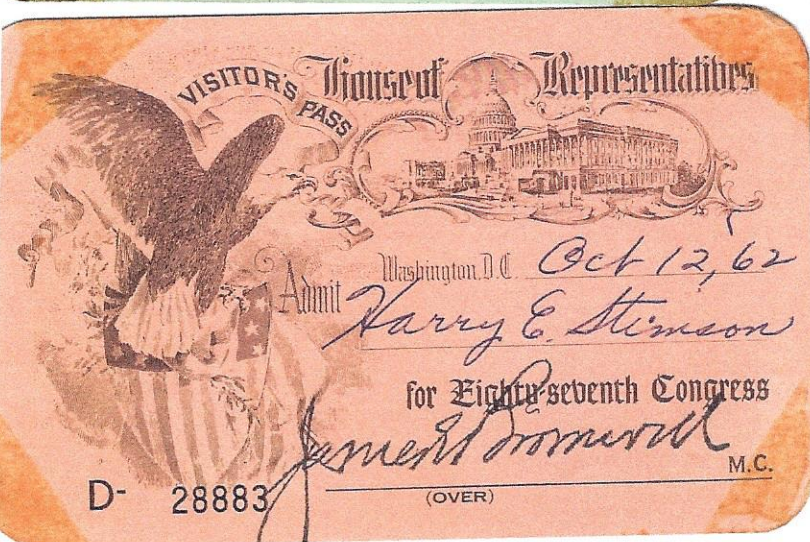
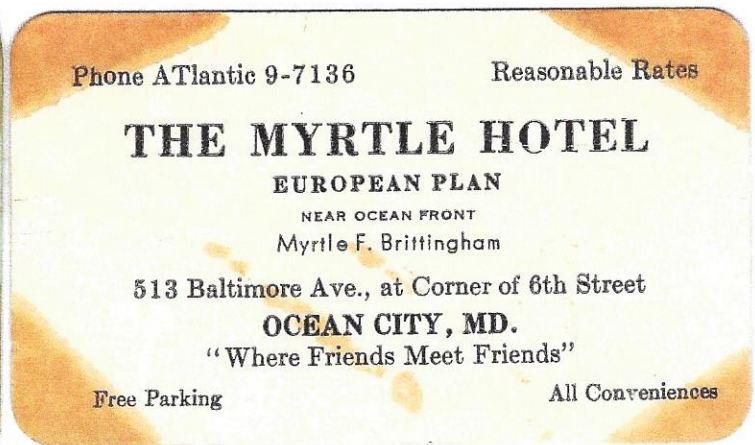
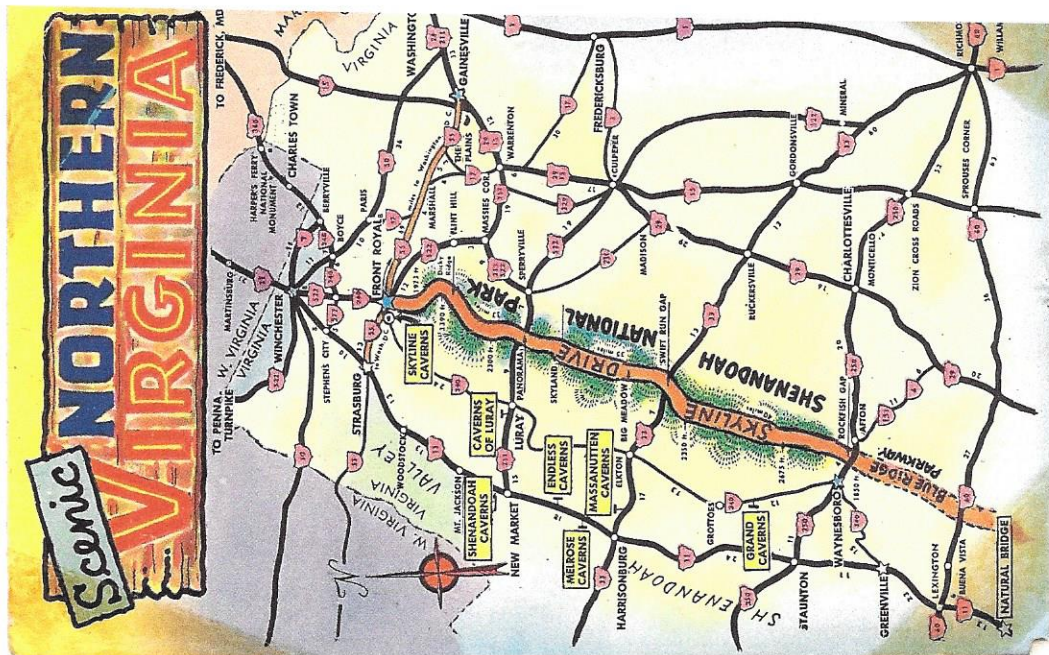
one of the purposes of Basic School to root out any shitbirds. He added that I couldn't even shoot the rifle. I was to pack my bags and would be immediately released from Basic School. "Pack your bags and get out".

I got back to class and told my friends what had happened. It was a little reassuring as they commiserated with me. All day I waited as classwork continued. All that night I couldn't sleep. The next day I still waited. And as the days continued, I began to realize that my friends had been right, I wasn't going to be thrown out of Basic School because I didn't attend the Birthday Ball. The worst part of these dressing downs is that I was at least partially guilty. But it hurt badly. And part of me was tempted to believe that I "was" a shitbird.

I want to mention our graduation dinner, presided over by Wallace M. Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corp. It was one of those super formal dinners with about three forks and 5 wine glasses lined up in front of the plate. The wine stewards came up and down the tables and filled the first glass and it was stand and toast to the President of the United States. The stewards filled the next glass and it was toast to the Commandant of the Marine Corp and so on. I mention this because we just about reproduced this event on Okinawa under different circumstances.

Whatever, I slipped through, Basic School ended, and I was off by train to Pensacola.





CALENDAR OF

- 26 Jul Individual Combat Course (Live Fire)
- 27 Jul Map Reading & Aerial Photo Exam (Phase I) (4.5 Weights)
- 27 Jul Summer Service & White Uniforms required in possession
- 30 Jul Map Reading & Aerial Photo Exam (Phase II) (6.0 Weights)
- 1 Aug Swords required to be in possession
- 1 Aug "I" Company assumes interior guard duty
- 2 Aug B0312 (Squad in the Attack) Live Fire
- 8 Aug Individual Weapons Examination (4.5 Weights)
- 9 Aug Mortar Examination (4.5 Weights)
- 13 Aug 5 Minute Presentations
- 16 Aug Phase I Comprehensive Examination (25 Weights)
- 17 Aug Parade
- 20 Aug Weapons General Examination (4.5 Weights)
- 24 Aug CMCS Reception for "I" Company
- 29 Aug Machine Gun Examination (4.5 Weights)
- 3 Sep Labor Day (Holiday)
- 4 Sep Winter Service Uniforms with topcoat required in possession
- 5 Sep Artillery Demonstration
- 7 Sep Parade
- 14 Sep Close Air Support Demonstration
- 1 Oct Blue Uniform required in possession
- 4 Oct 15 Minute Presentations
- 8 Oct 15 Minute Presentations
- 9 Oct Phase II Comprehensive Examination (14 Weights)
- 11 Oct Mess Night
- 18 Oct 15 Minute Presentations
- 22-26 Oct Amphibious Training, Little Creek
- 5 Nov C.O. TBS Inspection of "I" Company

8 Nov Mad Moment

9 Nov Parade

10 Nov Marine Corps Birthday

12 Nov Holiday

14-16 Nov 3 Day War

21 Nov Graduation

kade Ordered *Red Ships Warned*

Kennedy Tells Russia

TEXT . . . PAGE 5

WASHINGTON (AP). President Kennedy put into effect a U.S. blockade of Cuba Monday night, after disclosing that the Soviets are shipping into Cuba long-range weapons able to rain nuclear destruction on all the Americas.

The President announced a seven-point military diplomatic action program in a solemn speech to the nation. Quickly after his suddenly scheduled 7 p.m. EDT radio-TV broadcast:

● The Navy announced at San Juan, Puerto Rico, that its 40 ships, 20,000 men and aircraft assembled for annual Caribbean maneuvers have started blockade duties.

Kennedy said he is ordering that all ships bound for Cuba with offensive weapons be turned back. This "quarantine" will be extended to planes, too, if necessary, but will not be for all



HONOR GRADUATE FIFTH BASIC CLASS OF 1962

Second Lieutenant Donald K. SHOCKEY, Jr.

THE COLONEL WILLIAM B. LEMLY AWARD FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Second Lieutenant Donald K. SHOCKEY, Jr.

COMPANY "H" HONOR GRADUATE

Second Lieutenant Ken FALKENBERG

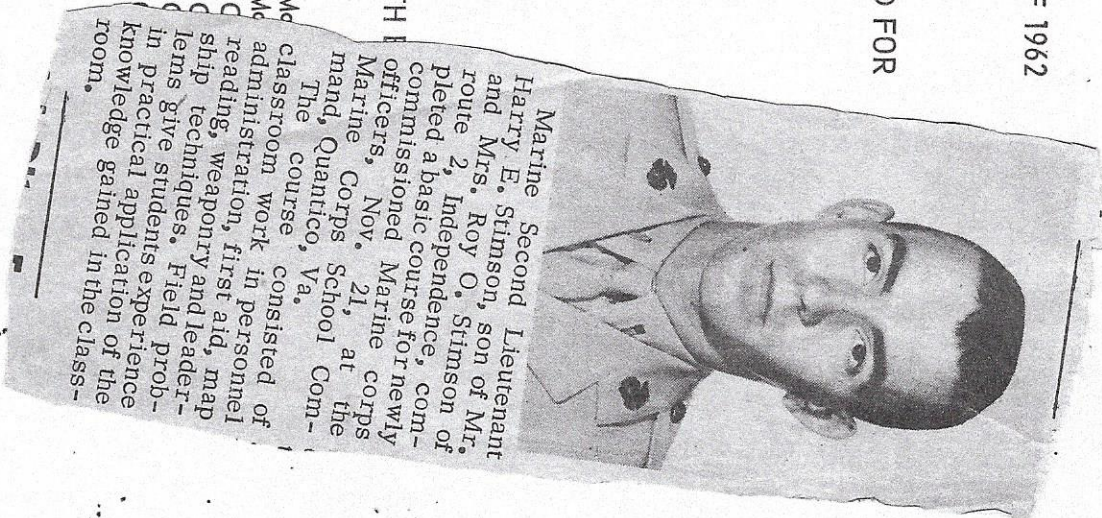
COMPANY "I" HONOR GRADUATE

Second Lieutenant Francis L. SHAFER, Jr.

ALLIED OFFICERS GRADUATING WITH THE FIFTH CLASS OF 1962

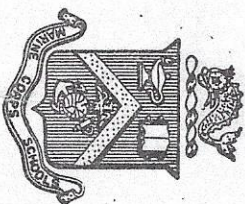
1st Lt Jung Won PARK	Republic of Korea Marine Corps
1st Lt Woo Yup SUEN	Republic of Korea Marine Corps
2d Lt Tran Van BI	Vietnamese Marine Corps
2d Lt Le Van DO	Vietnamese Marine Corps
2d Lt Nguyen Trieu TU	Vietnamese Marine Corps
2d Lt Luong Hoang VAN	Vietnamese Marine Corps

11097(76) NAVY-MCS QUANTICO, VA



Graduation Exercises

Fifth Basic Class



Basic School

Marine Corps Schools

Quantico, Virginia

21 November 1962

Marine Corps Hymn

Marine Corps Schools Band

Invocation

Lieutenant Commander William C. Fuller, ChC, USN

Opening Remarks and Introduction

Commandant, Marine Corps Schools

Address

Lieutenant General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps

Chief of Staff, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

Presentation of Diplomas

Lieutenant General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps

Presentation of Marine Corps Schools Insignia To Allied Officers

Director, Marine Corps Educational Center

Presentation of Colonel William B. Lemly Award

Director, Marine Corps Educational Center

Presentation of Marine Corps Association Sword To Honor Student

Commandant, Marine Corps Schools

National Anthem

Marine Corps Schools Band

Benediction

Lieutenant Commander William C. Fuller, ChC, USN

Semper Fidelis

Marine Corps Schools Band

COMMANDANT, MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS

Lieutenant General Edward W. Snedeker, U. S. Marine Corps

DIRECTOR, MARINE CORPS EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Major General Ralph K. Rottet, U. S. Marine Corps

COMMANDING OFFICER, BASIC SCHOOL

Colonel Robert C. McDonough, U. S. Marine Corps



Flight School

Flight school was a world apart from my previous experience. Most of the first classes were fairly sophisticated and difficult aeronautics classes. We were in the middle of a Pensacola winter where it was often wet and damp.

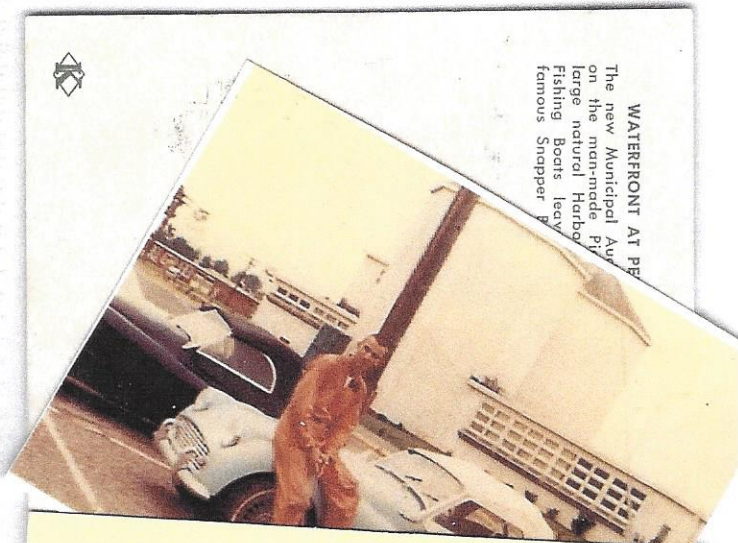
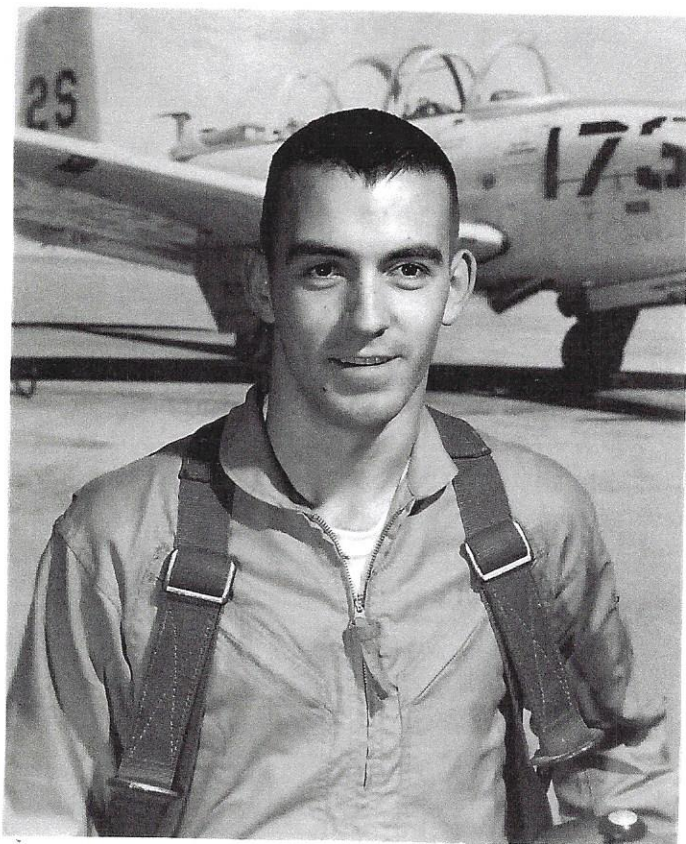
One of the most memorable events was the three-day survival ordeal. In groups of 3-4, we were inserted into a heavily wooded area with 1 parachute and a survival kit consisting of fishhooks, line, knife, and a few other essentials. What a miserable three days it was. We tried for flying squirrels, rejected eating a rat someone caught, and in general starved and froze. Just as our time was ending, a noise got louder and louder until a B52 roared over in its landing pattern and we realized we were probably just a mile off the end of the runway.

Even though I had student loans and uniforms to pay for, I found that I could afford a car. My choice was a Triumph TR3 which was a great car for tooling around Florida but I would find was not good for cold weather climates. And as you will find, in the years that I owned that car, it sat parked for at least 2 years of that time.

When we got to flying, our first plane was the low-wing T-34. We had good training and I found it easy and even enjoyable. Next came the T-28 which was a whole different experience. Before I washed out, I had accumulated about 83 hours of flight time, including night flying.

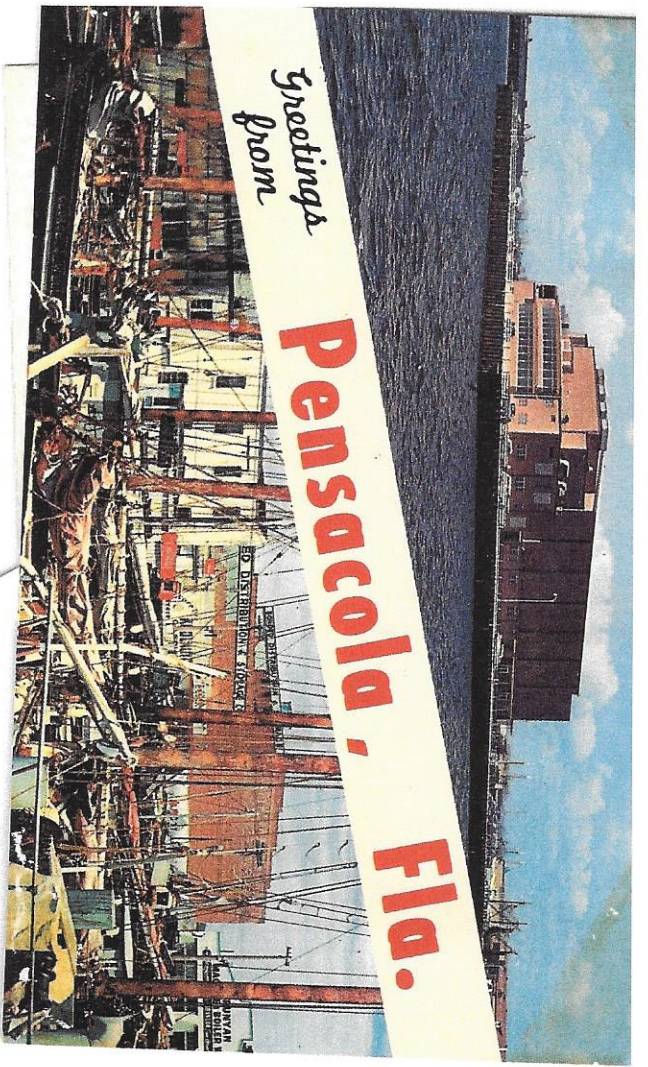
The problem that finally got to me was that I couldn't pass the swimming test. You had to swim four laps of the pool using 4 different strokes. You also had to swim a mile using any stroke. When the time came when I had to pass the test, I couldn't. So I was removed from my serial and ordered to the pool until I could pass. This took 2 full weeks for 8 hours a day. My ears got infected and my whole outlook declined. Finally, I did pass and was assigned a new serial. This wasn't good as I didn't know anyone. Also, I had gradually accepted the fact that there were very few, if any 6'2" fighter pilots. It had been a pipe-dream from the beginning. And I was due a physical and my blood pressure wouldn't come down and that was it for me and I have to say, except for Anna, I've never regretted washing out of flight school. Who was this Anna?, you say.

With Kim's permission, I can tell you that I had a very nice girl friend in Pensacola. Her name was Anna Marie Moore and she worked as a home-ec. Instructor/demonstrator for a local institution. Me, Anna, and my Triumph must have made quite a sight tooling around Pensacola. Anna even came to visit my parents in Iowa. I'm afraid I treated Anna very badly when I left Pensacola but what could I do. I was leaving Pensacola and had orders for Okinawa for a 13 month tour. Off to new adventures.



WATERFRONT AT PE
The new Municipal A
on the man-made p
large natural Harb
Fishing Boats leav
famous Snapper P





*Greetings
from*

Pensacola, Fla.



*Greetings
from*

NAVAL AIR STATION - PENSACOLA, FLA.

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra

Dr. John T. Venettozzi, Conductor

Edward Kilenyi, Guest Artist

PROGRAM

OVERTURE TO LA SCALA DI SETA	Rossini
ARIOSO FOR STRINGS	Mennini
Introduction, March and Shepherd's Dance from AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS	Menotti
A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL	Anderson

INTERMISSION

CONCERTO NO. 5 IN E FLAT (EMPEROR), OPUS 73--Beethoven
For Piano and Orchestra

ALLEGRO ADAGIO UN POCO MOSSO RONDO: ALLEGRO

When Beethoven wrote his fifth and last piano concerto, he was at the height of his power as a creative artist. It was not titled EMPEROR by the composer himself. It was written in 1809, a year marked by the investment of Vienna by Napoleon's troops; during this occupation Beethoven's young pupil, Czerny, gave the newly-completed concerto its first public hearing in that city. The story goes that a French officer in the audience proclaimed it an "Emperor among concertos." And EMPEROR it is called to this very day.

As in the Fourth Concerto, Beethoven brought in the piano at the beginning of the Concerto; the EMPEROR, however, is extraordinary for the magnificent rhetorical way in which the piano emphasizes the opening chords. Another high point of the work is the second movement, a set of variations on a theme of typically Beethoven character--majestic and noble.

U.S. Naval School, Pre-Flight



NAVAL AIR STATION

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

From The Commanding Officer, (Breeding)

This is to certify that

SECOND LIEUTENANT HARRY E. STIMSON, USMC

has successfully completed the prescribed course for the pre-flight stage of the aviation training program of the

UNITED STATES NAVY

In testimony whereof the Commanding Officer has affixed his signature with the official seal of this station.

15 FEBRUARY 19 63

J. H. CALDWELL, CAPTAIN, U.S. NAVY
Commanding

Off to Okinawa

Now that I had a car, this proved to be a mixed blessing. I couldn't take it to Okinawa so would have to find a place for it. I was leaving California from Treasure Island and Andy was stationed at Fort Ord at Monterey. So I would drive the car to California and deliver it to Andy and he would bring it back to Iowa.

On the drive to California, I was out on the open road somewhere and traveling right along when some guy in a hopped up pickup pulled up alongside and motioned like "let's get going". So I obliged. I don't think we got over 90 but eventually he waved and backed off. It was right away I noticed that the Triumph was overheating. I had blown a gasket on the water pump. Luckily, there was a town nearby with no mechanic but where I could get some water and a larger container. Step by step I made it to close to San Francisco. I pulled into a business district and located a mechanic's shop. The man and his son listened to my sad story and told me to go get supper and come back. Of course, even I could see that they would have to move the radiator and fabricate a gasket and I didn't have a pocket full of money. When I came back, they had it fixed and I asked how much. \$20.00. Another good deed for a serviceman in need

All the time I was at San Francisco, I had to travel over the Oakland bay bridge to Treasure Island. In my ignorance, I thought I was traveling over the Golden Gate Bridge. In fact, I told people for years that I had been over the Golden Gate Bridge. Just last year, (2015) I finally did cross the Golden Gate so I reconciled that error. Anyway, I got the car to Andy and left for Okinawa by air.

Spoiler alert- Andy and a friend were going to bring the car back to Iowa but his friend wouldn't go unless they installed seat belts. They had the seat belts installed. When they left, on the drive the car was wrecked with a roll-over in Winnemucca Nevada. Andy's arm was severely injured but his friend was not injured. The car was repaired but that took some time. Bill and Dorothy took a mini-vacation and drove out and brought the car back to Independence. My sword was in the trunk and it was bent probably 45 degrees. I bent it back but if you look close, you can see the damage. But think what would have probably have happened if they hadn't had the seat belts installed.

M50 Ontos: The Forgotten Tank-killer

BY BRENDAN MCNALLY FEBRUARY 12, 2013



13

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RAISING THE BAR
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It is the tradition in the U.S. Army to name its tanks after great generals. Over the years there has been the Stuart, the Grant and Lee, the Sherman, the Patton, the Pershing, the Abrams, the Sheridan, the Chaffee, and the Bradley. But there was one armored vehicle that was so singularly odd and strange looking, it didn't get named after anyone, lest perhaps, some insult might be taken. Instead, the name it got handed was Ontos, the Greek word for "thing." It was an apt name. With its tiny chassis, tinier turret and six, massive, externally mounted recoilless rifles, the M50 Ontos had to have been the strangest armored vehicle ever to make it into the American military inventory.

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FEATURED PHOTOS

3rd Anti-tank Battalion

Arriving in Okinawa, I was assigned to the 3rd Marine division anti-tank battalion. (Ontoes-if interested I've enclosed an article on the Ontoes). The battalion was based on Camp Hansen, outside of Kin Village and about a ½ hour drive North of Kadena and Koza. Camp Hansen also housed the tank battalion, the motor transport battalion and probably other heavy equipment.

Living conditions were good. We had modern 2-man facilities and the officer's club/dining hall was pleasant and attractive. The club had game rooms and a line of slot machines. We had what we called Naisons, (Kim says there is no such word) the young Okinawan girls who waited on tables, and we had the older Okinawan women who did our laundry and polished our boots. (For \$5.00/month). All in all, living conditions were very good.

I was assigned to be a platoon commander of a platoon of Ontoes. This machine was about as ugly as you can imagine but carried a lot of firepower. The recoilless rifle fired a 106 mm round. Of course, being recoilless, the recoil energy was expended with a massive back blast. On one of our first firing exercises, the safety officer insisted on placing empty ammo box about 50 feet back of a 106 recoilless rifle and fired it off. The box was destroyed and blown away. We got the point.

Over the years, the names of various officers have escaped me so you will have to put with letter designations. Col. A was my first real commanding officer and I have to say he taught me more than anyone before had about the military. His mantra was that you had to check everything; you couldn't trust anyone to do their job. The executive officer was a Major X and ruled the staff meeting with an iron hand. I came to believe that the Col. was leery of his exec. and treated him with kid gloves. But I began with a Captain Bird as my immediate superior. Unfortunately, I have very few memories of Captain Bird beyond the name.

Of course, the 3rd Anti-tank Battalion was notorious for its "functions" at the O club. Any new arrival was initiated by having to down a "flaming hooker". A shot glass was filled with Brandy and lighted on fire. The trick was to toss the brandy in your mouth and set the glass down with the flame still burning on the rim. Two other people stand by with wet towels. This was all pretty intimidating to say the least. Particularly if another young Lt. precedes you and it takes him several tries. But I was successful on the first try, and over my tour with the anti-tank battalion, went through this several times.

We had a very sad interruption. I went to the club one morning and it was very subdued. Some of the Naisons were crying. Pres. Kennedy had been assassinated. About a year before, we had been at Norfolk listening to the President give his ultimatum. It was hard to believe.

It wasn't long when my platoon had its first firing exercise. We had to load the 6 Ontoes onto 3 flatbeds and to travel to a northern firing range. I found that as a new Lt., for all practical purposes I had very little to do besides observe. The platoon Sgt. was an old experienced hand and probably didn't expect anything from me, anyway. The safety officer had his finger on

everything. All was going well until lunch time. Someone came over and asked about stopping for lunch. Oh my God! A platoon commander who didn't have brains enough to arrange for lunch on the firing range. Someone sent for some sort of meal and the firing exercise continued. Of course, all the rest of the day and that night, I'm cursing myself for my stupidity and imagining everyone is looking at me and shaking their head.

The next day we met in a staff meeting for a de-briefing. When it came to be my turn I said it all went well until I forgot to order the chow. Major X exploded, "You forgot the chow? It's not your job to arrange the chow." He turned his attention to the S-1 officer and the sweat seemed to start rolling off his face. It developed that someone was on leave and the S-1 had dropped the ball. Of course the Col. had to interject and tell me that you have to double check everything. Always double-check. I could only nod.

The next trip for my platoon of Ontoes to the firing range resulted in another screwup on my part. When we returned back to the Camp Hansen tank park, we were traveling again with three flatbeds. We were separated and when I arrived at the tank park, we only had 2 flatbeds. The platoon Sgt. arrived and assured me that he knew that other flatbed would be right along so I made a beeline for the club. On the way I met the Col. He asked if everything was OK and I reassured him that it was and we parted ways. The next morning I was really called on the carpet. It seemed that the final flatbed had not just been held up, it had turned a curve too tight, struck an embankment and knocked 2 recoilless rifles right off the Ontoes.

The Col. Really had me standing tall. And I couldn't blame him. He had made a special trip late the last evening to reassure him that all was well, I had reassured him that it was, and when he came in the next morning, he had a "down" Ontoes on his hand. Of course, it would do no good to blame it on the Plt. Sgt., although my opinion of the man went down considerably. You've got to check, Stimson, you can't trust anyone. I learned a big lesson there.

It didn't help that somewhere in that time period, I fired the rifle for qualification. And I didn't qualify once again. What a downer that was. I was back in the Col's good graces after the damaged Ontoes and he saw me and asked how the requalification went. When I told him my sad tale, he shrugged his shoulders and told me he had had the same experience. He told me that next time, just grab a rifle, adjust the sling positions, go to the range and adjust the sights on pre-qual day and fire the next day for qualification.

Spoiler alert- Next time to qualify, I did just that and never had trouble with the rifle again. But at the time, it all weighed on my mind, and I once again began to wonder, could those assholes back at T&T and Basic School have been right? I really was a shitbird who should never have become an officer.

At some point, we had an influx of new Lt.s and at the same time, the Headquarters Company commander rotated home. I was called in and appointed Headquarters Company commander. One reason was that because of my time at Pensacola, I had been promoted to 1st Lt. and as anyone with any experience knows, Headquarters Company was no great bargain and was really an administrative position. But it sounded good. Company commanders are called Skipper and that sure felt good to hear.

Headquarters Company

Headquarters Company was basically an administrative position. We spent all day maintaining record books and scheduling training. Technically, the personnel in the S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 shops, along with the armory, motor transport, and all were under the control of Headquarters. In reality, of course, each shop was commanded by an officer, probably superior to me, and the result was a some conflict. Say Trooper A in the S-1 shop was due to requalify with the rifle, but the S-1 officer just couldn't let him go right now. There were constant negotiations.

Luckily, I had a great First Sgt., Sgt. Abrams. Sgt. Abrams was the prototype Marine First Sgt. older, stocky, and cigar smoking, Sgt. Abrams, with his several clerks kept the office running and on top of things. And he had another characteristic, he was perfectly willing to "teach" his new Lt. the ropes and with a good nature.

But the worst problem was "office hours", in other words, discipline to be handled by the CO of Headquarters Company. Most were simple AWOL's, that is late for formation, and other smaller infractions. This was all according to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. (UCMJ) It is not possible for me now or even then to explain all the details of the UCMJ. In my position as Company Commander, punishments were pretty limited. More severe infractions were referred to a higher level. There were also letters of indebtedness. Merchants from back home weren't being paid and sent a letter complained to the Marine Corp. We were required to council men about letters of indebtedness. And, occasionally, there were congressional inquiries. Someone might think they were treated unfairly and they wrote their congressman. Luckily for me, higher command usually answered Congressional inquiries.

Combine all this with constant preparations for inspections kept us busy. If the IG (Inspector General) was coming to inspect, then the CG (Commanding General) would have to have an inspection. If the CG was coming to inspect, then the Battalion Commander would have to have a preliminary inspection. Inspections never seemed to end.

I don't know whether you have noticed from reading this account, but gradually I feel like I have actually become a Marine Officer. There was certainly no doubt in the minds of the troops, anyway. But the Col still had his ways and was determined to teach me the ropes. One day I got a call from the Colonel. There was a loose poncho blowing around outside his office and would I get it out of there. I told Sgt. Abrams to send someone over to pick it up.

It wasn't 10 minutes that the Col was on the phone. "Dammit, I told you to get this poncho out of here." He said he expected me and only me to be over there in 2 minutes to pick up that dammed poncho. I went racing out of the office and over to the headquarters building and without looking in the Col's window, dashed back. Of course the clerks and Sgt. Abrams were shocked and Sgt. Abrams was right in and closed the door behind him. Of course, he apologized and went back in the outer office where I could hear a lot of shouting and some trooper saying "I forgot, I forgot"

Later at the O club, there were 4 Cols who usually sat together eating and maybe playing cards. Several days after the poncho incident, the Col. saw me putting nickels in the slot machines and motioned me over. We went to the ping-pong table where he beat me about 21-2. We put down our paddles and he put his arm around my shoulder. I'm going to teach you this game yet. You've got to double check everything. Of course, I thought I had learned this lesson already.

I was getting into the swing of things when I came in to the office one Monday morning. The Col. was on the phone. Go down to the armory and check the personal weapons. See if any are missing. The armorer looked at me strangely as I looked over several rifles and the pistol chests. A 45 pistol had been checked out. I asked who had checked out the pistol and it had been the dreaded Major X. The armorer asked me if the Major was in this morning and I didn't know. "Too bad, he was a good man". It was only then that I realized the implications.

When I reported to the Col. He said he was afraid of that. A search was instituted, RAFT informed and because he was a tanker, every tank park on the island was inspected. It took several days before his body was found up on a sidehill.

This hurt the Col. badly. It wasn't long before he was gone for two weeks with no explanation and it wasn't long before we were scheduling a change-of-command ceremony. It all could have been in order but it should be noted that the Col. didn't even attend the change of command ceremony.



Operation Backpack

The Col hadn't been gone long when we were fully involved in preparations for "Operation Backpack" which was to be conducted on Taiwan. Preparations were normal for our Headquarters Company except for some reason I was appointed to the embarkation officer for an LST. I can't recall the name of the ship but I have included a picture of an LST, the USS Windham County (LST-1170) which was definitely on Operation Backpack.

The job of embarkation officer was a nothing job for me except I had to attend planning meetings and assist in planning on loading the ship. The NCO's were used to this procedure and my function was watching them juggle the equipment into place. Equipment had to be backed into the ship and the whole procedure was tedious, to say the least.

And of course, we had to have a "function" before we left. Unfortunately, I don't think the shot glass was full and I burned a perfect circle on my lips,

But at last, we left Naha harbor, and traveled out the channel, past the outcroppings and into the open ocean. The trip was uneventful and on D Day we were landing on the southern end of the island of Taiwan. We landed over a causeway and of course, when we got ashore my jeep got stuck in the sand and we had to commandeer a working party from our party and some Seabee's to push it out, all under the eyes of Chiang-Kai-Shek and a big party of big-wigs sitting on a bleacher. I didn't even dare to look up to see if they had caught our performance.

We were forbidden to travel off-road and as a result, the access road leading from the beach was clogged with heavy equipment, belching diesel fumes and proceeding at a crawl. I was sitting with one foot up on the side of the jeep when a young boy came up the road leading a water buffalo. As he got next to us, the bull started to pass manure. The little kid ran back and tried to catch as much as possible and fling it into the rice paddies. On the way back up front of the bull he wiped his hands on the bull's flank. My driver and I looked at each other. You don't see that every day.

The operation for us consisted of setting up headquarters, then moving the next day to another location. It got pretty old pretty fast. And it was very hot.

One day, I saw the senior staff huddled together and the CO motioned me over. He had a copy of the operation order and it plainly said we were allowed a beer ration every day. Where was it and go get it. I knew it was a little game but we gathered enough money together to run back to the beach and see if we could find some beer. And bring ice. I could see some of the staff grinning.

So I grabbed 2 new garbage cans and took off with my driver. It felt very good with the wind playing through our hair. It wasn't long before we came to a tree down over the road. The aggressors leaped out and we were captured and out of the operation. My first reaction was that this wasn't too bad a deal. But as we sat there, I thought what the heck. I called the umpire over said innocently; you know we're supposed to pay the Taiwanese \$500.00 for every tree we damaged. Don't blame this on me. And it was true, it was written in the operation order I had just been looking at.

The aggressors and the umpire looked at each other. I said lets hide this thing in that ditch and I helped drag the tree away and my driver and I roared away. When we got to the beach, there was a cluster of tents and there was an officer's club set up. I rushed into see if I could buy some beer and was met with an uproar. It seems I had entered with cover on and he who enters the club covered has to buy a round of drinks. Of course, I wasn't going to buy a round of drinks with my trooper's money for this

bunch of rear echelon poguees but there was on particular Major there that was getting obnoxious. Finally a Col. Came over and told the Major to sit down and the enlisted bartender could hardly contain himself as we loaded up the jeep with cases of beer.

Ice! We had to travel to the mess tent where there might be ice but the mess Sgt. looked pretty dubious. But he was staring at the bright shiny new garbage cans in the jeep and by the time we left, we beer and ice loaded into very dingy and banged up garbage cans. When we arrived back at our base camp, all the CO could say was he didn't think we could ever do it. I had to tell our supply Sgt. that we had traded our garbage cans. He didn't seem to appreciate it.

Even over 50 years later, it sounds like a story. But it happened and of all the things that I have recounted, this event served to up my self-esteem as any other.

We reembarked and started back to Okinawa and hit some very heavy seas. Someone said that in addition to a storm, there was a convergence of currents south of Taiwan that was always rough. Anyway, sometime in the night there was a tremendous racket overhead. The noise was so loud that I jumped up too quickly and banged my head pretty good. Stupidly, I thought it sounded like a bunch of bowling balls rolling back and forth over our heads. Of course, someone shouted that it was the ammunition for one of the deck guns rolling overhead. We ran in our skivvies to the bridge and the Navy got up a working party and corralled the ammo. I couldn't help but think that I guy could get hurt out here.

Finally, we pulled into Okinawa and made our way Camp Hansen. Home at last.

USS Calvert (APA-32)

Attack Transport, 1942-1966: WWII, Korea, Vietnam

CATEGORY ARCHIVES: OPERATION BACKPACK

Exercise Backpack – WEST PAC '64

In early 1964 (late-Feb into early-March) the *Calvert* participated in Exercise Backpack. Thanks to Charlie V. who commented on an earlier post ([here](#)) which shed light on the Calvert's participation in this exercise during West Pac '64.

A quick search of the web resulted in the following information on this exercise (note: this was an exercise, not an "operation" in the military sense of the word, i.e, an operation takes place in a combat situation):

Wikipedia entry for USS Windham County, LST-1170: "Backpack," was a joint American-Taiwanese practice amphibious assault which took place at Che Cheng, Taiwan, in the late-February (1964) to early-March (1964) timeframe.

Beatrice Daily Sun – March 11, 1964: Backpack was a coordinated U.S. – Nationalist Chinese amphibious exercise conducted off the coast of Taiwan. Backpack was an exercise to test the amphibious capabilities and readiness of the forces of the Seventh Fleet and the Nationalist Chinese Navy. Prior to the assault, aircraft of the Seventh Fleet "softened" the beach defense. In addition, support ships conducted anti-submarine warfare exercises and the area surrounding the beachhead was cleared of obstructions and mines. "Backpack" was similar to exercises conducted periodically of the Seventh Fleet with SEATO and other allied nations in the Far East to improve proficiency in coordinated amphibious warfare operations and to maintain working relationships with allied nations.

This entry was posted in Operation Backpack, WEST PAC 1964 on June 1, 2013

[<http://www.usscalvert.com/2013/06/01/operation-backpack-west-pac-64/>] by Chris Funck.

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December 26, 1998



History of The USS Windham County (LST-1170)

LST-1170 was laid down on 21 April 1953 by the Christy Corp., Sturgeon Bay, Wis., launched on 22 May 1954; sponsored by Mrs. Joseph McCarthy; and commissioned on 15 December 1954, Lt. Comdr. Max Wells in command.

The new tank landing ship joined the Atlantic Fleet at her home port, Little Creek, Va., in January 1955. Following shakedown and type training, the ship was named **USS Windham County (LST-1170)** on 1 July 1955 and spent much of that month and August in more training exercises. She then helped to support Operation "Caesar", an underwater surveillance project, which lasted through the end of the year.

Summer of 1964

The spring was moving to summer and summer on Okinawa is hot, hot, hot. The red flag was up most days signaling no strenuous outside activities. I can't be sure of the time line, but somewhere in this summer I met Kim.

What happened is that it was one evening late, about 9:00 and I was already back in the BOQ room ready for bed when I got a call. It was from Jerry Nugent and Dave Breen. They were at the Kadena officers club with 3 girls and needed me to come down. I wasn't too enthusiastic as I had to go out the main gate, catch a cab, and go down to Kadena. But I did and that was where I met Kim. She was very pretty and she seemed to be interested in me. That was the beginning.

Now to clear up a wild story. Jerry Nugent had a younger brother named Pat who married Lyndon Johnson's daughter Lucy Bird. That is it, our whole relationship to the White House. I did maintain a relationship with Jerry for some time and he also ended up in Vietnam but I haven't ever been able to contact him since.

So Kim and I developed what I would call a normal dating relationship where we ate out, we went bowling, and such. But as Kim can tell you, dating a Marine on Okinawa is liable to be a hit-or-miss proposition as the Marines seemed to be here today and gone tomorrow.

We received orders to be at the O club one day in our whites. Of course, our whites were at the bottom of our footlockers and had to be dug out and pressed. We were all wondering what was up when we arrived at the club. Once again, it was the Commandant of the Marine Corp, Gen Wallace M. Greene. There was once again the lineup of wine glasses and toasts. Finally the Commandant gave his talk.

It seemed that the situation was deteriorating in Vietnam and might require American intervention to buck up the existing Vietnamese government. We all kind of looked at each other. And he said, if we are going to land troops in Vietnam, by God the Marines are going to be there first. We all stood up and cheered. There may even have been some hip-hip-hurrahs. Check your mount-out boxes; check your gear because this could happen anytime.

Before you wonder what kind of fools we were when we cheered, remember this. You know that over 14,000 Marines died in Vietnam and who knows how many wounded. But we knew the theory. Our purpose was to show the Vietnamese leadership we had their back. And that would be enough.

It did seem like the situation was tightening during the summer but in the heat of the summer, a kind of doldrums set in. How likely was it, with an election coming up back home, that the President would commit troops now? So at least speaking for myself, and enjoying my relationship with Kim, it became a lazy, hazy, summer. This all ended suddenly with the Tonkin Gulf crisis.

and implementing a system of payments from the aid funds.

Expected that the GRI will be able to accelerate construction of walls, roads, bridges, port and city planning projects as mental hygiene programs, and distribution of free to schools in the Ryukyus the improvised systems of and partial payments of the Aid Funds.

William W. Cobb, chairman of S.-Japan-Ryukyus Technical and deputy U.S. Civil Governor of the Ryukyus, closed tour of duty on Okinawa in mid-July and left for a new assignment at Fort E. Meade, Md. He is being replaced by Col. Jack P. Napier, special assistant to High Commissioner Watson.

Ryukyus, which is striving for more autonomy, got another boost in this direction on July 1 when High Commissioner Watson issued USCAR ordinance No. 54 giving complete authority in the management of the Miyako Island water system to the people of the island.

Decision transferred full control of water system from USCAR to the newly formed Miyako Island Water Assn. This action was part of General Watson's continued program of giving authority to the Ryukyuan people where they are capable of handling it themselves aside from

Another significant achievement in the past month, a new 88,000 kw electric power plant at Kinshiro in northern Okinawa was dedicated by the High Commissioner who in the process relinquished the operational responsibility of the island power from the U.S. Army Ryukyu Power Corp.

The new power plant is expected to boost the economy of the Ryukyus and help to erase for the most part the threat of electrical brownouts and insufficient power as was experienced throughout Okinawa the past few years.

N SOUTH....

Anthony T. Common gets his heart less than 24 hours after being wounded. Beside him is LCpl. S. Czomba, who was in the same boat with Capt. Common when it was presenting the awards is BrigGen. B. McCutcheon (back to camera), of the First Marine Aircraft Wing. Three Marines from "B" Co., Ninth Marine, watch over the landing zone as helicopter from Marine Aircraft Group 16 lands behind enemy lines in the largest Marine air-ground



Winner of the Life on Okinawa Lucky Winner Contest is Miss Kim Sagawa, an employee of Bireley's, shown receiving her check for \$100 from Executive Editor Jan M. Cayton.

The War in the Republic of Vietnam continued to raise uneasiness and force pressure on the U.S. Forces and their dependents on Okinawa during June and July and reliable sources reports that the U.S. commitment there will be stepped up in view of surging communist Viet Cong operations in the southern section of the war-torn country.

An entire airborne brigade, elements of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) along with the main core of the Okinawa-based 3rd Marine Div. are already deployed to Vietnam on a combat status and it appears imminent that this complex Pacific military basin will play a more vital role in the conflict there in the coming months.

The Vietnam tension mounted on the island in mid-July when a 1,500-man Marine Battalion plus 900 other Leathernecks arrived on Okinawa from Camp Pendleton, Cal., aboard a Navy transport vessel to replace units of the 3rd Marine Div. returning to the U.S. for reassignment.

According to Marine authorities, the 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, relieved the 3rd Bn., 9th Marines, who have left Okinawa for Camp Pendleton following a 14-month tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam.

A Marine Corps spokesman said it was not known if the new Leathernecks would eventually be sent into the Republic of Vietnam in view of recent developments there but added the possibility could not be ruled out.

The authorities said the battalion was expected to undergo a regular training cycle for all new arrivals which includes counter guerrilla warfare operations at the 3rd Marine Div.'s training center deep in the mountains and hills in northern Okinawa.

It is at this jungle school that Marines receive their last training in guerrilla warfare tactics before facing the Viet Cong in Vietnam if the need arises there.

A Marine spokesman said that the other 900 Marines which arrived with the battalion aboard the troop transport Mitchell are to replace individual officers and enlisted men in the division here on Okinawa who are also slated for reassignment to the U.S.

In another development which stemmed directly from the critical situation in Vietnam, the Marine Corps established a forward echelon of Fleet Marine Force Pacific at the 3rd Marine Div.'s headquarters at Camp Courtney in central Okinawa during July to iron out any problems related to the moving of troops and equipment into and out of the island.

The echelon, under the command of Marine Maj. Gen. Sidney S. Wade, was set up on Okinawa at the request of Lt. Gen. Victor H. Krulak, commanding general, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, who saw a strong need for an increased need of his representation in the Western Pacific in view of the tempo of operations in Vietnam.

The unit is expected to help in speeding up the delivery of troops and equipment to any spot in the Far East, including South Vietnam, in addition to bolstering the Marine Corps logistical support received from other branches of the U.S. Forces in the Western Pacific.

Krulak, whose headquarters are at Hawaii, is now more able to maintain physical and close contact with all developments on Okinawa and in Southeast Asia through his echelon here since the island is the supply point and staging area for his Leathernecks being

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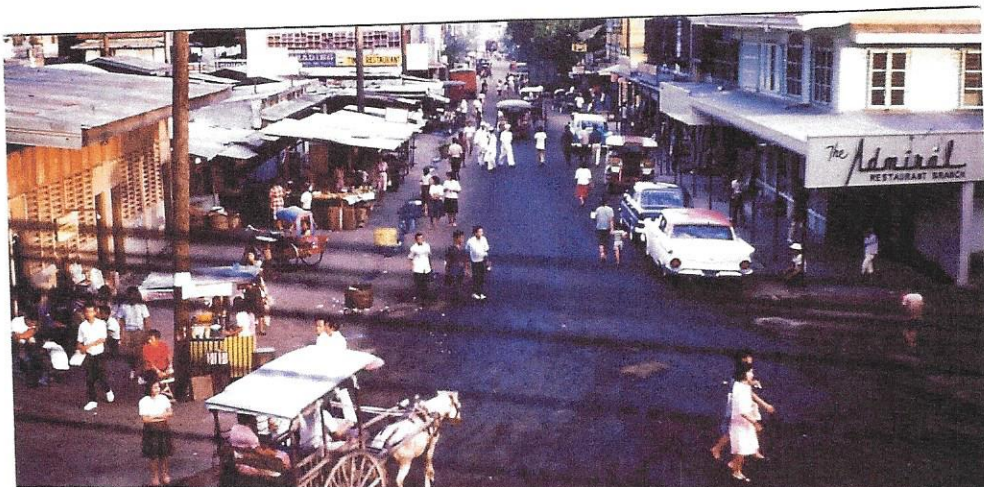
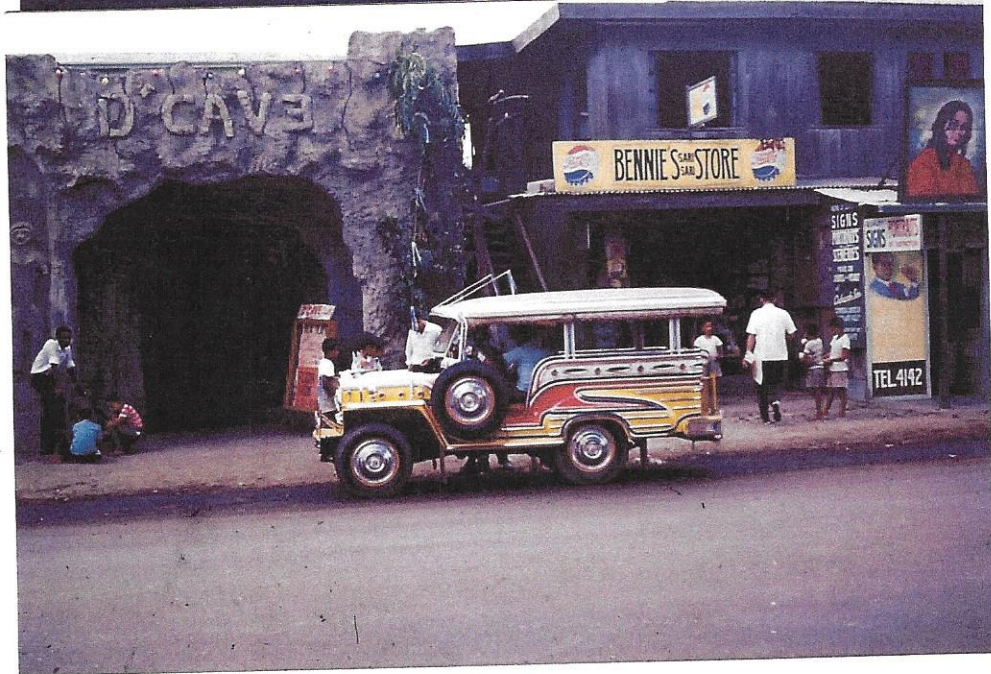
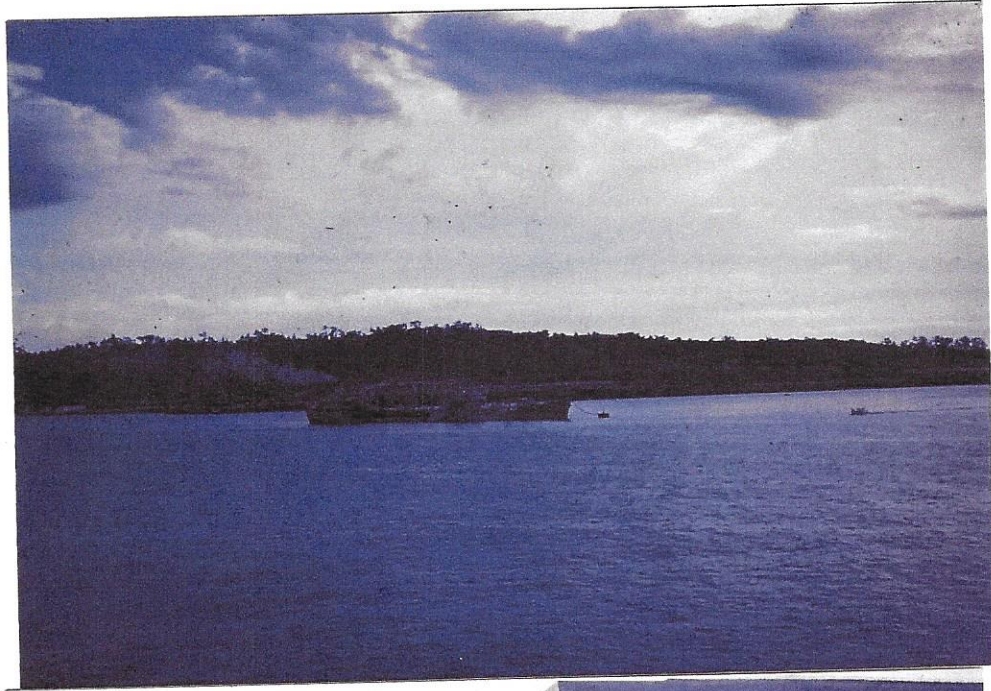
Mr. Taba

CHUBU TOYOTA AUTO. SALES CO.

NEW TOYOPET	Corona 1500-20% Down	\$47.00 Per Month
" "	Corona 1500 Deluxe-20% Down	\$52.00 Per Month
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Subic Bay



Tonkin Gulf

Our sleepy summer came to an end for me. Around the 1st of Aug. there was a supposed incident between a US Destroyer and North Vietnamese torpedo boats. President Johnson went to congress and congress passed what was called the Tonkin Gulf resolution which authorized the President to take military action.

What it amounted to for us was the biggest flap I had seen yet, besides the Cuban missile crisis. The 3rd division was to mount our two additional battalions to merge with the float battalion to form an expeditionary brigade. Pretty exciting. But, of course, I was just the Headquarters Company commander. I made my way to Battalion headquarters and was told that since I was a more senior and experience man, I would take my old platoon back and join the task force. So it was a quick mount-out and once again we were passing out the channel and outcroppings and leaving Okinawa behind.

We were on the USS Alamo and when we got to sea, the whole fleet began to gather for the trip to Vietnam. There were APA's and AKA's. We were being escorted by a carrier with a cruiser escort. Destroyers mingled in the fleet. The American flags were flying, and the signal flags were colorful. It was quite a sight. I felt like I was at the tip of a spear, in the front with the American military.

We arrived off the coast of Vietnam at night and we could see a blinking light, probably on Monkey Mountain. We had a 3-2 Sgt. aboard with maps and we pored over the Danang maps. The next morning, we awoke and we were steaming off Chu Lai, about 50 miles south of Danang and where there was a big runway being constructed. So we studied the Chu Lai maps. The next morning we were back at Danang.

This went on for maybe a week and we began to realize that we might not be landing. Day after day, we steamed up and down the coast of South Vietnam and this went on for probably a month. Oilers began to show up to refuel. Sometimes the oilers brought mail and we had a mail call. Another time a man had to be evacuated for medical reasons and he was transported to an oiler via a rope sling. It was getting pretty boring; after all even watching the flying fish and dolphins gets old.

Finally, the original float battalion was sent back to Okinawa, Brigade headquarters went to Subic Bay. The remaining 2 battalions would rotate from the coast of Vietnam and Subic Bay so on battalion was always off the coast. My first trip to Subic Bay was another eye opener. In addition to our carrier, there was British carrier, and there was an Australian force, all in the harbor at Subic Bay. The harbor was loaded with ships. And liberty ashore was a madhouse of drunken sailors, excluding me of course.

All in all, if I wanted to see the world, this was it. One trip to Subic, we caught a bus and made it to Manila, another two week break from the coast, we made it to Hong Kong. But of course, all things come to an end and sometime in November, I was detached from the fleet to return to Okinawa and return home. That is stateside. I only had three days on Okinawa and Kim had moved and I couldn't find her.

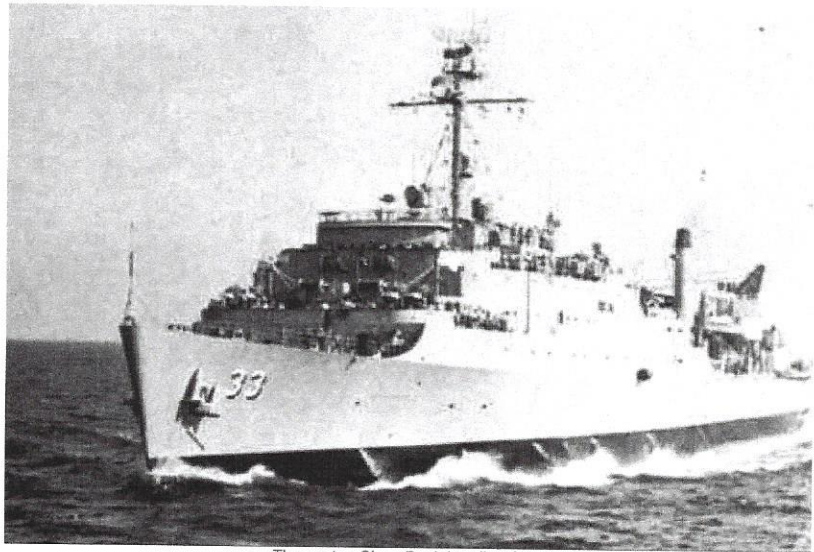
1966 - Ship Along Side 3 times

USS Alamo (LSD-33)

View: CAPTAINS LOG

"Remember the Alamo"

The 184th ship alongside during the 1966 Cruise holds special memories for the men of the big "K". With the USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) already alongside to port, the USS ALAMO (LSD-33) commenced her approach to starboard. At first, nothing appeared out of the ordinary. The starboard highline and the after fueling station went over to the USS ALAMO. With the exception of the Avgas rig on Station 2, the USS PRINCETON was sending the rigs back.



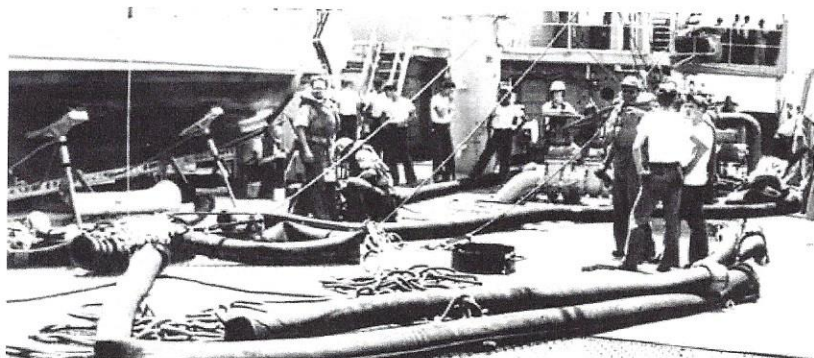
Thomaston Class Dock Landing Ship

Slowly the USS ALAMO and the big "K" edged together and "Emergency Breakaway" was sounded. Station 2 was returned from the LPH, the starboard hi-line was cut, and the span wire tripped. Although our stern swung toward the LPH, the USS PRINCETON increased speed and was soon clear to port. The USS ALAMO brushed our starboard side and her increased speed cleared our starboard side. Quick action and correct breakaway procedures prevented any injuries and minimized damage.

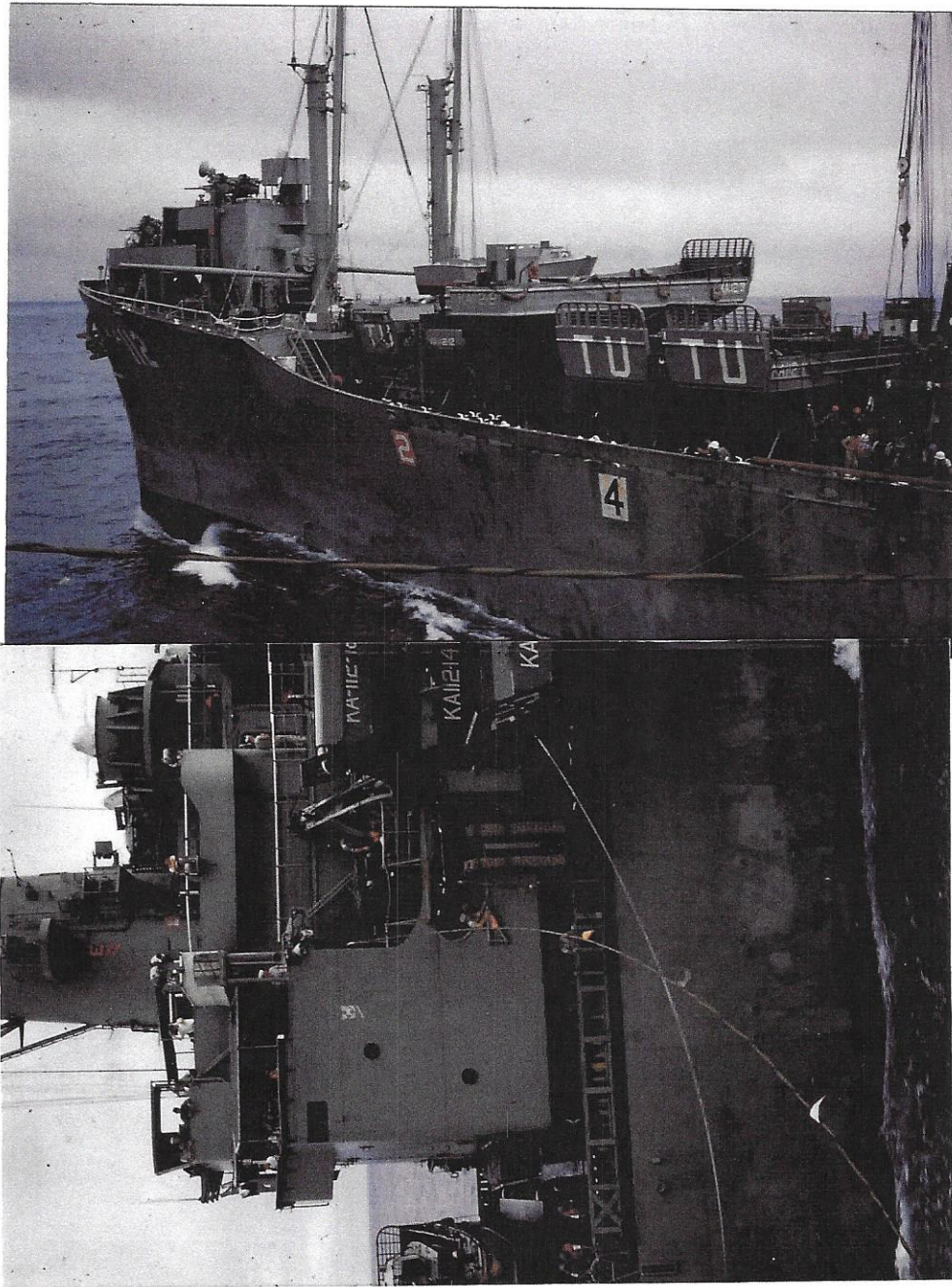
USS ALAMO was alongside again within 30 minutes for completion of replenishment.

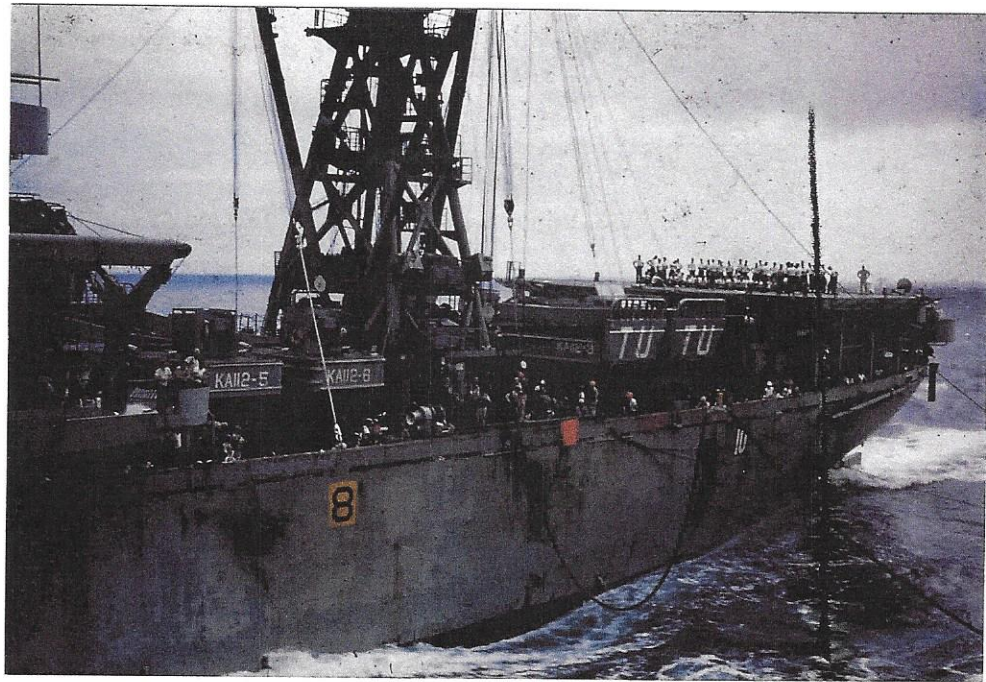


Tim Barron took the pictures of our collision with the U.S.S. Monticello one day out of Pearl Harbor, we were returning from WestPac. Tim had the Mid-watch and was sleeping in "on the starboard side", when there was a sickening lurch and a very loud crushing sound. He flew out of his rack, and for some reason grabbed his camera. "When I got topside I couldn't believe my eyes! We opened up that ship like a can of peas. You could see people peering through the huge gash on their port side."



At Sea During Tonkin Gulf





Back to the US

I don't remember the exact details of returning to the US after Tonkin Gulf. I was authorized 30 days leave and at the time, you could travel on any airline for ½ fare if you were in uniform and on orders, even leave papers. I remember arriving at O'Hare and Cedar Rapids was snowed in or otherwise shut down. So I had to catch the Land-of-Corn for Independence.

Mother and Father met me at the station. It was late in the evening and the temperature was about 18 below zero. Of course, when I left the South Pacific, it was short-sleeve weather. So it was very hard to adjust for the weather and I sat around shivering for at least several days.

But it was great being home at the Christmas season. Of course Father and Mother were happy to introduce their officer son to anyone they met and it could be very embarrassing. And if you have been reading this military history, how was I to tell anyone just what it was like. And would they have understood, anyway. Of course, they were very glad that I didn't have to land in Vietnam.

The repaired Triumph had been returned to Iowa by Dorothy and Bill and was sitting in the old corncrib so I had to get it started and cleaned up. The car was not a cold weather car by any means as the heater and defroster couldn't keep up. It was almost unusable car in northern climates. And I soon found that if I had any ideas of finding single girls to see while home in Independence was almost impossible.

With the combination of everything, I was actually anxious to get back to Pendleton. Before we had left the Far East, we had had to opportunity to choose which duty station we would prefer and within the limits of the Corp, they would try to agree. My choice had been Pendleton. We had another choice, either to Pendleton base, or to 1st Marine Division which was based at Pendleton. I chose the Division which would prove to be one of those choices that would be consequential. In normal circumstances, you were guaranteed 3 years back stateside after your 13 month tour on Okinawa.

So it was off in the Triumph for Pendleton. It should have been a 3 day trip but by driving until about 10:00 each night, it could be done in 2 days. So I pulled into Pendleton to the hostess house on evening at about 11:00 and reported to the S-1(Personnel) shop the next morning.

The officer in charge asked me if I would be interest in the MPs and having nothing to lose, I agreed. It wasn't to be quite that simple because the MP company commander, Major Snyder, needed to interview me before he agreed. I passed his informal interview and became the Exec. Officer of the MP Company of the 1st Marine Division. I was to have considerable interplay with Major Snyder over the next year and am happy to report that he was an excellent "boss" and even friend.

Pendleton 1965

I could see that duty at Pendleton was going to be enjoyable. I shared an apartment in San Clemente with a couple of other officers. There was the SandPiper bar up the road in Laguna Beach, and there was Los Angeles just up the road. And of course, San Diego was just down the road.

Duties as Exec. Officer with the MP Company were the usual and I fit right in. The MP unit consisted of both Base MP's and Division MPs. You wouldn't know the difference by looking and for normal duties they both performed the same duties. Many of the members of the unit were graduates of police academies and had very good relationships with Oceanside and San Diego police units. And because of Major Snyder's screening process, there were virtually no disciplinary problems. All in all, it was very good duty.

I think Kim and I were communicating but I have to say that without the interruptions to come, we probably wouldn't have gotten back together. Here I am in southern California tooling around in my Triumph and already getting acquainted with several other "people". And you'll have to ask Kim what she was doing.

It wasn't long before we had a 1st Division operation, Operation Silver Lance. Silver Lance was supposed to have been designed by Gen Krulak and was supposed to represent a landing on a friendly county but with restless natives. As always, it took some time and energy to mount out and travel to San Diego to get on a ship. The time came and we put to sea about several miles and there we sat. Word was that the Navy didn't have money to be sailing around at the time so there we sat for several days. Finally we went ashore to bring peace to a little village. Actors had been hired to play the part of villagers.

Of course, it was time for a major chewing out for me. The occasion was when we got ashore, I introduced the General (who I didn't know) to the village chief and gracefully backed away. That wasn't the thing to do and I was severely berated by this General for what I wasn't clear. I personally think he didn't have the faintest idea what to do and was expecting help from this 1st Lt. It was embarrassing as the whole thing took place before the actors and others. When I reported this to Major Snyder, he took the time to investigate and found this particular General was a reserve, spending his 2 weeks of active duty just for this operation.

Of course, I remember these periodic chew-outs but I had advanced to the place where I could just chalk it up to some Asshole throwing his weight around.

Enormous change came. I came into the office one Monday and the base was in an uproar. Lyndon Johnson had landed the float battalions in Vietnam, one in Chu Lai, one in Danang, and one in Hue. They were to take up defensive positions and not conduct offensive operations. The 7th Marines (part of the 1st Marine Division) had been alerted to mount-out and I wasn't going to be there. I had wanted to be the point of the spear.

Major Snyder was gone from the MPs already. He had wrangled his way into the S-3 (Operations) shop of the 7th Marines. It was several days before we had a new CO and it was to

be Major Bartlett and it couldn't have been a better choice for me. He was an older man, obviously not headed for high rank, but a veteran of WW2 and Korea.

Whether the following account is totally accurate, I don't know. I have thought about this many times over the years and it could be distorted. But here goes.

The first chance I had, I asked Major Bartlett to speak to him privately. He said no! He knew what I was going to ask. He said that he was brand new to the unit and couldn't let his Exec. Officer go. In a way, this was a relief because I could say I had tried but couldn't go. So I could be satisfied.

But the phone rang several days later and it was Major Snyder. The 7th Marines rated a platoon of MP's. Who were we going to send? I said we hadn't decided but we had several officers in mind. He asked "Why don't you go yourself". Major Bartlett was standing nearby and I went into this explanation of New CO and all. "Oh bullshit!" Major Snyder said.

Then he asked a question that I can testify is true and accurate. "Do you want to go?" I answered immediately. "Yes, Sir". Major Snyder said he'd be calling back. I've thought about this many times over the years. If there is a point that I can point to that affected me, my children, and grandchildren's life, this was the point. Because as you know, it would mean that I would become reacquainted with Kim and finally our marriage.

Anyway, back to the timeline, the phone rang soon and it was for Major Bartlett. He took it in his office. The whole office seemed to get really quiet as we waited. Finally, Major Bartlett came back out. "Well, I don't know how you did it but you're going to the 7th Marines." But he was good natured about it. He produced an imaginary rope and twirled it like a cowboy might. "It's going to take a mighty long rope to get me over there."

There was an outdoor storage area where I could store the car where the car could sit resting for another 13-month tour.

So it was another mount-out and myself and a platoon of MP's and we left San Diego with the 7th Marines on May 25th, 1965, destined for Vietnam. The ship was the USS George Clymer, which would make an entire story by itself.

Summer of 1965

The George Clymer (The Greasy George) was not an impressive view as we embarked. There was some problem with the ballast and when the ship settled into its pier, it settled all right, with a pronounced list. In fact, it looked stupid at the pier.

We spent several days at sea and finally made it to Hawaii. We were met at the pier by General Krulak, girls with leis, and a band. We had several days in Hawaii and it was off to sea once again. Our first hint of trouble was when we went on water rations, that is, navy showers and all that. It seemed that the tubes were leaking in the boiler and water was getting short. Then we woke one morning to find the ship dead in the water. It was to shut down the boilers, and replace pipes, all of which would take 3 days. It was in the heat of the Pacific, it was an awful three days and finally we limped into White Beach, Okinawa, about June 24th, or a trip of almost a month at sea. I, for one, was shocked. I had been under the impression that we were headed for Vietnam.

We traveled to Shwab, and I located Major Snyder. He seemed glad to see me and told me the MPs would be assigned to RAFP (Ryuku Armed Forces Police) at Sukeran to help patrol Marine areas. I finally asked him, what about Vietnam. It seemed like the President was hesitating and wasn't allowing offensive operations in Vietnam. We had to be ready to go at any moment. On the other hand, maybe never!!! I would never have been so enthusiastic about coming with the 7th Marines if I had known it would only be for another 13 months on Okinawa.

I got settled in and at first opportunity, I tried to find Kim. She had moved. But I was in civilian clothes in a bar when I innocently showed a lady my MP ID card. Her eyes widened but she also spied a picture of Kim I had in the wallet. "I know that girl," she said and that was how Kim and I found each other once again.

So all of a sudden, another tour on Okinawa didn't seem so bad. Duty with RAFP was about what you would expect, and being able to see Kim was extra fine. We made the rounds, particularly at Kadena, where that always seemed to be visiting performers. You'll have to ask Kim but I remember Nancy Sinatra and Lew Rawls. She took me to see the Japanese memorial to Japanese who had died in WW2 on Okinawa.

But as you know, the peaceful interlude was to end. The phone rang one day and it was Major Snyder. Head em up and move em out. And he added, I had been appointed the embarkation officer for the LST and I had better check out of my quarters and move to the ship as it was at Navy Pier in Naha and already loading. It would be unusual in that the entire well deck would be full of palletized cargo.

I zipped down to the docks and it wasn't long before once again we were sailing out the channel, past the outcroppings, and into the open sea. This time there was no doubt. We were going to Vietnam and landing at Chu Lai.

As we prepared for landing at Chu Lai, the naval officers were a little nervous themselves and we were all prepared with sidearms and such, and as it got more light we could just make out the shoreline ahead. There was a causeway ahead but as we neared a small boat appeared heading directly toward us at top speed. I was on the bridge and tensed with the rest of the other officers. The small boat veered off and there was a guy waterskiing behind. Everyone on the bridge relaxed. We landed circa Aug., 15th, 1965.

We made our way ashore and found someone who directed us to 7th Marine headquarters. There was an outline of a map where we could set up tents and we set to work getting established. The heat in August was intense even debilitating. Only the Marines would set up in the sand dunes. You've heard of mad dogs and Englishmen in the noon-day sun. We could see the need for MPs as newly arriving units were blundering around trying to orient themselves.

I grabbed a driver and the jeep and toured the small enclave. We could travel out the beach access road to Hwy 1. I would say we could travel north maybe a mile or 2 toward Danang before we hit Marine roadblocks and it was the same going south. I could see that what we were seeing was the prototype Marine operation. Cross the beach, fan the infantry out and form an enclave. We found that within that enclave was a Brown & Root construction company hard at work building a 12-14,000 ft. runway. Whatever apprehension I had felt was relieved. This was the equivalent of another operation. I probably dashed off a letter to my parents saying that. I'm in the rear with the gear.

It was only several days that Major Snyder was on the phone. The 7th Marines were laying on an operation and it would involve 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines who had been in country for several months and were short of men. I should make liaison with 2nd Battalion. I traveled to the Battalion and visited with one of the company commanders. Their experience had been that they rarely met any resistance but you had to be very careful where you stepped. And bring plenty of water, he emphasized. The operation called for three companies moving abreast with our MPs serving a connecting file back to the Battalion commander. The Battalion commander was named Bull Fisher and the operation would be called Operation Starlite. (Google operation Starlite 1965 Vietnam and you will get some perspective.)

Operation Starlite

We were to be helilifted into landing zone White right behind Echo company and Battalion headquarters so we had to wait for an hour or so at the helicopter pad. Someone had a radio on the air net and the helicopter pilots were shouting and seemed to be very excited. That was my first hint that this was not to be a cakewalk.

I was sitting at the door by the door gunner as our chopper approached the landing zone. I looked back at the troopers. They were all staring at me. I drew my pistol, drew the slide, and chambered a round. Lock and load. They all followed suit. Then it was out the door, jump to the ground and on our way on "Operation Starlite".

We landed and started up a small hill and almost immediately came under mortar and small arms fire. As I lay there on that side hill, I'm not ashamed to say it was pretty terrifying. I swear that I looked up once and thought I saw the small bush above clipped by a round. 2 A-4s showed up and made runs off to our left and the shelling stopped. We passed by several groups of wounded and 1 dead Marine and crested the hill and raced down the other side. A Marine motioned by over and pointed down to a little hollowed out hole. There was a dead woman and 2 children where someone had tossed a grenade and went on. I looked at the Marine and shrugged my shoulders, what could we do? I was destined to repeat that mantra over and over in Vietnam.

The order came to hold up and we stopped to wait for the Col. Fisher. I was still in my stupid mode and walked around the paddy with other Marines. A 57 MM round whizzed by and exploded right behind me and knocked me and another Marine forward into a drainage ditch. For just a moment, my helmet was stuck down over my nose and I struggled to get it up. The trooper beside me was looking ahead and said "Should I shoot?". Of course we couldn't as the companies were right ahead of us.

A Marine came up and asked me to help him. He had a small neat incision in his arm with a chunk missing. I grabbed his first aid bandage and tied it up and got him back to an evac. area. The round had injured several Battalion staff members including the S-3 officer and there was a wait for evac. helicopters. Then, it was to press on. The Col gave up his idea of connecting files and from then on we were joined adjoined to the Echo company staff and the Battalion staff.

Spoiler alert- These several hours were my closest brush with the enemy as the enemy disengaged by noon and the bulk of the Marine Casualties from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines were from H company and other casualties from other 7th Marine units.

Water was immediately a problem. The first village we came to had a well but we had been warned to avoid indigenous water due to intestinal parasites. We had been issued Iodine pills so that in an emergency, we could fill our canteens with local water, drop in the pill, shake for 15 minutes and then it would be safe to drink. This whole process wasn't possible and I drank the water and took the pill and hoped for the best along with the rest of the men. We

also had our salt pills which might have been necessary but didn't do anything to relieve our thirst.

The operation turned into trudging forward and finally stopping for the night. On the first night, we were assigned a quadrant of the CP area to protect. We sent a listening post down the little trail that led into our position. Overnight, rifle fire broke out and our patrol came dragging in a dying Vietnamese so my platoon was responsible for 1 enemy KIA. When we arrived at what was to be our last overnight position, we were so short of water that men began to pass out from heat exhaustion. We all rushed around to distribute whatever water we had and finally a chopper arrived with cans of water. We had to evacuate several of the men who were in pretty desperate condition.

There was a reporter from the Arizona Gazette named Paul Dean along with the operation who talked to me a little. The significance of this will become obvious later in the account. We were helilifted back to Chu Lai and rushed into the surf to rinse off our utilities. We had sweat so much that our utilities were stiff with salt and chaffed against our legs. Finally, we were able to relax back in basecamp. Back home to Chu Lai.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

All personnel attached to and serving with the following units of the 7th Regimental Landing Team during the period 18 to 23 August 1965 are hereby authorized to wear the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

Headquarters Company, 7th Marines
Detachment, Company B (Rein), 1st Tank Battalion
Detachment, 3d Battalion (-) (Rein), 11th Marines
Detachment, Company A, 3d Antitank Battalion
107mm Mortar Battery, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines
Detachment, Headquarters Company, 3d Amphibious
Tractor Battalion
Detachment, Company A, 3d Amphibious Tractor Battalion

Battalion Landing Team, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines
Headquarters and Service Company, 2d Battalion,
4th Marines
Companies E, G, and H, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines
2d Platoon, Company C, 3d Tank Battalion
2d Platoon, Company B, 3d Engineer Battalion
Detachment, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines
Platoon, Military Police Company, 3d Marine Division

Battalion Landing Team, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines
Headquarters and Service Company, 3d Battalion,
3d Marines
Companies I, K, L, and M, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines
3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Tank Battalion
Platoon, Company B, 3d Antitank Battalion
3d Platoon (Rein), Company A, 1st Amphibious Tractor
Battalion
3d Platoon, Company B, 3d Engineer Battalion
Detachment, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines
Detachment, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines
Detachment, Interrogation-Translation Team, 4th Marines

page two of three pages

Operation Piranha

Well, I wasn't exactly at the point of the spear, but I was darned close. But I had to calculate that as I was to be in Vietnam until next summer that could include a lot of close calls. What were the odds of surviving? And the 7th Marines were still full of enthusiasm. They laid on another operation to be called Operation Piranha.

In the meantime, I was appointed at Provost Martial of Marine Corp Base, Chu Lai. A more distinguished title I have never had, as in reality Chu Lai was really a kind of madhouse where vehicles and even units still wandered around, seemingly looking for something.

Operation Piranha would be a little different for the MPs. There was now a holding area for enemy prisoners at Chu Lai which had to be manned. In addition, the high command wanted motor patrols up and down Hwy 1 within the conclave because of the heavy truck traffic. As a result, we left one squad behind and I took two squads on Piranha.

We were also going ashore from ships so we loaded ourselves onto a ship for transport. It was great to get a day or two aboard ship. The navy was great to us as we were now bofamide combat veterans. They washed our clothes and provided great meals. But too soon, it was time for the operation. We were in a later landing wave and finally climbed down the cargo nets into the landing craft.

The public affairs officer had prevailed on me to carry a camera and take pictures if I could but when we landed, I had to wade through water almost chest high and the camera got ruined. Going across the beach, we came across a group of villagers being watched over by an infantry man. There was a dead mother there, shot through the chest. The SeaBees had set up a holding compound and there were probably 15-20 mostly old men in the holding compound. So that was to be it for us.

We had 2 interpreters, one an earnest young man, and the other a strutting peacock dressed in camouflage utilities. Somewhere after noon, the earnest young interpreter came forward with an old lady who was evidently the village honcho. She wanted money for incense for the dead woman. We did have a young civil affairs officer there and he actually did have some funds. We paid the old woman the equivalent of \$2.00 American.

There was an infantry platoon on the perimeter for security and there was an amtrack pulled up for lights. It was slightly uncomfortable overnight with the lights but what was the likelihood that the enemy would shell a compound holding their own.

Sometime in the night rifle fire broke out and the infantry came dragging in 2 young dying Vietnamese, with an old carbine. Evidently they had stayed hidden all day and tried to sneak out at night and came up right in front of a Marine platoon. We called in a Corpman and he shook his head and I could see he was right. It wasn't pleasant as these two young Vietnamese passed away.

The next morning, the earnest young interpreter was back with the same old lady and they both were agitated. A young girl in the village had been raped. I called for the infantry

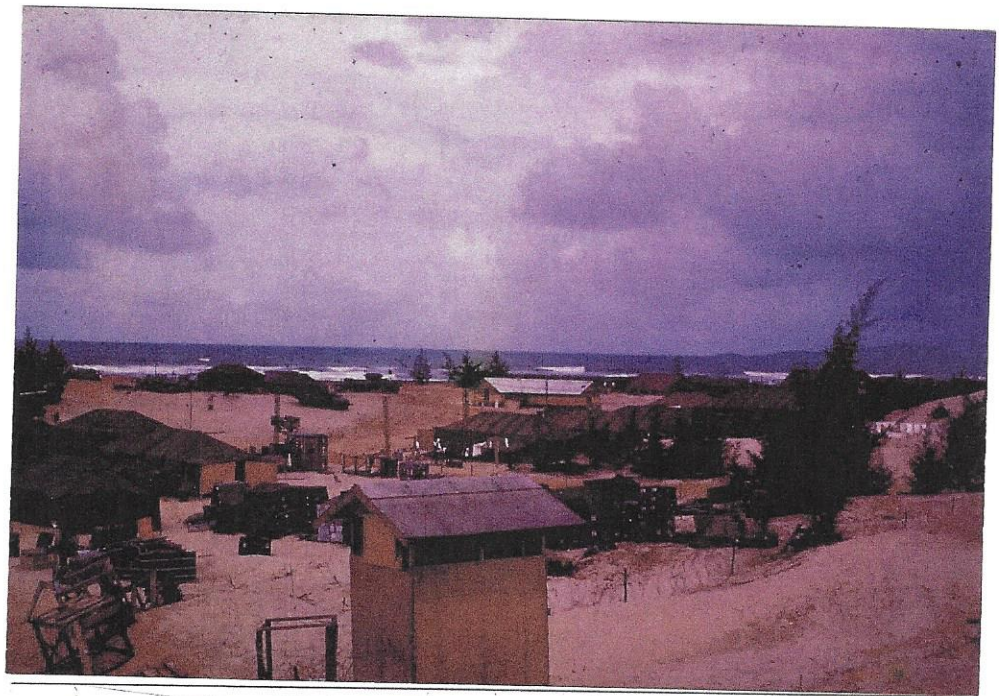
platoon Lt. and I'm ashamed to say our first thought was it must have been a Marine. But the conversation was continuing between the interpreter and the poor girl and it suddenly developed that the rapist had been speaking English all right but also wearing camouflage utilities. The only person in the village who fit the description was the other interpreter! We tied him up, I wrote up a statement and we sent him back to Chu Lai. I never heard what happened to him.

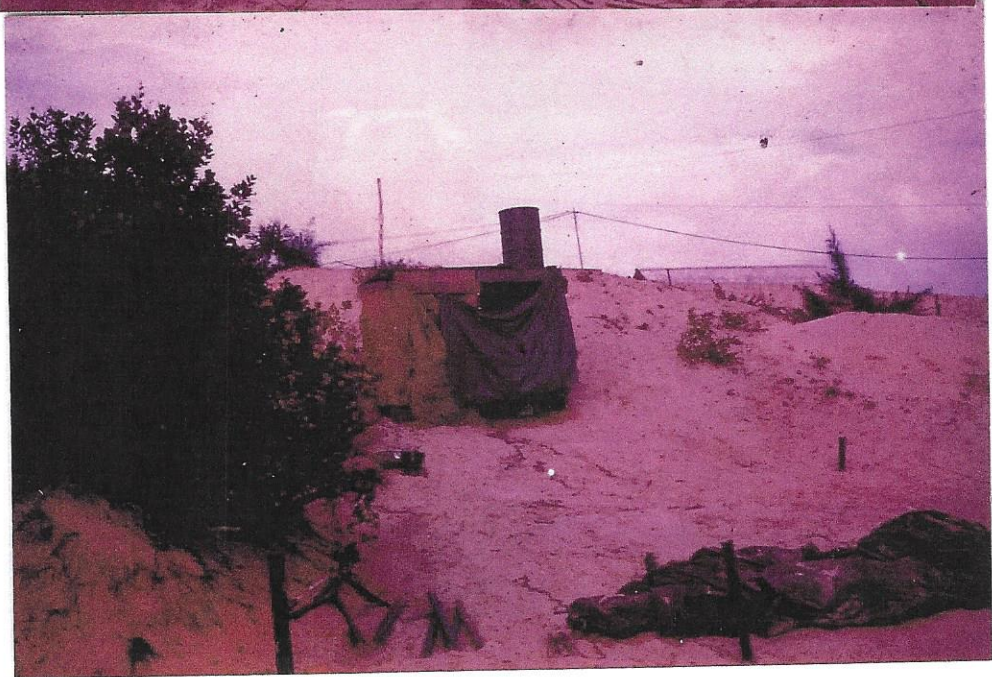
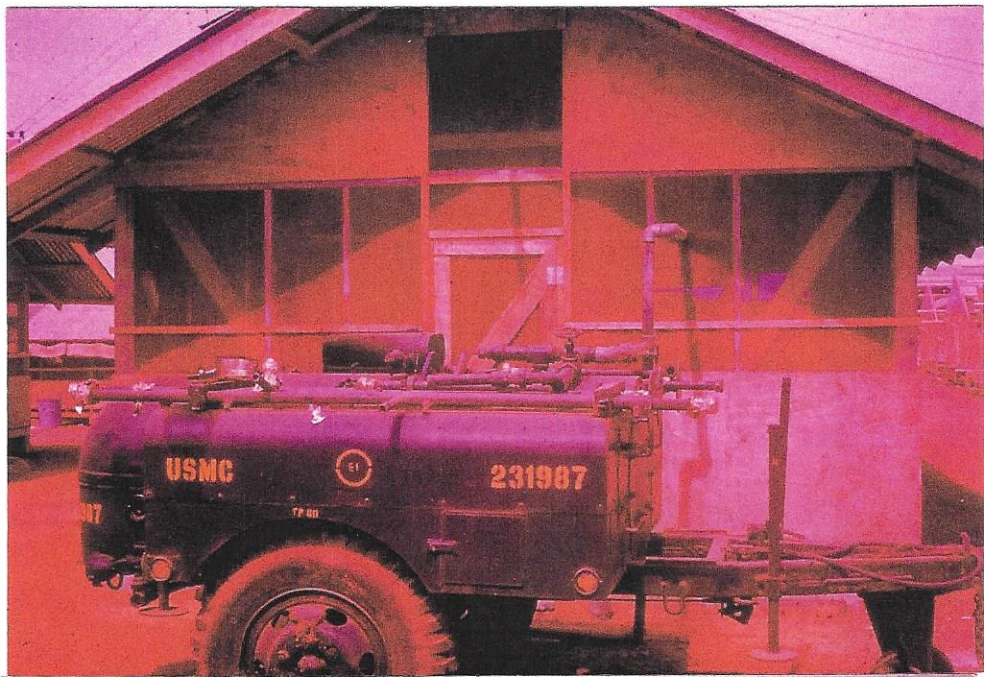
The old lady was back and this time wanted damages for the rape. We paid another \$2.00. I remember thinking that we hadn't made many friends in this particular little fishing village. Then it was back to the compound at Chu Lai.

(Lots of info available on both Starlite and Piranha, also with some video on U-tube and such.)



Chu Lai





Paul Dean

We arrived back at Chu Lai and developed into what might be called more traditional MP duties. I was in the office on day and a mail orderly came asked for the "Famous" Lt. Stimson. He had this huge mail bag full of mail addressed to me. Someone counted or estimated it was about 3,500.

It seemed that Paul Dean had written an article about Operation Starlite and it had run in the Arizona Gazette and several other papers around the country. The result was about 3,500 letters to me from everywhere in the country. He had quoted me by name. Somebody had seen the article and sent a copy to Mother and Father and I have photocopied this article and included in this account. We passed the letters around to other members of the platoon and even other units and asked that if a Marine took a letter, he would respond. And most did.

So even though I had written home and told Mother and Father not to be worrying because I was in the rear with the gear, they had this article to contend with. They probably knew that I would be in the thick of things, anyway.

We went away from C rations, and I can't tell you the designation, but we went to a kind of intermediate rations. This was a small local mess hall and mostly dry ingredients, to be mixed with water. This would be like powdered eggs and water, powdered milk and water, and powdered potatoes and water, and so forth. We had our individual mess kits and the procedure was to go ahead and eat the meal, then take the mess kit and scrape the remains into a garbage can. There was another garbage can which was supposed to be filled with boiling water and as your final move, you dipped your mess kit in the boiling water.

As you probably can imagine, it was shortly that the most terrible bout of diarrhea spread through our area. Maybe it should be called dysentery. Whatever, it was the worst I had ever experienced. We didn't feel particularly bad, it was just that we were running to the head every chance we had. And to put it as delicately as possible, it was like you were eliminating hot water every time you went. For a period of time, we went back to eating the C rations which you could at least eat safely. I would hate to guess how much weight I lost during that time. And I didn't gain much of it back in Vietnam.

It didn't help that we were located at the end of the mats runway and the A4 were constantly taking off using Jato assist and very noisy. And somewhere very nearby was a 155 artillery unit which was silent until the middle of the night when they would suddenly fire off a H&I (Harassment and Interdiction) round. The concussion from firing that round would actually slap the side of our tents and wake us up.

For some reason, the major operations ended for a time in our area. We didn't hear any more from the 7th Marines, in fact I totally lost track of them. And I never saw Major Snyder again. My whole circle of acquaintances revolved around the MP platoon and the staff that was growing on the rise on the north side of Chu Lai beach. I attended the staff meeting and reported on MP activities, so my reports didn't amount to much. My direct superior was a Col. who conducted the briefings with a good humor and was helpful to me.

Mother sent over a "care" package with all sorts of goodies she thought I might enjoy, including a bag of jelly beans. I had them kind of hidden away over my cot and began to find some missing. One night, my arm was flung over the side of the cot and I awoke with something nipping on my finger. We knew we had rats but this was getting too close and also explained where my jelly beans were disappearing. And we knew that right behind our office what appeared to be a maze of rat holes.

So I grabbed some gas and poured it around the holes and lit it off. Wouldn't you know a flaming rat ran out and expired under a pallet of supplies, starting a smoky fire. We had to tear the palletized material apart with no real damage. But at the next staff meeting, the Col. finished by saying that he had noticed a fire down at the beach. He didn't what asshole would start a fire on the beach but pass the word to be careful. I nodded with everyone else. I didn't know how anyone could be so stupid.

Every day units were disembarking and coming ashore. The roadblocks on Hwy 1 were moving as the enclave expanded with more and more battalions out front. My place in the war seemed secure and I could begin to relax. This was to end soon.

It seemed that Danang was suffering massive problems from the Marine buildup. And somehow the MP Company commander in Danang found out that there was this "experienced" MP Officer whiling away his time down in Chu Lai. So he prevailed on the powers-that-be to have me transferred to Danang. The next staff meeting the Col came over and told me that I would be leaving.

It was emotional leaving the MP platoon. We had left Pendleton together, spent a month getting to Okinawa, served with RAFP, and went through Starlite and Piranah. Sad to say that only man I can remember now was Sgt. Trapp, a very squared away black man. But I made my way to the airstrip and traveled to Danang.

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Combat Diary

Aftermath of Battle Still Grim For Those Left to Undergo It

Danger lurks for combat men even after the enemy has been routed, leaving hundreds of dead and wounded behind. Operation Starlight, a grim three-day battle, was over, and a heroic band of Marines was about to be relieved. Paul Dean, our war correspondent in Vietnam, tells of the closing hours of their rendezvous with the black-clad enemy.

(Fifth of a Five-Part Series)

Read

By PAUL DEAN
Republic Staff Writer

all

VAN TUONG — The Marine lieutenant squinted into the night and used a spent match to explore teeth that for three days had used chewing gum for toothpaste.

"You know what bugs me about newspaper and magazine writers?" he said. "They always wind up combat stories by saying 'and at night the weary soldiers slept and relaxed.' "

A 5-inch naval shell droned over our heads. Our own outgoing mail, wicked 81mm mortar shells, shook the ground under our dusty boots.

The lieutenant and I banged helmets as we ducked to avoid tracer slugs ricocheting from the beach a half mile to our front.

There wasn't going to be much sleep this night. And I joined the lieutenant in being upset at newspaper reporters.

FOR WAR did not stop this night for the men of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. It simply entered a new phase.

We were dug in with Golf Company and the battalion command post at the top of terraced rice paddies overlooking a magnificent sweep of the South China Sea. Echo Company was occupying a tiny coastal spur to the north. The battalion's other unit, Hotel Company, had been evacuated that morning after a savage mauling that had claimed 50 per cent casualties.

But the battalion had done well. By actual body count we could claim 100 Vietcong killed, and more than twice this number injured, and that

evening we had airlifted out 32 VC prisoners.

THEY WERE scruffy little men, all in tattered black pajamas, with foul-toothed mouths constantly gaping in mute requests for water.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Bull Fisher, and I had stood and looked at them.

"And these are the scrawny little bastards who've been giving us so much trouble," he said.

At 1 a.m., Col. Fisher was in his command hole, a camouflaged poncho tent shielding the glow from a cigarette.

He was thinking about the word he had received from regiment concerning Operation Starlight.

AT LEAST 1,500 VC had been killed or wounded. Fisher's own battalion had overrun a VC command post, honeycombed with tunnels

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 6)

A Prayer

O GOD, we trust Thee for another day. We have no one else in whom to believe. All else fails us. Life is too mysterious, too demanding, to go it alone. Our help is in Thee. For all Thy mercies we give Thee thanks.

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More About

Dean's Combat Diary

(Continued from Page 1)

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THERE carried in bed, his raw flesh bone.

A man, shoulder badly clawed, limped in for the instant medicine being handed out by Corpsman Bob Scholtes, 34, of Oklahoma City.

His tiny wife, her white blouse bloody from hugging her man, came with him. The villager was airlifted out to a Marine hospital.

His wife was told she could ride with him.

For three awful minutes, while the chopper pilot screamed about the possibility of VC ground fire, she fought the choice between love for her husband and fear of the shuddering machine these men of violence had brought with them.

FEAR WON, and the woman collapsed in the red dirt and sobbed as the chopper lifted off.

Two more men stumbled into our position and asked for dressings for wounds "from the airplanes."

But Scholtes had an ex-

and spider pits, and had captured grenades, U.S.-manufactured radio sets, packs and clothing and vital documents, including a valuable chart showing VC radio links and call signs. Not a bad score.

Outside on the radio, Pfc. Ira Young, 19, was thinking soldier's thoughts of home, his girl in Lafayette, La., and the huge meal of steak and eggs he would order the first time he got liberty.

"Somehow I never get around to thinking about home," said Lt. Harry Stimson, 26, of Independence, Iowa. "I suppose I should philosophize about war; but I don't get much further than wondering what is out there in the night, what is that noise, and who is going to start shooting at me next."

STIMSON didn't have long to wait for his shooting.

Thoughts were guillotined as his own machinegun pit opened up at a moving shadow.

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But at 8: ward Garr, Fla., yelled command p

"Message . . . Helos of retraction."

Operation 3 bloody three

The shape sped into a tree-line, leaving a dark blob laying in the light of a flare.

It turned out to be a small purple fabric sack of dried potatoes.

The guerrilla carrying these VC rations had escaped.

In my own foxhole, steel helmet for a pillow, I resigned myself to the dirt lumps prodding my back, scratchy beard, filthy fatigues and muddy rivers of sweat.

I THOUGHT of what I had seen that day, particularly the small acts of tremendous courage too often overlooked in the heat of battle.

There was Lt. Doug Ryan from Echo Company, an imp of a 150-pounder, who had carried two 200-pound NCOs 100 yards back to a medical aid center. He had been under fire all the time. As it turned out the little lieutenant got his strength from being the battalion chin-up champion.

And the sight of a muddy ditch full of wounded Marines.

There was one huge sergeant screaming in agony. But all he had was a relatively simple bullet wound in the ankle.

AND NEXT to him was a young kid with half his face blown away. He could have cried out, but he chose to chew on what was left of his lip.

I dozed off. The rest lasted until 3 a.m.

A barrage of naval gunfire had started. And the erupting shells were slowly walking toward our own positions.

Col. Fisher grabbed his radioman and screamed an emergency "flash" message to regiment. The bombardment stopped 100 yards short of our positions.

THIRTY minutes later we came under another attack. Our own aircraft were striking with rockets just short of our forward foxholes.

Again Fisher grabbed the radio. Again we were saved

our positions a little after 5 a.m.

Marines coughed, scratched and faced into the bushes. They broke open cardboard boxes of C-rations. Ham and lima beans, coconut cookies, peanut butter and crackers for breakfast.

I BORROWED one of their tricks, heating a C-ration can of water over burning plastic explosive and stirring in instant coffee and powdered cream.

Never has a bad cup of coffee tasted so good. Nor the puffs on the stale, half-smoked

(Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

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More About

Diary

(Continued from Page 4)

cigarette I had been saving since last night.

But the war was still around us. There was a grenade explosion on a hill to our right. Our Vietnamese interpreter, in search of precious nylon fabric from parachute flares, had walked straight into one of our own booby traps.

And from a nameless village to our front came a pathetic straggle of peasants who had been injured by the air strike that should never have been.

THERE WAS a 10-year-old carried in on a heavy wooden bed, his right leg a mass of raw flesh and splintered bone.

A man, his body and shoulder badly clawed, limped in for the instant medicine being handed out by Corpsman Bob Scholtes, 34, of Oklahoma City.

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PRISONERS AIRLIFTED — Some of 32 Vietcong prisoners taken by 4th Marine Regiment's 2nd Battalion are loaded aboard helicopter at com-

perienced eye for combat injuries.

These wounds were at least three days old. And two had most certainly been caused by carbine bullets. Jets don't carry carbines.

The men were arrested as VC suspects and hauled off to a POW camp.

Col. Fisher was anxious this morning. He had received preliminary word that his depleted battalion might have to fulfill another mission.

HIS MARINES were filthy, tired, in need of a hot meal. They had long ago run out of cigarettes, and canteen water was down to a dribble.

But at 8:30 a.m., Sgt. Edward Garr, 33, of Oklawaha, Fla., yelled across to the dirt command post.

"Message from Starboard ... Helos on way, commence retraction."

Operation Starlight, a bloody three-day trip to hell

and back for the men of the 2nd Battalion, was over.

I hitchhiked by chopper and Jeep to the sandy civilization of Chu Lai and sneaked my name on the manifest of a C130 troop transport bound for Da Nang.

THERE WERE other Marines waiting for that flight.

But these men were zippered in green plastic-rubber sacks. Impersonal cardboard labels and tiny metal dog tags identified the corpses of 30

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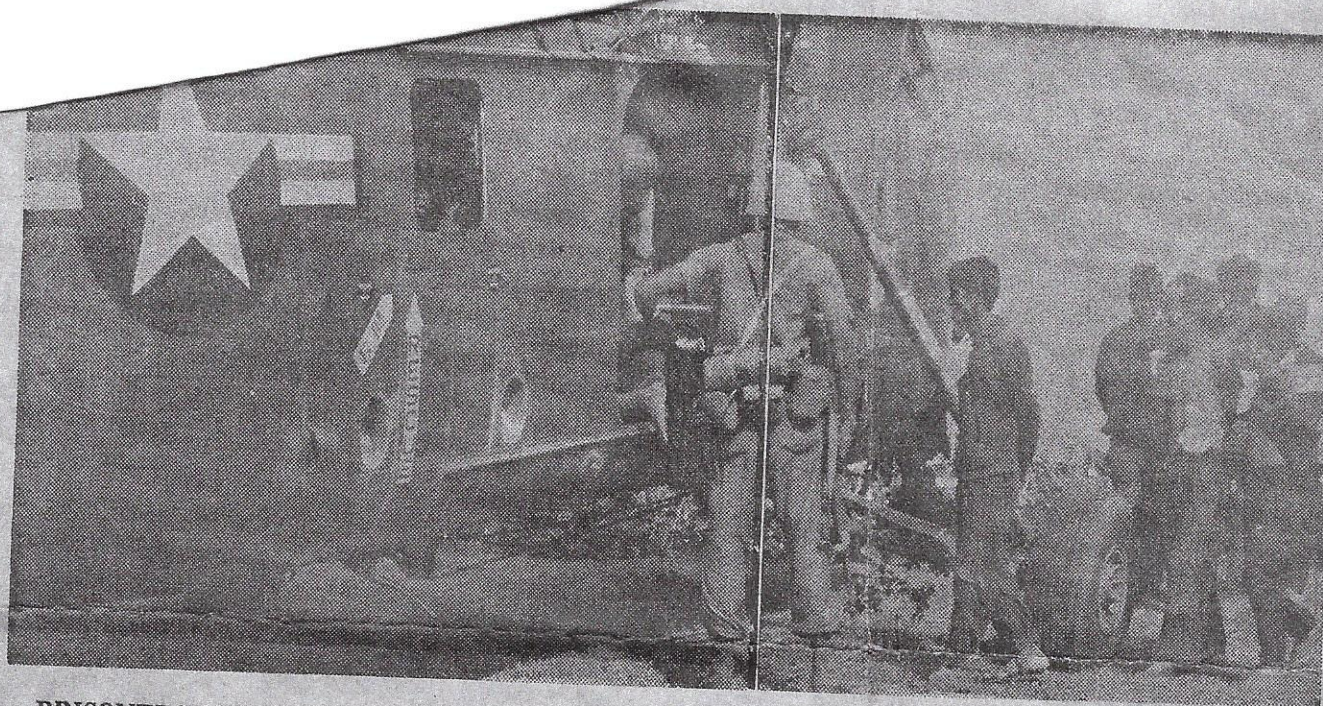
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Operation Starlight, a
body three-day trip to hell



Republic Photo by Paul Dean

PRISONERS AIRLIFTED — Some of 32 Vietcong prisoners taken by 4th Marine Regiment's 2nd Battalion are loaded aboard helicopter at com-

mand post near Van Tuong. Scrawny, black-pajamaed VC proved formidable fighters during three-day fight for Vietnam peninsula.

Advertisement

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Quite simply, they'd given
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(Continued on Page 4, Col. 6)

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fails us. Life is too mysterious,
too demanding, to go it alone.
Our help is in Thee. For all Thy
mercies we give Thee thanks.

FOR A FAMILY SIZE SMILE

September 24, 1965

Dear Harry,

I would at this opportunity like to express to you my heartfelt "thanks" over the good you is doing while in Vietnam, helping to stamped out those terrible Menaces to civilization- the Communist Vietcong Duerrilla.

I know this isn't fun for you with your hard and long days and nights you put in, risking your life in helping make this world a better place to live & especially recently in the grim three-day battle "Operation Starlight" which you took part in.

I hope this will find you in good health, and not feeling you been serving in vain. Persons like you is thought of often by the peoples from back home.

Sincerely yours,

Danny Franklin

Danny Franklin
206 East Alice
Sunnyslope, Arizona 85020

U.S.A.

Independence, Iowa
Jan. 20, 1966

Dear Mr. Stimson,

My name is

I am in the eighth grade at Jefferson Jr. High School. I have seen your father many times at school. Mr. Corkery, our Geography teacher told us to watch for you on the Bob Hope Show.

We watched for you but didn't happen to see you.

I wish to tell you and all your buddies that the whole eighth grade is pulling for ~~you~~ you. We hope that you all will be back home soon.

Well, I guess I had better close now and do my icky home work.

Sincerely,

Thank you for writing to me
We enjoyed about 75 letters from you
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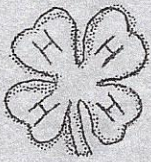
time. This is the time of year for such things here.

What is your favorite baseball team? My favorite team was the Braves, but since they moved to Atlanta I really have not decided which team I like best. My brother goes for the New York Yankees, even though they are not doing so well. Everyone has his own opinion on everything and I would like to know yours about baseball.

I am very happy for you because of your promotion. I do not know how high a captain is or what he does but I am sure you like being one. You must have been doing, and are doing, much for your country to get promoted.

I can't find anymore to say so good-bye for now and see you in June. Sorry I took so long to write. Oh, thanks for the map.

Your friend,



I pledge . . my HEAD to clearer thinking,
my HEART to greater loyalty,
my HANDS to larger service, and
my HEALTH to better living, for
my club, my community and my country.

Dear G. I.

I want to thank
you for what you
are doing for me
and our country.
I hope you enjoy
my cookies.

Sincerely,
Joni J.
Scimmens
R D #2 Box
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Ohio, age-9

Danang 1965

The MP compound at Danang was a step above Chu Lai. I had my own tent and an actual single bed, mattress and all. The compound was located just off the end of the Danang runway. All day long planes came and went without too much notice. But there were also the F4's which had to be the single noisiest planes I had ever heard. They took off with afterburners glowing in the night and all conversations came to a halt until they were going out of sight. Just a minor inconvenience considering the upgrade in facilities.

The company commander was a Major Z and actually seemed glad to see me. Even though the 3rd Marine Division was ashore and outside the city itself, the existence of a full Marine division on the edge of town would tax a lot of communities. Major Z outlined his troubles.

Marines had liberty in Danang except for Saturday nights so this required patrols. The new commissary was reporting they estimated there were receiving only about 20% of the inputs coming over the pier. Young Vietnamese boys would jump out in front of trucks, the trucks would stop and hoards of other boys would clean the truck out before anyone could do anything. It was said that if you had to replace your combat boots, you might as well go to the "vil" and buy a pair. This was going to require a convoy system. There were never ending problems at the dump. There was searching for AWOL Marines and 1 deserter who had found life much more livable by just living in downtown Danang and this man hadn't been caught yet. The Major ended his litany and he left. I asked the 1st Sgt. where the Major was going. The 1st Sgt. shrugged his shoulders and said that he had no idea. Not a good sign, I thought.

I hadn't really got my feet on the ground when a call came and Major Z took it. He had the habit of stiffening or even leaping to his feet as he said "Yes, Sir, Yes, Sir" over the phone. It seems that the problems at the dump had come to a head. Units had been ordered to place an armed guard on trucks headed for the dump because the Vietnamese kids would jump on the trucks and start throwing things off. Unfortunately, one of the armed guards on the trucks had just shot and killed a Vietnamese boy and an ugly crown was developing. Major Z looked at me and said "You'd better handle this."

My driver and another 2 Marines jumped in a jeep and tore out to the dump. Sure enough, several trucks were stalled just inside the gate and several more were arriving as we got there. I had no qualms about pulling my pistol and plunging through the crowd with the riflemen following me and got to the front of the lead truck so they could get going. About that time, a vehicle full of Vietnamese troops arrived and they forcefully removed the crowd. The mother and a few other women were hovering over the body of the dead boy and just before we left she looked over at our jeep and made a supplication motion with her outreached arms. My driver looked at me and I motioned him on. What could we do?

Major Z called headquarters and reported that the incident was over and garbage runs were cancelled, pending finding another more suitable location.

Duty in Danang got even better. I think it was on Thursday nights, there was a steak night at a downtown hotel appropriated as an Officers club. The pretty Vietnamese waitresses

were dressed in the My-Ties, there was usually a band, and plenty of "refreshments" It was here I met an Army advisor who had suddenly found himself overrun by thousands of Marines. He told me that the Marines were upsetting the applecart here in I Corp. The Vietnamese commander was a General Thi, who was a Buddhist and up to now was conducting a 9-5 war collecting arms and funds and having very little contact with the "enemy". The whole war had been conducted with a series of side agreements. The big fuel tanks on the edge of town were sitting ducks for attacks but oil tankers traveled up and down Hwy 1 and never molested by the Viet Cong. And the reason Gen Thi had insisted that Marines didn't have liberty on Saturday night was that Saturday night was reserved for the Viet Cong to come to town.

It was several weeks later that I had the duty in downtown Danang on Saturday night. There did seem to be a number of young couples out for a stroll but there were other young guys who stepped back into the shadowed doorways. I had the jeep pull over to the curb. I had to wonder if the Army Major was right and I was looking directly at the enemy. You could see the glow of cigarettes in the darkness. Finally, my driver said that he didn't feel comfortable sitting there and we passed on.

We had a fireworks display at some point. The Viet Cong hit the helicopter pad at Marble Mountain. We stood outside our tents and watched the flashes and heard the explosions. About 50 choppers were damaged or destroyed.

It was on Thanksgiving Day that and we had been promised the greatest turkey dinner when the phone rang in the office. Major Z leaped to his feet and repeated "Yes, Sir, Yes, Sir" over and over. We all tensed. It seemed that there was a call for help from a freighter in the harbor, there was a mutiny under way! I grabbed several troopers and a vehicle travel to White beach to see if there was a boat. The Major took his men directly to Navy pier.

Our driver was good and we roared past White beach with no boats in sight and we traveled on to Navy pier. A many stripped officer came to meet us and directed to the Admiral's launch and away we went. This launch was a mahogany beauty with a big inboard engine. The coxswain had to hold it down as we went out the channel and then he opened it up. The ship was about a mile out but we approached fast. I looked back at the men. They were all staring at me like now what have you gotten us into? I pulled my pistol and motioned lock and load. There were cargo nets down and it was difficult to climb a cargo net with pistol in one hand but I kept up with the troopers and together, we jumped over the railing. The deck was empty. It developed that there was Chinese crewman aboard who had gone nuts, attacked another crewman with an ax, and had been subdued. He needed to be removed from the ship.

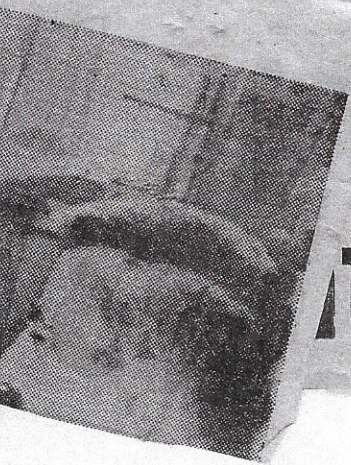
But up on the bridge was the Captain in full whites who motioned me up to the bridge. I took another man and we made our way to the wardroom. The Captain held out 2 shot glasses for us and proceeded to pour a drink for all three us. "To the Marine Corp" he

said and clicking his heels downed his drink. We did the same. I don't ever remember ever clicking my heels before.

On the way back the troopers were in a great mood and it looked just possible we could make our Thanksgiving dinner. We were going down the channel when we met a crane-type barge and suddenly realized that the Major and his men were aboard. We held up but our coxswain shook his head. He evidently wasn't going to hazard the Admiral's launch. We traveled on to the pier and were met by the many striped Navy man and the Vietnamese police. While we waited impatiently, they argued back and forth as no one wanted to take the prisoner. Finally the Vietnamese dragged the Chinese off and we rushed back to the mess tent.

Sure enough, it was closed up but we pulled the flaps back and after my troopers told them the story, the messmen did find a meal for us, maybe not the full meal but a good one. When we got back to the unit, the Major's men were sitting there eating C rations. The Major didn't seem too upset but he took off pretty fast for wherever he was going. I may not have made any points with the Major but I was a hit with my troopers.

Major Z rotated home and was replaced by a Major P. He was a decent man but events were about to overtake me once again. The 1st Marine division had transplanted to Okinawa. And with the 1st Division came Major Bartlett, my old CO who had twirled his rope. It seemed the Marine Corp had managed to rope the good Major into his third war. Major Bartlett visited Chu Lai and searched for his Exec. Officer who had left him long ago. He wasn't happy to find that I had been scarfed up by the 3rd Division. So it was time for me to say goodbye to Danang and back to Chu Lai. I said my goodbyes and climbed on a C-130 for Chu Lai. We were traveling with another C-130 when it seemed to me that it was taking a long time to land at Chu Lai. I caught a glimpse out a window and the other C-130 had crashed and was burning on the runway! I had to try again the next day and finally did get back to Chu Lai, back home.



Damage 47 Planes at Da Nang, Chu Lai

DA NANG, Vietnam (UPI)—Viet Cong forces launched commando and mortar attacks against three U.S. Marine-defended bases at midnight Wednesday, destroying or damaging 47 helicopters and jet fighter-bombers.

Marine Corps authorities reported that Viet Cong commandoes succeeded in penetrating only one of the bases and that suicide squad's five members were either killed or captured.

In a related action, a regular Viet Cong unit estimated at more than 100 men also walked into a Marine ambush near this sprawling military complex and was badly cut up.

There were no Marine casualties in the ambush and spokesmen described U.S. casualties on the three attacked bases as "very light."

Spokesmen said the most damage was suffered at the Marines' Da Nang East-Marble mountain base, the home of Air Group 16.

The base is located on a peninsula bounded by the sea and the Da Nang river, due east of this strategic seaport and 385 miles northeast of Saigon.

The base complex draws its name from a nearby mountain of pure marble.

Thursday morning, marines picked their way through the rubble left by the midnight attack and reported counting the burned-out hulks of 18 HU-1B turbojet and H-34 helicopters.

Another 22 H-34 and H-37 helicopters were found damaged.

At Chu Lai, the main base for U.S. Marine jets some 50 miles to the south, authorities reported

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

VC Raids—

(Continued from Page 1)

two A-4 Skyhawk fighter bombers totally destroyed and five others damaged.

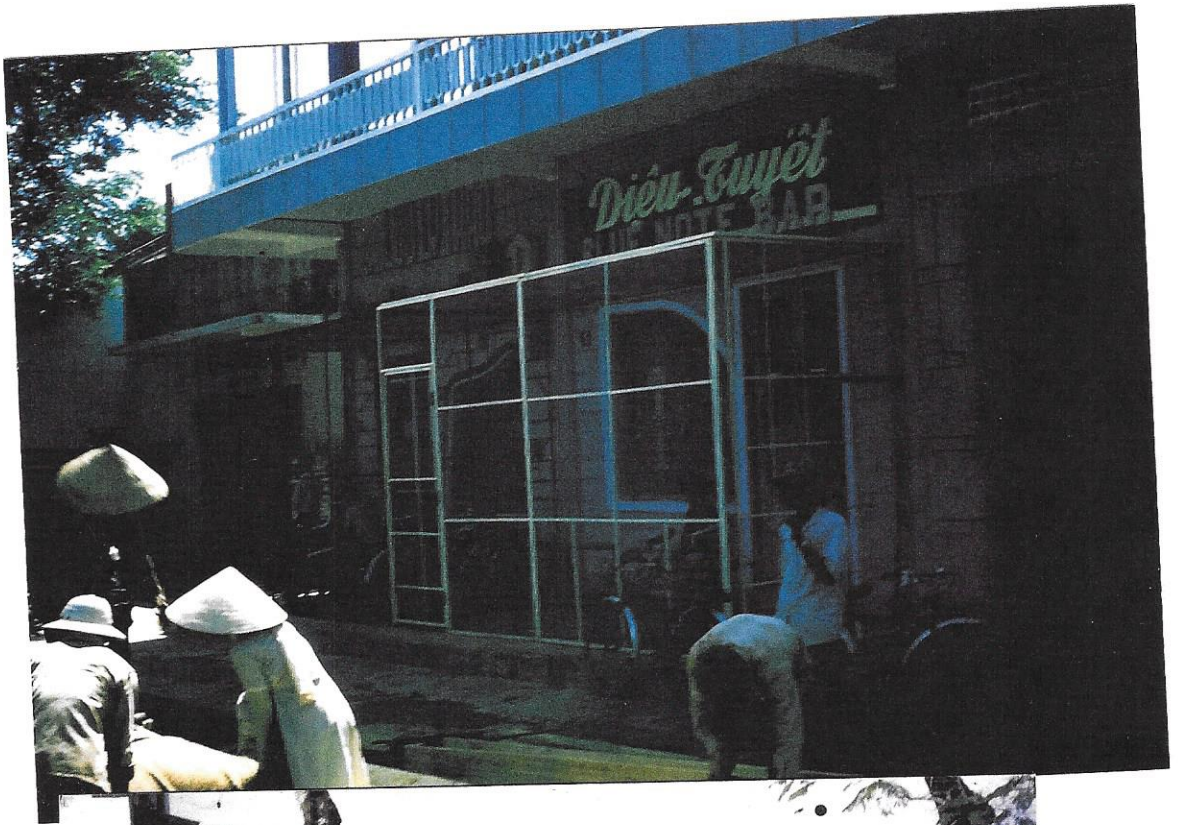
Early reports said there were no aircraft damaged at the main Da Nang air base, from which both Air Force and Marine jets are launched for strikes against Viet Cong and north Vietnamese military targets.

Spokesmen could offer no details of the successful Marine ambush of a regular Viet Cong company, other than to say 15 communist dead were left at the battle scene by the withdrawing Viet Cong.

The five Viet Cong who penetrated Marine defenses at Chu Lai were carrying satchels of explosives with which they apparently destroyed or damaged the seven Skyhawk jets.

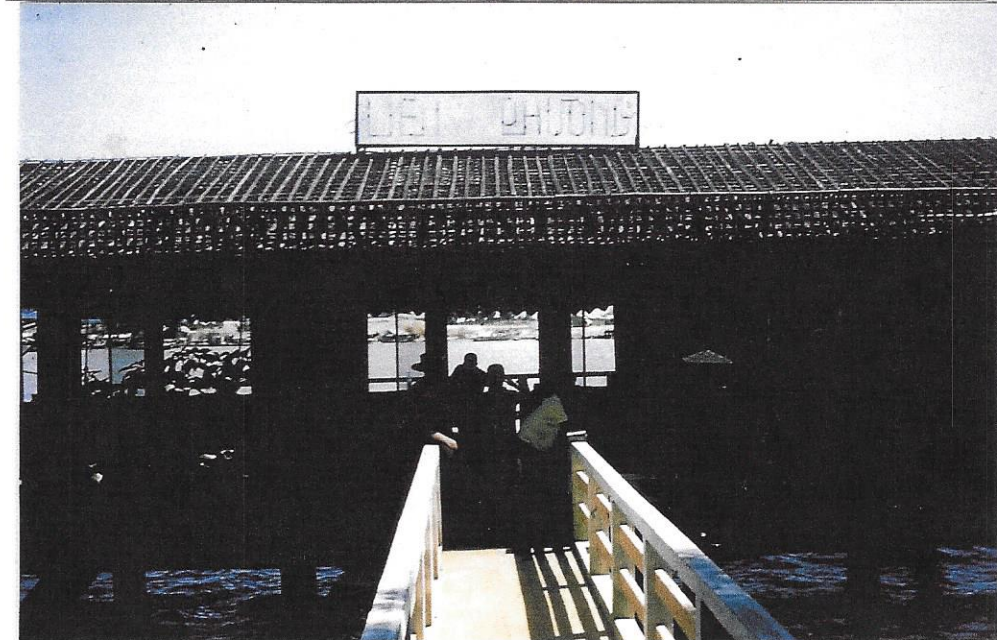
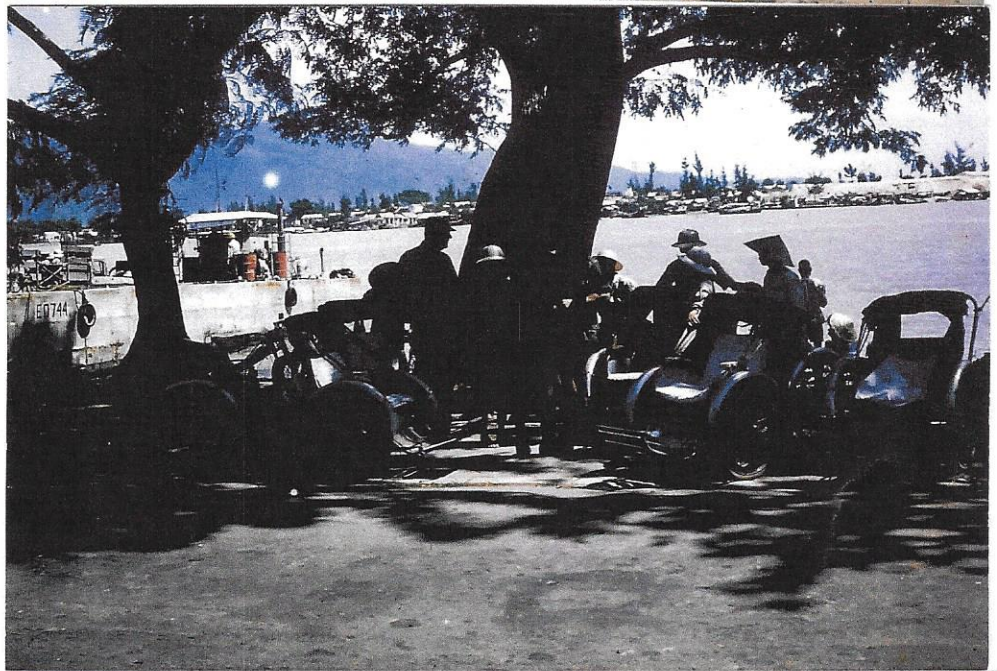
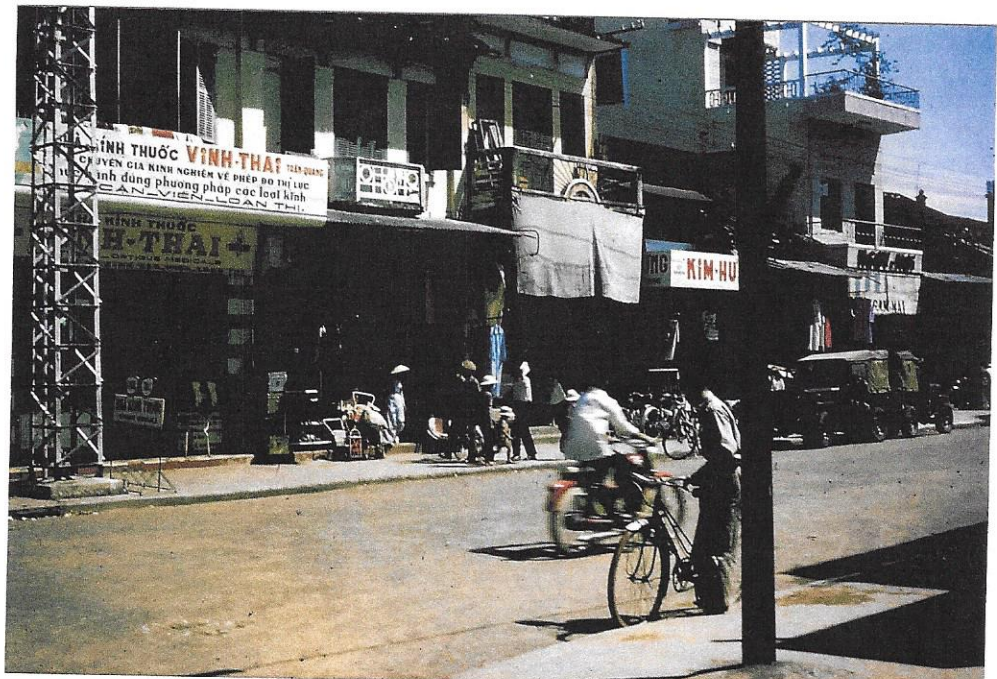
An American military spokesman said the guerrillas infiltrated through the Marine perimeter, and ran throwing grenades through the base.

About 30,000 American servicemen are based around Da Nang, which also is the headquarters of the Vietnamese Army's 1st Corps which covers the nation's five northernmost provinces.



Da Nang





Chu Lai Again 1965-66

The platoon seemed happy to see me back, but I could see they were just a little bit thinner and had developed attitude problems. They took no time in filling me in on the bad chow, the lack of maintenance for equipment and vehicles, and general living conditions. There was the same A-4s taking off over the compound. The same old H&I fire in the middle of the night. I felt just a little embarrassed as I had just spent a couple of months with a genuine mess hall, steak fries every Thursday, washerwomen, and better living conditions overall.

I traveled up the hill for the same old staff meeting and the same old Col. was there. He smiled and told me that I just had to get back to Chu Lai, didn't I. But he had a good piece of news. I had been appointed security officer for the upcoming Bob Hope show. That sounded interesting. It developed that our only duties would be to form a convoy to take the Hope troupe to and from the stage area.

So I had high hopes of meeting Mr. Hope but when he stepped off the plane, there was such a crush of higher-ranking officers there I got pushed to the rear. The show was exactly like you've seen over the years, only with a lot more bawdy jokes that never made it to TV. The trip back to the airstrip came too soon and the troupe embarked and off they went.

Shortly after Christmas, the MATS airstrip became so bad that the airstrip was shut down for regrading and relaying the runway. We regressed to eating C rations for a time as we didn't really want to go through another round of the trots. This began several month of extreme do-nothingness that I have ever experienced. New troops and units were coming into Chu Lai every day. The perimeter of the enclave was expanding. And there we sat. We did have several incidents.

I was called to Hwy 1 for "Officer Assistance". A young child had been struck and killed by a Marine truck and a crowd had gathered. We got the truck out of the crowd and the crowd disbursed. I sat for a second with my driver and looked at the small family kneeling over the body. One of the women reached out with the same gesture I had seen before. My driver looked over at me and I motioned him on. What could we do?

Once again, at the staff meeting, it was reinforced that we had to patrol Hwy 1 more to prevent these accidents. The Marine truckers were getting a little heavy-footed. There was one good thing that came out of this accident, our equipment was in such bad shape and we only had one jeep in operating condition. We were given another jeep to augment our patrols.

And I was called to the village on another "Officer Assistance" call. A very drunk and armed man was basically marauding around the village. By the time got there, he was pretty much out of it. He was a member of the Brown & Root construction company. Traffic accidents, drunks, and there were plenty of drunken Marines. Nothing was happening to lift my spirits.

The base at Chu Lai was developing, but slowly. There was no perimeter fence and as the air units and other units hired locals for various jobs, and these new employees just walked in from Hwy 1 over the countryside. The developing idea was to fence the perimeter of the airfield and other units and

develop a main gate with an ID system. This was going to require proper cameras and lamination equipment so I was elected to travel to Danang and pick up this equipment.

A quick trip to Danang was a good change of pace. I visited the MP compound and found a place to stay overnight and was to leave the next morning. The next morning, air traffic was delayed and F-8's from a carrier were making fast and low runs over Danang. Whatever the cause of the delay, I soon made it back to Chu Lai. It was only then I found what all the fuss was about. The ruling Saigon Vietnamese generals had come to Danang and relieved Gen. Thi of his command in I corp. There was to be no more 9-5 shadow war. It turned out that troops loyal to Gen Thi had left their posts and had advanced toward Danang and that was the cause of the American show of force.

There was lots of construction of hard-backed tents on the hill as preparations were being made for the arrival of 1st Marine division headquarters. And finally, the day came and 1st Division HQ's landed and with headquarters come Major Bartlett. We assigned a young Lt. to the beach compound which had been my home for too long and I moved up on the hill with MP Company headquarters to serve once again as Exec. Officer of the MP Company.

It didn't take long before a complete mess tent was up, a camp theater was operating, and an O club was functioning. Proper military civilization had come to Chu Lai. Not without hitches. We did have slit trenches dug alongside our facilities. One of the first evenings that HQ was aboard, explosion started first in the distance then closer and closer. We finally got in our slit trenches when the explosions stopped. It developed that a mortar section had set up 180 degrees out and was shelling Chu Lai all by itself.

And the new arrivals were very nervous. Again, in one of the first nights ashore, rifle fire began nearby and gradually a real firefight got under way. Again, we had to retreat to the slit trenches. After a time a tank came rolling up road with a very brave Marine with a bullhorn shouting cease fire, cease fire. It seems an infantry company had been brought back to the rear for a little rest and between them and the cooks and clerks of HQ battalion, a pretty good firefight got underway. Major Bartlett asked me seriously if it had always been this way and I had to tell him that there wasn't a Viet Cong within miles. And no one was hurt in these little episodes.

Local Marine Security Officer for Bob Hope in War-Torn Vietnam

Life in a battle-torn Vietnam can be interesting---especially if you draw assignment as a security officer for Comedian Bob Hope and his touring troupe who spent their Christmas holidays entertaining U. S. servicemen abroad. This was the report made in a letter recently by Marine Lt. Harry Stimson to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Stimson of Independence.

medical aid to the aged payments in the county went to 25 persons who received a total of \$1,426 for the month. The aid to dependent children expenditures included 35 cases involving 145 persons with \$5,167 allocated. Aid to blind persons included five county residents who received a total of \$548. Aid to disabled persons included three residents who received a total of \$207.

During the month the Social Welfare department had 178 cases involving 288 persons in the county. Grants amounted to \$11,777 while nursing expenditures were \$2,630 and medical care \$2,277 for a grand total of \$16,684.

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rain-O-Vator Sales our
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delayed.
Jan. 15th.

CIAL
DAD SALE!

In his letter, written Dec. 30, Stimson wrote: "Bob Hope was here yesterday. I was security officer so I not only got to see the show but met Mr. Hope and the cast. I say met when I mean I shook hands with them - one out of hundreds who did. Anyway, when he televises the show look for me behind the stage right in line with the cameras. There is no way to tell if the cameras were focused that far back. The whole show really was tremendous and everyone enjoyed it. Of course, now they go

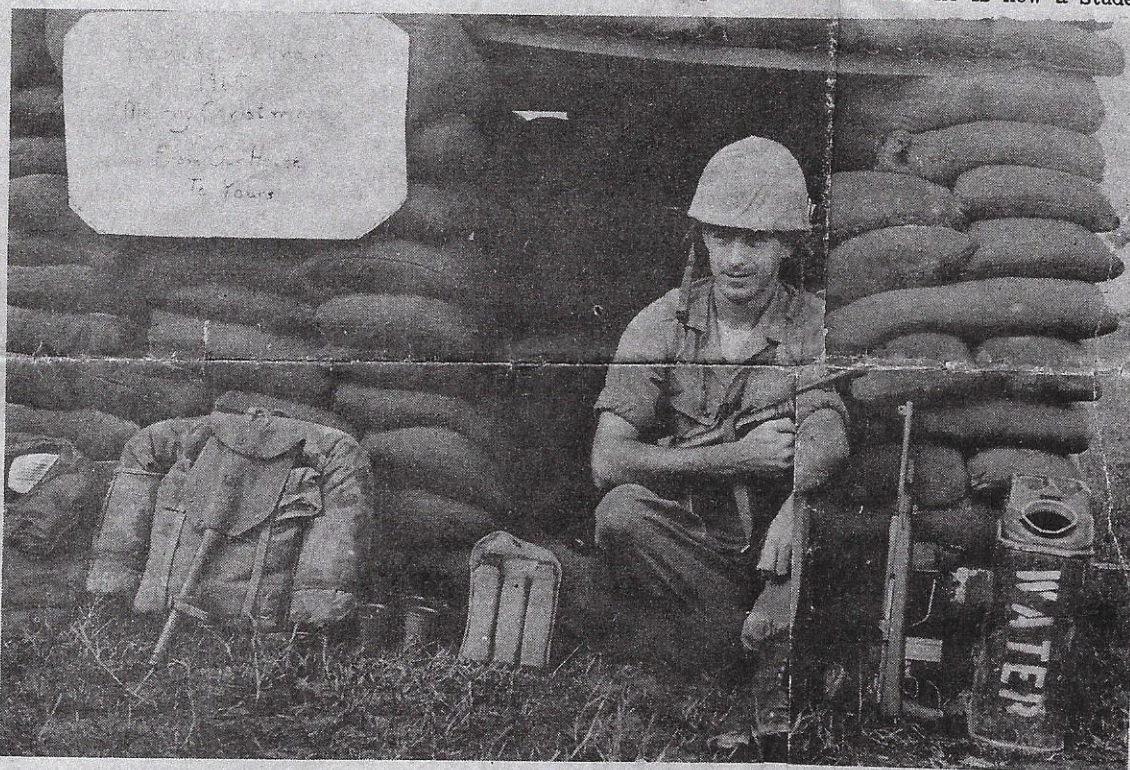
home and here we sit, but I guess that's the way it goes...." (The Bob Hope television show on the recent tour of Vietnam is scheduled to be presented on nation-wide TV on Wednesday, Jan. 19, Channel 7, Waterloo from 8 to 9:30 p.m.)

In his letter Stimson also told of life among the Marine and Army troops in the Danang area of Vietnam where the fighting has been most intense in recent weeks. He said that Christmas "was pretty dull here though, although we did have quite a few packages from

attended the office school at Cam Quantico, Va. While serving in Okinawa he was promoted to first lieutenant and has been in the Infantry since division.

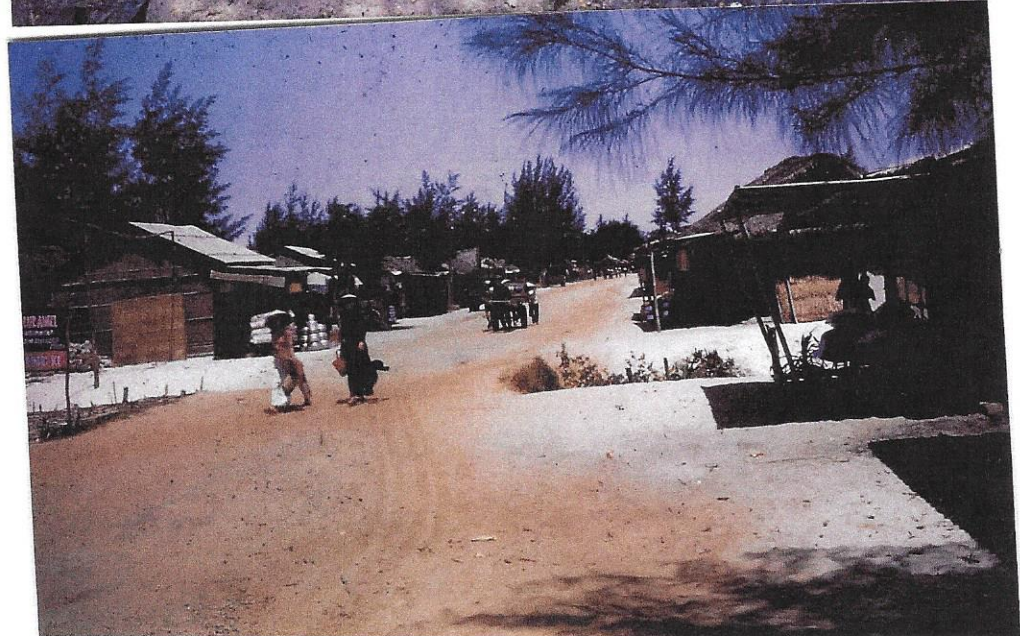
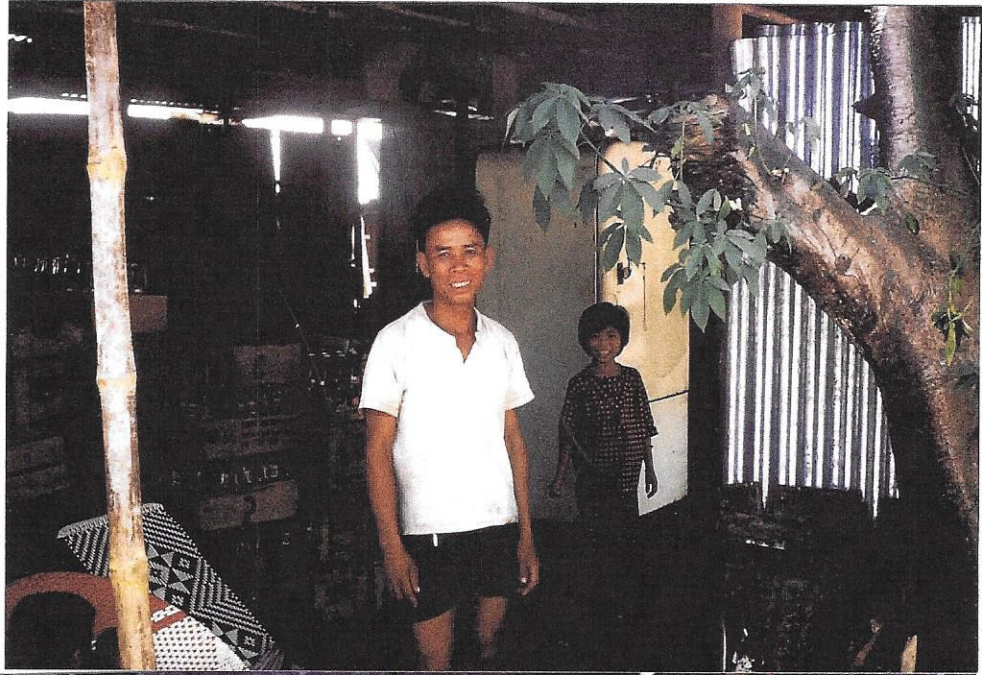
His address is: 1st Lt. Harry Stimson, MP det., Hdq. Co. 7th Marine Reg. (Rein), 3rd Marine Division (Rein), FMF o/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif. 94.

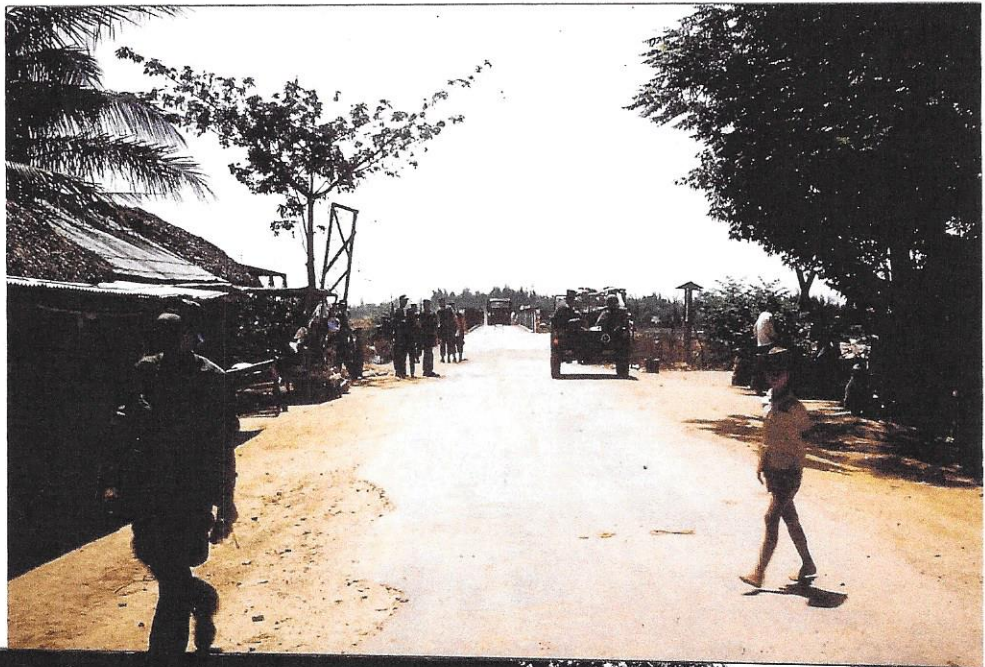
and Mrs. Stimson also have a son, Andy Stimson, who was discharged last August from the Army as specialist 5. He served in the security agency and spent three years in service, most of the time at Ft. Meade, Md. As part of his training he studied Arabic at army language school in Monterey, Calif. After his honorable discharge he returned to school at St. College of Iowa in Cedar Falls where he is now a student.



FIRST LT. HARRY STIMSON, SON OF MR. AND MRS. Roy Stimson of Independence, is pictured here in front of a bunker in the battle area of Vietnam. He is pictured here with his gear which includes a sub-machine gun. The sign on the sand-bagged bunker says simply, "Danang, 1965, Merry Christmas from our house to yours." It was a Christmas card sent by the bendence Marine to friends and relatives. The picture was taken several weeks prior to Christmas. Sbn pointed out in a letter to his parents that the bunker is used for emergencies and that normally lies at the battle front sleep in tents.

Chu Lai





Picked up in the Village of AN HAI drinking
beer and under the influence of alcohol. They
had previously been stopped at check point at
Sand range and instructed to leave vehicle. They
did as ordered then got in a large and proceeded
to An Hai. They were placed under Military garr-
ison by Lt Col Perreick. Lt. Col Perreick instructed
~~Col~~ Sgt Maj Reeve to deliver two to Col. Martin.
Sgt Maj Reeve reported to Col Martin and was
instructed Col Martin to take the men to the
Provost Marshall at POW Stockade. This was
accomplished.

Sgt Maj. Reeve

Deliver to RMK -- to LT. STRODE ~~Attn~~

Henry E. Strode

^{pm}
J D Strode

LT CEC USN

I have RMK employees turned over to me this
night.

J D Strode
LT CEC USN

Getting Short

With the arrival of Major Bartlett, all of a sudden it was like a great relief had been lifted from my shoulders. Let someone else worry about hiring Vietnamese and creating IDs. I could sit back with the duties of exec. Officer which I knew well and the Major could take the staff meetings.

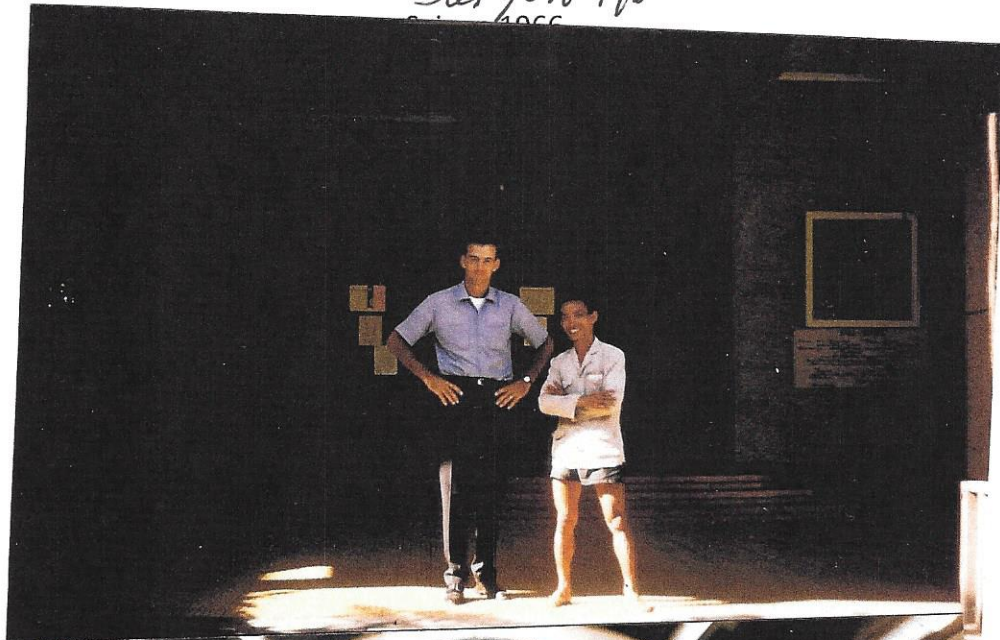
We did have an emergency. The call came in that there was a riot at the Brown & Root headquarters. The Major told me I'd better take this one. I didn't feel bad about it as I still had the pride that when the unknown situations appeared, my superiors thought of me first. I grabbed the first handiest troopers and raced to the Brown & Root. It was hardly a riot but the workers had refused to go to work without a pay raise and were milling around the headquarters with several speakers egging them on. We didn't intervene but I had my troopers line up while a Brown & Root foreman came over. It was indeed a strike and the Vietnamese army was on its way.

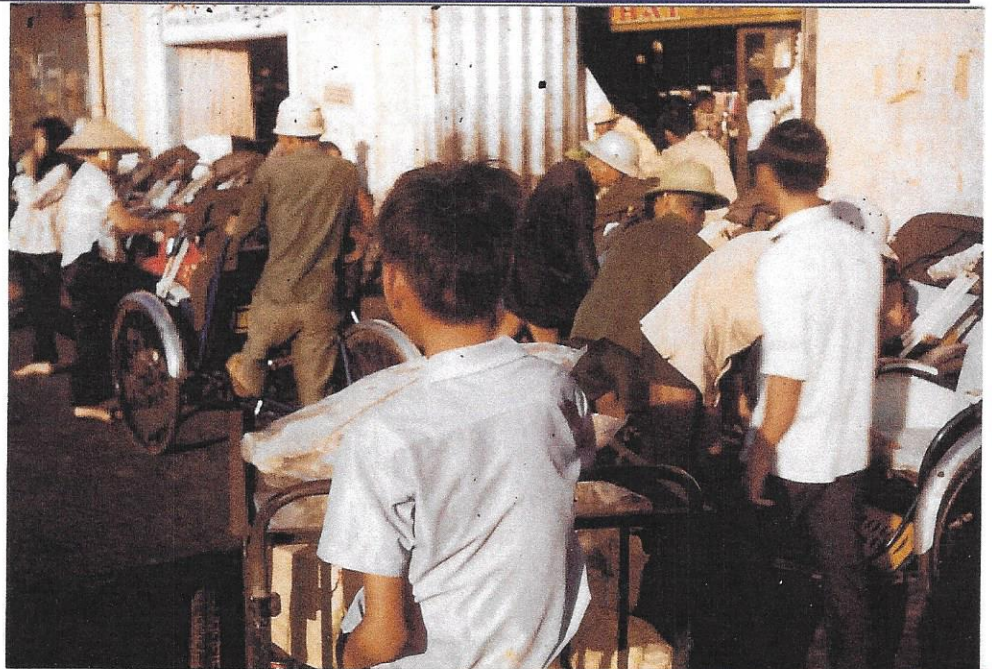
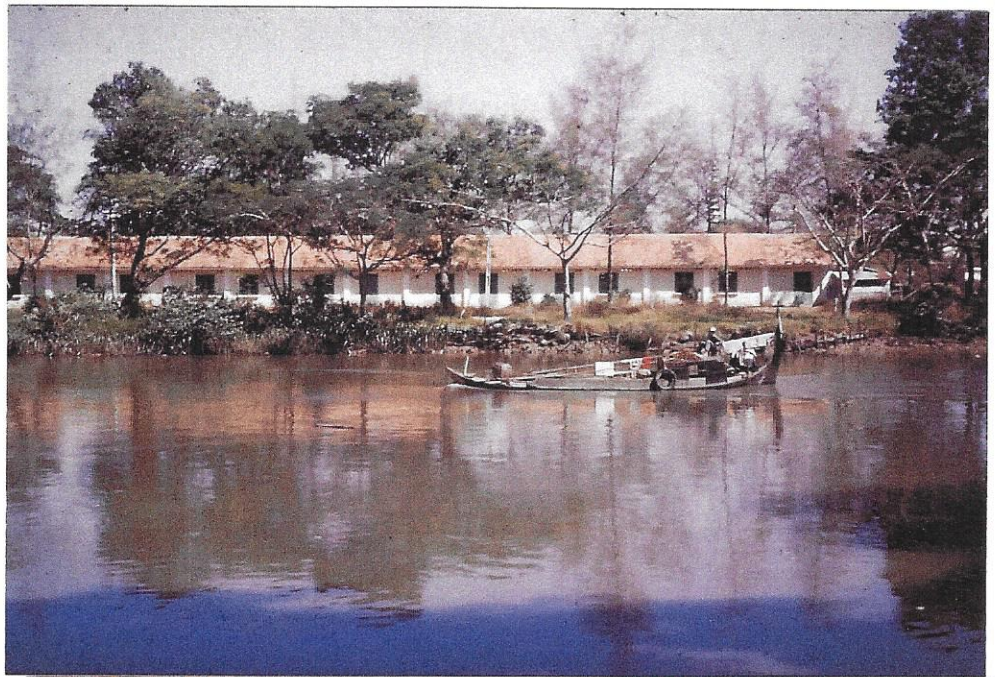
The Vietnamese Army split the crowd into pie shaped pieces and asked for a representative from each piece to come forward and a round of discussion went on and on. Finally, some sort of resolution was reached and the crowd disbursed. But not before the worker's ID's were checked and the Army finally left loaded with a load of pretty mournful looking young men.

I think that Major Bartlett was startled with my appearance because when we had any free time, he insisted we go down to the beach and search for shells. I still have these shells scattered around the house. Half belong to the Major as I lost track of him when I got home.

He also gave me a three day in-country leave and I traveled to Saigon for three days. It seemed to be good therapy. I enjoyed traveling around Saigon and took the pictures I have enclosed. But his campaign to was only beginning. He came in one day and threw some papers on my desk. I had been appointed investigation officer for the for the legal section of headquarters.

Saigon 1966





Getting shorter

The investigations were tedious and took time with interviews and etc. I could see that no-one else wanted the job. The only one I remember involved 2 young Marines who thought it would be fun to take target practice on a road sign and a round passed into a hut down the road and injured a little Vietnamese girl. It was a pretty open and shut investigation but it wasn't up to me to decide punishments, it was to investigate.

The Major was relentless as he came in soon with another sheaf of papers. I had been appointed trial counsel in an upcoming court-martial. Trial counsel is comparable to the prosecuting attorney. The rules were that the trial counsel had to be junior to the defense counsel.

The case involved stolen ID cards being sold and young marines showing up trying to enter the Seabee club. There was very little doubt as to where the blank ID cards came from and who was responsible for the theft. But being total new to the UCMJ required me intensely study the manual. The trial didn't go well. I was trying to enter the log book into evidence when he corrected me once again. Finally, he announced that the court would adjourn for noon and he hoped the Lt. over there gets himself unfucked. I swear that the defendant was embarrassed for me.

I met Major Bartlett over the break and unloaded my problems on him. Then I said something that I probably shouldn't have said. I told the Major that I wasn't sure that the man wasn't drunk. I instantly regretted it as the Major was shocked. You mean a man's future is at stake and the court officers have been drinking? He left immediately.

I tried to determine just what I was doing wrong when the court reconvened. A clerk came in and leaned down and said something to the Major. He left the room and was back soon. I don't think I've ever seen an angrier face. He growled at me. Show me that logbook. The trial ended soon with a guilty verdict and the court officers left. The defense attorney came over and shook my hand. He was an attorney on active duty. All he said was that he was surprised it took me that long to pull the plug on that son-of-a-bitch.

A happy thing happened as I was promoted to Captain. They had a little ceremony and took a picture. I was glad to be promoted but the picture showed me to look so bad that I threw the picture away. And as a Captain, it was going to be hard to assign me any more court-martials.

I was getting short. I could look through keyholes without leaning over but they couldn't slide me under the door yet.

I had one more ordeal to go through. I had a rotation date to go home. It was to be the end of my tour in Vietnam. But, about 2 weeks before the date, I was suddenly informed that the rotation date had been set back for several weeks. I wrote a note to the powers-that-be that I would like to have it changed back. So I was called into an office with a very grumpy Col. who proceeded to chew me out. I had to realize that there was a war

going on and everyone had to do their job. As a Captain I should know that. I had left Pendleton on the 25th of May last year it would only be 13 months with my new rotation date. So there was some truth to what he told me.

But he had only been in country for a couple of months. And he had no credibility with me in chewing me out for not knowing my duty. I went back to the MP compound and Major Bartlett must have seen I was upset. I told the Major the whole story and he told me he would try to fix it. I told him that the Col. had been pretty firm.

The major was back in an hour or so. I had my original rotation back. I told him I didn't think the man would change his mind. After 50 years I hope you realize that some of my accounts may not be totally accurate but I am absolutely sure about this. The Major said "He didn't, I had to go to the General." Even writing these 50 years later, tears are welling up a little. For all the assholes I ran into in the Marine Corp, there were also great Marines who took pride in looking after their troopers, and in that moment I was one of Major Bartlett's troopers.

The day came and I said my goodbyes and traveled to Danang. There was to be one more downer. When I arrived at the Danang airstrip, there were already civilian planes loading. Stupidly, I suddenly thought I might be missing my flight home. I barged to the head of a line and the clerk looked up my name and informed me that I was to report to temporary housing and my flight would be leaving in 3-4 days.

I could have traveled to the MP compound, or maybe checked out Danang one last time. But I didn't and think I just lay on a cot with my arm flung over my forehead. I was, to put it mildly, thoroughly through with Vietnam. The day finally came and I climbed aboard a civilian flight with American stewardesses and all. I was going home, with a stop at Okinawa to pick up my gear that I had stored when we left for Vietnam. I made contact with Kim and she says she remembers seeing me off from Kadena as I left for the US.

J. Ridge: Marine Memorial to Gallant Chief

Leon Daniel

SAIGON (UPI) — The marines of Kilo company called it 428 "J. J. Ridge" and they speak of it softly. It is very special hill.

It is their memorial to Capt. J. Carroll, a leader blessed with a rare mixture of guts, grace and style.

He compromised none of these qualities before he was killed by a marine tank shell which fell far short of its intended target. He died as a hero unselfishly supporting the assault by another marine company on another hill. He has been nominated for the Navy Cross, the corps'

second highest award for gallantry, which ranks only behind the Medal of Honor.

When Carroll, 29, of Miami Beach and his company captured Hill 428 after being rebuffed four times, newsmen asked him if the hill had a name.

"No," he said, "it's just a goddam bump in Vietnam. Can you believe that?"

Then he laughed. "You're going to get me in trouble with my priest if you quote me swearing like that," he grinned.

J. J., as he was known in the Third battalion, Fourth Marines, was married and the father of a child.

He was a big man, more than six feet tall and around 200 pounds, and he had a generous smile and a constant spring in his step.

In battle he rarely bothered to wear a helmet.

I spoke with him the day before he died. He told me that, when the going got rough, he had to expose himself to lead his men. He figured a helmet wouldn't help much.

He commanded Kilo company only about six weeks. But all who knew him liked him. "He was so full of vim and vigor," said his executive officer, Lt. Ted Hopgood of Billings, Mont. "He was contagious. He worked himself

into the heart of the company real quick."

"He was so likeable and enthusiastic, everybody considered him a pleasure to work with," said one of Carroll's platoon leaders, Lt. Dan McCord of New Castle, Pa.

On Hill 428 Carroll led his men against a tremendous volume of machine gun and automatic weapons, fire and hand grenades. Bare to the waist, bareheaded and hurrying grenades, he urged Kilo company on. They took Hill 428.

"It was determination that made us take that hill," said Cpl. William Hutton, 19, of Canoga Park, Calif., one of the

first three men to reach the top.

Carroll was unharmed in the capture of Hill 428. According to the battle plan, Kilo company was to make the assault Wednesday on Hill 484, the big prize in the drive across the spiny ridgeline just south of the demilitarized zone.

But Capt. Robert Hanrahan of Randolph, Mass., commander of Mike company, had lost men trying to take Hill 484. He wanted another chance.

Lt. Col. Bill Masterpool of Solway, N.Y., gave Hanrahan the go-ahead. Carroll stayed at the command post to direct the heavy machine gun fire supporting the assault. As the at-

tack began, two marine tank rounds fell short and hit the command post.

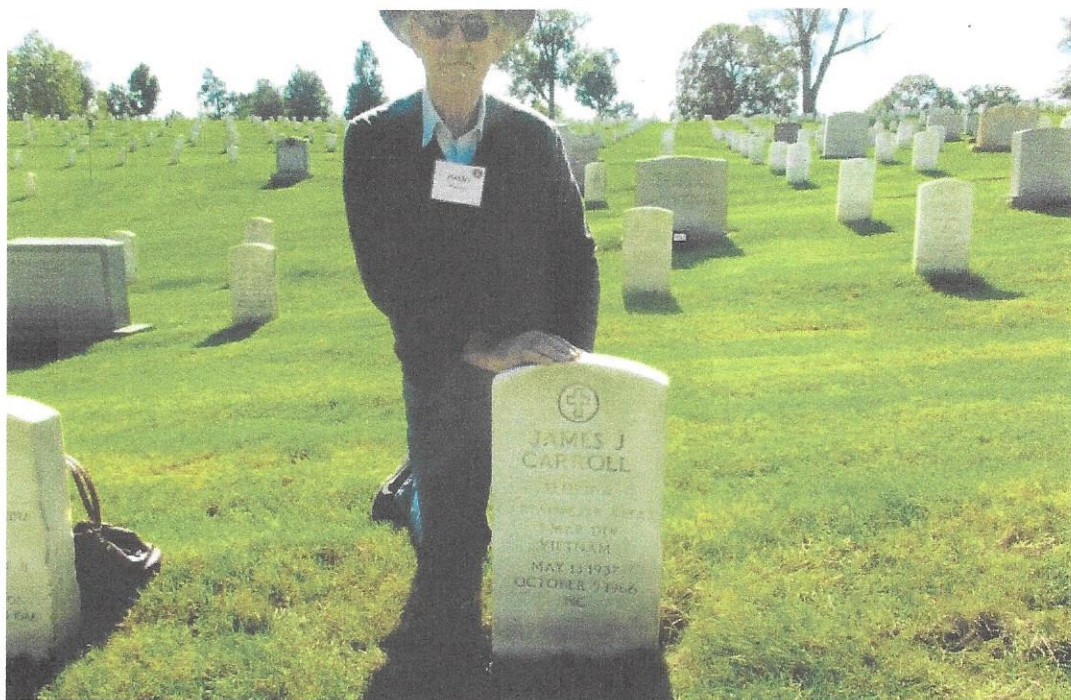
One was a near-direct hit on Carroll. He died quickly.

Masterpool, visibly shaken hours after the accident, muttered repeatedly: "Poor J. J., poor J. J." Then he thought a moment.

"I'm a religious man. Maybe it's not poor J. J. He was a good man and he believed in his faith. He's got it made now," he said.

Hutton spoke the thoughts of the enlisted men Carroll so gallantly led.

"I hated to see him get it without a chance to fight fight back."



2018: In conjunction with a Marine Corp reunion at Quantico, we took the opportunity to travel to Washington DC to visit Capt. Carroll's grave at Arlington. The authorities make it very easy and provide transportation to an individual grave, using GPS services. I ran into Capt Carroll as he was preparing for Vietnam and I was just returning. Google his name and you will get a complete history of his service.