



River Currents



VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2
Summer, 2024

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

Message From the Radio Shack



Harry Hahn

This message is full of good news, so let me share it with you.

Through a very generous benefactor, I am pleased

to announce that our reunion in St. Louis for 2025 will be free to members and their spouse/girlfriend (first guest). The hotel lodging and incidentals are on you, but we are covering the reunion fee for members. This will include our "Banquet of Heros" on the Saturday night of our reunion and finger food receptions like the last reunion.

We received such great reviews of the last reunion that we decided to repeat the format, which includes the fabulous banquet. The form for signing up for the reunion is attached to this newsletter and available in a fillable form online, on the MRFA website. The caveat for getting your free attendance is that you must sign up by April 1, 2025, to get your free attendance. This allows us to better plan and organize the event. So, sign up soon and make your arrangements with the hotel for your stay. Again, free to members and their spouse/significant other.

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MRFA REUNION, ST. LOUIS, MO. SHERATON Chalet -2025! September 18th through 21st!

Start making reservations, under Mobile Riverine Force Association - MRFA on Oct. 1, 2024.

The Mobile Riverine Force Association is pleased to announce our 2025 reunion, again at St. Louis Westport, Sheraton Chalet on September 18-21. We had such a wonderful reunion there in 2023 that we are repeating the same format, with one HUGE exception, the attendance fee is free for all MRFA members and their wife or significant other. Yes, due to a donation by a benefactor, we are able to wave the reunion fee. This includes the Saturday night buffet dinner, "Banquet of Heroes". Normally there is a \$75 reunion fee, and this did not include a buffet. Please pay close attention to the registration form as it does have a caveat. You must sign up by April 1, 2025 to get the free attendance fee.

You can start making your reservations now for your room at the Sheraton Chalet Westport. The number to call is 888-627-7066. Make sure you tell them it's the Mobile Riverine Force Association group rate. Our room rate is \$144 and this includes a buffet breakfast Thursday through Sunday mornings. There is a link to the hotel website on our www.MRFA.org webpage. The fillable form for the reunion is also on our site, or you can use the form attached to this newsletter. Please only use the ADA transportation form if you physically require wheelchair or ADA type transportation. More information on activities will be following this year as we prepare for the reunion.



Your membership expiration date is printed on your River Currents just above your name and address.

Message From The Radio Shack

continued from page 1

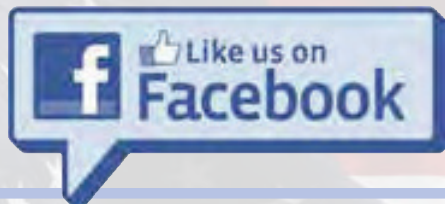
Speaking of membership, the Life Membership, now offered for \$40, is a great value, and almost every member is selecting that option when renewing their membership.

Secondly, the Quilts of Valor form that we have mailed out has netted great returns. So far over 260 of you have signed up for the quilt. We apologize for early miscommunication of requirements, but now this new form gives you the ability to apply for the quilt. A form is included with this mailing so you can sign up for one, if you have not already.

Last, but not the least, the Arballos are in post-production of the documentary, Mobile Riverine Force. They have targeted having this done by year end. Once we have a good date we will begin to organize premier rollouts for this film. They will explain further in their article in this newsletter.

Thanks to all who work and support our great organization. Albert Moore continues to remind me that this is the oldest Vietnam Veteran organization. Several similar associations have come and gone, but his belief is that we are the oldest and longest standing organization. It is my belief that we will continue to be that strong organization as long as I can breathe!

Harry Hahn, President, SparksRivRon13@aol.com



The Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam Page. After you send a request to join the group, Bob Pries will approve your request to join the group.

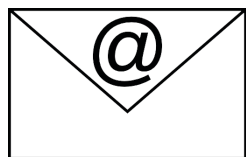
Contact Changes

Please send Frank Jones any changes in address, phone number or e-mail addresses so that he can keep our database updated.

His address is:

9 San Marino Parkway,
Fenton, MO 63026

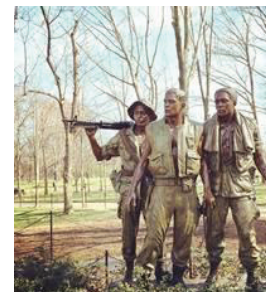
Frank's e-mail address is
mrfatango48@gmail.com



Contact the Editor

If you have questions, stories, or comments for "River Currents," please e-mail Terry Sater, at terry.s8er@yahoo.com Not all stories can be published. All must be family friendly. We want a good balance of Army and Navy stories, so please participate!

Veterans Day 2024, Washington, D.C.



The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, 2024. We will gather at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at 8:30 A.M. on the 11th, and proceed to The Wall at 9:00 A.M.

We have blocked twenty (20) rooms at the Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, in Arlington, Virginia for November 8th – 11th (check out on 11/12). Room rates are \$139.00 (plus tax) for a Studio King (single) and \$149.00 (plus tax) for a Studio Queen (double) per night.

Come join us as we honor our fallen Brothers on Veterans Day 2024 and enjoy the camaraderie of your MRFA Brothers and their friends and families. We look forward to seeing you in D.C.

For more information, you may contact: Bob (Doc) Pries, Vice President,
Phone: (513) 659-4974,
Email: pries247@gmail.com



2025 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion
Registration Form
9/18/25 TO 9/21/25
(PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)



Name _____

Unit in Vietnam (1 unit only) _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Member's Polo Shirt Size [] [] [] [] []
M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name - Spouse/Significant Other _____ City _____ State _____

Woman's T- Shirt Size
[] [] [] [] [] []
XS S M L XL 2XL

Name - Additional Guests _____

City _____

State _____

Send my registration form to me by e-mail Yes [] No [] First reunion []

Registration is for member and 1 guest (Does not cover lodging, food or drinks)

MRFA Member Registration FREE to member and spouse/significant other if registered prior to April 1, 2025

\$ 0
\$0, 75 or \$100

After April 1, 2025 \$75 for Member - Nonmember Registration \$100

ON SITE/LATE-REGISTRATION FOR MEMBERS: (\$125) NON-MEMBERS: (\$150). MUST PAY WITH A CHECK!! NO CASH!! THURSDAY AND FRIDAY 1PM TO 2PM. PLEASE SIGN UP AT CHECK-IN TABLE.

Total number of other guest(s) _____ x \$ 25 ea. Guests under 12 are free \$ 0

Grand Total Enclosed \$ 0

Shuttle to Soldier's Memorial, Gateway Arch, St. Louis Zoo and Old Town St. Charles on a first come, first serve basis. Shuttles will operate on Friday (10am to 4pm) and Saturday (1pm to 5pm)

Please send this form with your check or money order payable to the MRFA. Mail to MRFA 2025 Reunion, C/O Frank Jones, 9 San Marino Parkway, Fenton, MO 63026 before 9/1/2025

Full refund for cancellations will be made until 9/1/2025. After this date NO REFUNDS will be made. Returned checks will be charged a \$25 processing fee.

Note: You will still have to pick up your name tag and lanyard at the check-in table. There will be no admission to hospitality rooms without your name tag and lanyard. NO EXCEPTIONS! CHECK-IN WILL BE OPEN ON THURSDAY, SEPT. 18, 9AM TO 5PM AND FRIDAY, SEPT. 19, 9 AM TO 1PM.

Only activity on Sept. 21st is breakfast and checkout!

ONLY SEND THE FLIGHT FORM IF YOU ARE DISABLED AND NEED ADA TRANSPORTATION! Please fill out the 2025 MRFA Reunion Flight Form and send to Frank Jones



Documentary Update from Arballo Entertainment!

Jeff and I hope that this update on the Mobile Riverine Force Documentary finds you and yours healthy, happy and enjoying the beautiful summer.

We would like to thank you for standing beside us as we navigate through the final stages of post-production on this feature documentary, a story that is virtually unknown, yet is so very critically important to our American Military History and to a grateful Nation that honors your service and tremendous personal sacrifice. We continue to feel blessed and honored to be entrusted with your stories.

We know that so many of you are excited and anxiously waiting for this film to be completed and of course, we are too. So, we would like to take this opportunity to update you as to where we are in post- production.

Having completed all production, we are actively working towards “picture lock”, which means the film and story is complete and ready for film finishing with our post-House where they will lay in the narration, graphics, credits, etc. and put this film in the can, as they say. We’re not quite there yet.

Currently, we are actively working on shortening the string out, layering film and photos to the story, selecting music as well as sound effects and drafting and laying in the rough-cut narration for our professional Narrator. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into this stage of post-production, so we thank you for your continued support and patience as we go through this stage.

While we feel a sense of urgency in completing this film, our promise to you was that we would not compromise on quality and simply finish a film, but make a GREAT movie, which is what we intend to do. We have established

a working Target Completion Date of Veterans Day of this year.

As we get further down the road, we will begin to share pertinent information on our KPBS Television Debut as well as National Distribution.

We are also actively looking to secure the final Corporate Sponsorship that will go directly towards the post-house expenses. If you have an interest in Corporate Sponsorship, please contact us right away at arballoentertainment@gmail.com or at 760-809-4558 as we would be happy to discuss the current

need, advertising opportunity, etc.

In closing, we simply want to thank you for your continued patience and understanding. We know how exciting the road ahead is, beyond this bend, once the film is finished and are so excited to share that with you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We’d love to chat with you!

Take care,
Jeff and Shannon Arballo

FREE SHIPPING
ON ORDERS OVER \$60

MRFA GEAR LOCKER

ORDER FORM

| Qty | Model Number | Size | Unit Price | Amount |
|-----|--------------|------|--|----------------|
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | | \$ |
| | | | Subtotal | \$ |
| | | | Shipping (If order subtotal is over \$60, Shipping is FREE) | \$ 8.00 |
| | | | Grand Total | \$ |

Ordering is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Indicate your choice of item number (be sure to include size, if applicable), with quantity, and total amount. Add amounts for grand total to enclose.
2. Make check or money order payable to: MRFA. The MRFA does not take credit cards.
3. Mail Gear Locker Order Form and check to MRFA, PO Box 271, Lake Villa, IL 60046. Email Harry Hahn at SparksRivRon13@AOL.com for questions.

Products Chairman
HARRY HAHN
President

Name _____

Shipping Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

MRFA GEAR LOCKER

www.mrfa.org

FREE SHIPPING
ON ORDERS OVER \$60

Unit Patches

These full color embroidered patches vary in size from 2 to 3" in diameter. Long lasting brilliant detail make these items a must have for every collection.

\$7.00



UP001 MRF Mekong Delta (white anchor)



UP002 MRFA Vietnam



UP003 MRF Mekong Delta (yellow anchor)



UP004 9th Inf Div (no words)



UP005 9th Inf Div Vietnam



UP007 RAF TF 117



UP008 RAF One



UP009 VCCC (blue)



UP010 VCCC (brown)



UP011 VCCC (silver)



UP012 Combat Boat Captain



UP013 Combat Boat Crewman



UP014 RivRon 9



UP015 RAD 91



UP016 RAD 92



UP017 RAD 111



UP018 RAD 112



UP019 River Squadron 13



UP020 RAD 131



UP021 RAD 132



UP022 RivRon XV



UP023 RAD 152



UP024 Riv Div 153



UP025 MRF 3/47



UP026 3rd/60th Inf



UP027 39th Inf



UP028 47th Inf



UP029 USS Benawah APB-35



UP030 USS Colleton APB-36



UP031 USS Mercer APB-39



UP032 USS Nueces APB-40



UP033 USS Benawah Logo



UP034 USS Mercer Logo



UP035 River Raiders



UP036 River Rat



UP039 Brown Water Navy



UP041 MRF Vietnam Veteran



UP042 RAS 13



EXAMPLES:

Jumbo Patches

Enormous 9" diameter patches, a must have for your favorite jacket or shirt!

Full color embroidery is bright and brilliant. **SPECIAL SALE: \$8.00**



JP001 MRFA Vietnam



JP001a MRF Vietnam



JP002 MRFA Vietnam



JP002a MRF Vietnam



JP003 MRF Mekong Delta



JP004 9th Inf Div Vietnam



JP005 9th Inf Div Vietnam Veteran





Survey Question:

“What advice would you give your younger self, just coming home from Vietnam and facing the rest of your life?”

James Wollner, 2nd Airboat Plt., 15th Eng. BN., 9TH Inf. Div. The advice I would give to my younger self would probably be the same as I did. I was still in the Army and assigned to Ft. Dix as an assistant Drill Instructor.

I had the opportunity for an early out by going back to college. My intention was to go to law school but after going to school around the clock to finish in three years I just couldn't see spending three more years in law school library so I got a job in an office manufacturer in their purchasing dept. Was asked to take over their warehouses to straighten it out.

A year later I answered an ad for a purchasing Director at a hospital, I applied and my career in health care began. I ended up as a VP of materials management until my retirement.

One never knows what the future will bring but the most important thing is to get an education no matter where, a trade or college or an apprenticeship!

As I said earlier I would do the same thing I did then and that is to get an education in something.

Frank Jones, RivDiv 152, T-48 Boat Captain. 07/69-07/70 Enjoy the rest of your life because I made it home.

Donald Saylor, Radioman/gunner on M-92-1. We were the first of the boats... Division 91 and Div 92, 1967. I think the biggest thing I would pound into my head is that drugs and alcohol have never been anyone's friend. They certainly weren't mine. Sure, they might let you escape for a couple hours, but at what cost. They destroyed fourteen years of my life.

There is a God out there and while He will never push himself on you, He anxiously waits for you to call on Him. He has the answers and if you choose to listen, they WILL work. My younger years could have been much different had I made the right choices.

Robert “Bob” Flaige, SSG USA (Ret.). Echo Co. 3rd/60th, May 67-May 68. Return to college and finish my education. I enlisted in the army in my junior year. After spending almost three years in service, I knew I had unfinished business. Appreciate the opportunity to do so and don't let little things bother you and just enjoy life as it comes.

Patrick Hartley, USS Mercer APB-39 April 1968 to June 1969. I would have recommended finding other Vietnam vets closer to where I lived. Even now, my best friends are other vets.

A.J. McCaskey, 4/47 Co. A, 9th Infantry Div., 1968-69. I was wishing/hoping to immerse myself back into the real world and to get on with my life as I once knew it. I wasn't ready for a real job, so I enrolled into college, thanks to the G.I. bill. It was the best thing I ever did. Once I consulted with my class advisor who sensed some confusion on my part, she looked me in the eye and reminded me I had my whole life in front of me. Make an effort to do something good with it. So, locating and consulting with some sort of post war support that works for you, be it family, professional help, whatever, will help remind you that life goes on, that you can do it!

Tom Rattan, October 1969 TO 70, RivDiv 111, 131, 153 Don't hide your service and what you did. Most people did not know that I was even in Vietnam for many years.

Nick Miller, Chief Staff Officer, RivDiv152. Jul 68-June 69. The War was an interlude. Don't let it distort your perception of reality in the normal world. Hold on to the lesson that you can reduce your level of risk and still stay on mission. But The War is not who you are.

Vincent Dellipaoli, 9th Infantry, 3/47, 68-69, 11BRAVO. We were attached

to the MRF. When I came home from Vietnam, March, 1969. Even though I still had seven months left in the Army, I locked Vietnam in the back of my mind and threw the key away. For the next fifty years, I struggled with suicidal thoughts. My mood swings were drastic, to the point that I was taking it out on my family. When I got into those moods, my wife would tell my kids to leave daddy alone, he doesn't feel good. Years later, after I got the help, my wife told me that the family had to walk on eggshells for fear of me possibly harming them.

It wasn't until 2019 that I finally went to the VA. It wasn't until I got help that I realized how bad my PTSD was. I now go for counseling at the local Vet center. I go once a week, and I see the VA shrink every two months. My answer to your survey question is; don't wait get the help. I talk to Iraq and Afghanistan vets and that's what I tell them. Get help right away. You can't do it on your own. Getting the help saved my life and my family.

Pat Kelly, RM2 C-151-1 Everything worked out fine. Have been very fortunate. Only regret is that I spent my saved money from Vietnam on a car instead of buying real estate in my home of record, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Herschel Hughes, Colleton OPS '68-'69. By the way, the quilts of Valor folks are the greatest. I was presented with my quilt with a former Colleton crewman, Lee Whitehurst. He was a plank owner and brought the Colleton over from the states before being transferred to PBR's. There was a total of nine of us all Vietnam era vets. Kudos to the leadership for setting that up for us. The ceremony touched me deeply; a lot loose ends and hurts that had been bouncing around in my head for decades just seemed to melt away when they draped that quilt over

me and the nice lady gave me a hug. As for your question: what would I tell my younger self following the return? Don't lose heart; stay proud; don't buy into the melancholy of the age; keep faith in your country; keep faith in your God; keep faith in yourself; there are huge mysteries in life; you'll never get it all figured out; when you lead sailors and marines in the rest of your career, lead them to survive and to win; give them hope and purpose; always know where the nearest Chaplain is; and don't abandon your church just because they don't get what service in Vietnam was like.

Randy Peat, "No one is shooting at you anymore. You are 10 foot tall and bulletproof. You can't do anything so let's get moving"

Ken Kalish. RivPatSec 523, Vinh Long, then GMG2, '67, '68 '69. Retired as a JOC. Take your time. Consider each decision and wonder what the proposer wants from you. Don't try to go back to what was before you left because it isn't there. Build yourself a life but take time to learn what is new since you left. Use your resources wisely. Learn how to accept beauty and quiet.

Douglass C. Ogden, Lieutenant, US Navy (1963-1971), USS AULT (DD-698)-JULY1967-AUGUST, 1969, INSHORE UNDERSEA WARFARE GROUP ONE, UNIT THREE OUI NHON, RVN, NOVEMBER, 1969-JUNE 1971. My answer is probably too long, but the only way I can answer is to ramble a bit.

I graduated from the US Naval Academy on June 7, 1967 and went right to Viet Nam on a Destroyer on the gunline. I went back in November 1969 and spent a year and a half in-country, first with Inshore Undersea Warfare Group One, Unit 3 in Qui Nhon, then as Senior Advisor to that team when we turned over to the Vietnamese Navy. At that point, I decided to leave the Navy and try something else, so I went to Law School and graduated in 1974. I hated Law School but I knew it wouldn't hurt me, so I finished, but while I was there, I heard some women in the Class behind me talking about women then being able to join the FBI. I immediately went over to

the local Bureau office, applied, and was accepted in May 1975.

I spent almost 24 years as an FBI Agent working Violent Crimes, Drugs and Terrorism and loved every minute of it. I retired in 1998, but the best thing was that my 8 years in the Navy counted towards my retirement.

The connection I want to make with your question is what happened to me when I returned from Viet Nam and landed in San Diego in 1971. As I walked through the terminal, I was spit on and called a baby killer. Today, when I wear a Viet Nam Veteran baseball cap or a Viet Nam T-shirt, I get stopped all the time and thanked for my service. Bottom line-do the best job you can do in the Service-take advantage of every opportunity to advance and improve yourself in whatever you decide to do, and learn from your experiences. There are the names of 9 of my Naval Academy Classmates on the Viet Nam Wall, none of whom I will ever forget. I hope this makes sense-thank you.

Joe Rosner, RivRon 15, M-6. 07/69-06/70. Get professional help sooner!

Wendell Affield, Tango 112-11, Feb-Aug 18, 1968. Author: *Muddy Jungle Rivers and Chicken house Chronicles*. Fifty-five years after I enlisted at 17 years old, here is my advice to my younger self. Don't jump into a serious relationship. You really know nothing about women. You have lived in a controlled environment during your military service and have not matured/grown socially.

March 22,2025, my second wife Patti and I will celebrate our 50th anniversary!

Bob Schrader, D Company 9th Med Bn 9th Infantry Division. "Go with the flow. It's amazing how life changes as quickly as combat. I was planning on a military career or medical school, but was talked into rejoining the family business. That changed as well - too much family. More career changes including commercial pilot, Deputy Sheriff, and going to law school, practicing law in a firm and then solo and becoming a judge. I retired and taught school to keep active. Now I write novels.

I often wondered how a military career would have been. A general or a dead Huey medivac pilot.

I went with the flow and obtained benefits that would not exist if I stayed my original course. I have two wonderful daughters, at least one I would never have met (adopted), became a legal beagle and experienced much of a pretty good life. Glad I took the ride along a different road.

Al Breininger, CSO, RivDiv 91, Oct 1966 - Dec 1967, NIOTC Riverine Instructor, Feb 1968 - Oct 1969. Nothing different from what I did. I came home, spent another 20 months in the Navy training people going to the brown water units in Vietnam, giving them the best that I could for operating in the Delta. Got out of the Navy and started working in a manufacturing plant for one of the Johnson and Johnson divisions. My focus was getting on with life, and it stayed that way for 27 years. After attending my first MRFA reunion in 1997, my time in Vietnam came more to the forefront. I had more pride in my service because I had people who could understand the job we did.

I spoke very little about my Vietnam experience between 1970 and 1997. Nobody was interested in hearing about it, so I did not devote any time to it,. Working and raising my kids became a priority.

Reading Rick Atkinson's "The Long Gray Line", which featured several of the Army officers who were with the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division and the MRFA, got me into reading a whole lot more about not only our experience in the Delta, but about the whole Vietnam story. And today I am much more vocal about both my experiences. The experience had a major impact on my life going forward from 1967. I learned a lot about myself, and there are no regrets, or things I would change.

I was called, served, survived, learned, and am better for having done so.

Erik Scott, A-152-3, 10/68-10/69. Go back to college! Get your degree.



Ron Roy, of Rudolph, WI, B Co. 2nd/60th Inf. receives his Quilt of Valor!



Alfred "Tom" Owenson, USS Mercer APB-39, 03/68 - 06/69, and **Dave Schell**



Harley and Sue Timmerman with Harley's QOV Certificate Fellow MRFA member **Dave and Robyn Schell** of Stillwater, Mn. Came to support!

Quilts of Valor will award **Gary Hale's** quilt on Nov 11, when we have a QOV Award program at the Veterans' Hall in Dripping Springs, TX. He lives close to that area.



Quilts of Valor

A Message from President Harry

Dear MRFA Member,

Previously, at our reunion, and in our correspondence, you were told that you would automatically be registered to receive a quilt from the Quilts of Valor organization as a member of the MRFA. There has been a slight change to this process. There is a new process that will now be in place.

Attached to this letter is a form for you, or your family member assisting you, to fill out. This form to apply for the Quilt of Valor award. This information on your form will be filtered down to your local QOV people who will make the presentation to you in your hometown. Please place in a stamped envelope and mail to the address shown on the form.

If you have already received a quilt, please disregard this process as you will only ever receive one quilt. This award is only available to a veteran, not to a family member or spouse.

We apologize for any confusion we may have caused and trust that this new process that we now have in place will make it easy for you to complete and to receive your quilt.

Thank you for your patience.

In the Brotherhood,
Harry



The Dripping Springs Rotary Club and the Dripping Springs High School Rotary Club will be part of our program, too. The kids have learned how to sew and have had a big part in making 2 quilt tops with supervision by a couple ladies in our Kyle & Buda Freedom Quilters group. There is even 1 boy who learned how to sew!

Karen Herrmann



MRFA Recipient Information - all fields are required except county and nickname

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Address Line 2: _____

City, ST, Zip _____

County (if known): _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Discharge Status: Honorable Conditions Dis-Honorable Conditions

Army Navy

Coast Guard Other _____

Dates of Service (year to year): _____

Discharge Rank: _____

E.g.: E1-E10, WO1-WO5, and O1-O10

Our Mission Statement: *To cover Service Members and Veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.*

Please use the second page to provide information about locations of service (e.g., stateside, deployments, countries). Example: France, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Beirut, Granada, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, Somalia, the Middle East, anti-terrorism operations and terrorism attacks against Armed Forces personnel. You may also provide comments about the nominee regarding unit or ship assignment, duties or responsibilities while serving, experiences, or other information that will help personalize and make the ceremony meaningful for the recipient.

I certify that I have read the QOVF Mission Statement, and affirm the information I provided is accurate.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Please add service location, duties, medals/ribbons or any other information you would like to share to help make the award ceremony more personal for all involved.

MAIL TO

Name: _____ Ginger Fondren

Group Address: _____ P.O. Box 109, Gladeville TN 37071-0109

Email: _____ ginger.fondren@QOVF.org

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Clarence Eugene Sasser



Member **Clarence Eugene Sasser** passed away on May 13, 2024. While in Vietnam he served with Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division from September 1967 to January 1968. Specialist First Class Sasser was awarded the Medal of Honor for Conspicuous Gallantry and Intrepidity for his heroic actions as a Medical Aidman on January 10, 1968. Clarence was preceded in death by his spouse Ethel L. Sasser.

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Specialist Fifth Class **Clarence Eugene Sasser** (ASN: US-54511001), United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Medical Aidman with Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, in action against enemy aggressor forces during a reconnaissance in force operation in Ding Tuong Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 10 January 1968. Specialist Fifth Class Sasser's company was making an air assault when suddenly it was taken under heavy small arms, recoilless rifle, machinegun and rocket fire from well-fortified enemy positions on three sides of the landing zone. During the first few minutes, over 30 casualties were sustained. Without hesitation, Specialist Fifth Class Sasser ran across an open rice paddy through a hail of fire to assist the wounded. After helping one man to safety, he was painfully wounded in the left shoulder by fragments of an exploding rocket. Refusing medical attention,

he ran through a barrage of rocket and automatic weapons fire to aid casualties of the initial attack and, after giving them urgently needed treatment, continued to search for other wounded. Despite two additional wounds immobilizing his legs, he dragged himself through the mud toward another soldier 100 meters away. Although in agonizing pain and faint from loss of blood, Specialist Fifth Class Sasser reached the man, treated him, and proceeded on to encourage another group of soldiers to crawl 200 meters to relative safety. There he attended their wounds for five hours until they were evacuated. Specialist Fifth Class Sasser's extraordinary heroism is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Watch a video of his account of the day, at YouTube "Living History of Medal of Honor Recipient Clarence Sasser."

Ross D. Henderson

Member Ross D. Henderson passed away on May 16, 2024. While in Vietnam he was a gunner onboard the USS Luzerne County (LST-902) from January 1970 to August 1970. It was his second tour of duty in Vietnam. Ross is survived by his wife, Susan, of 50 years.



Gregory Lynn Gass

Former Member Gregory Lynn Gass passed away on June 18, 2024. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9/Division 91 onboard A-91-7 from January to December 1968. Gregory is survived by his daughter Charlotte and son Jared.



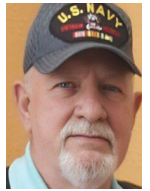
Frederick L. Simpson

Member Frederick L. Simpson passed away on May 20, 2024. While in Vietnam he served with C-4, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from April 1968 to April 1969. Frederick is survived by his wife Mary-Anna of 53 years.



Jimmy Don "Jim" Haley

Member Jimmy Don "Jim" Haley passed away on June 17, 2024. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 13/Division 131 onboard T-131-8 from March 1968 to June 1969. Jim is survived by Beverly, his wife of 44 years.



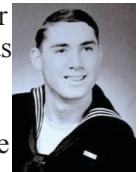
Larry E. Fitchner

Member Larry E. Fitchner passed away on June 14, 2024. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9/Division 91 as Boat Captain of A-91-3 from December 1967 to May 1968. Larry is survived by Terri, his wife for 47 years.



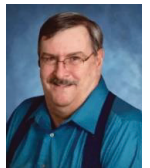
Douglas Thomas Halsted

Former Member Douglas Thomas Halsted passed away on July 13, 2024. While in Vietnam he served about YRBM-17 from January 1968 to August 1969. Douglas is survived by his loving wife Jean.



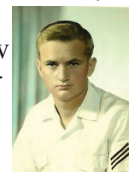
David J. Nowacki

Member David J. Nowacki passed away on June 13, 2023. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 11 - Division 111 from September 1968 to June 1969. David is survived by his wife Sallie.



William Andrew "Andy" Curtner

Member William Andrew "Andy" Curtner passed away on August 6, 2024. While in Vietnam he initially serviced onboard the USS Nye County (LST-1067) and then with River Assault Squadron 13, Division 131 as a Gunnersmate onboard T-131-1 from March 1968 to March 1969. Andy is survived by his wife Donna. They were married for 47 years.

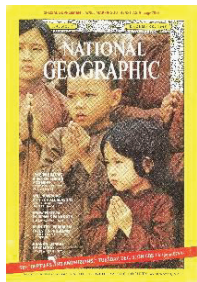


A “The Mekong- River of Terror and Hope.”

Excerpt from the December, 1968, National Geographic

By Peter T. White

Foreign Editorial Staff



“First I studied the maps. Then a U.S. Army plane carried me high and low over all the likely places, when muddy beaches and mangrove swamps meet the South China Sea. I did my best, But I could find only eight dragons.

Yet how could that be, when the Vietnamese call the Mekong River the Cuu Long Giang ---the River of the Nine Dragons?

In Vietnamese imagery, a waterway is a benign, life-giving force, a dragon; and as the great river, nearing its end, splits to form the many-mouthed Mekong Delta, the number of dragons correspondingly multiplies. To as many as eight, as far as I could see.

Dragons Watered by Monsson Rains

I consulted my friend Ton That Thien, long a mentor on matters Vietnamese. Now he was Minister of Information in Saigon.

He smiled. “There really are only eight,” he said. “But eight is not a lucky number. It has to be seven or nine. So, we had to find another one, and we did. But it is very small, very narrow, and less than ten miles long. I hope you are not too unhappy to have missed it.”

.....”War, on any battlefield, is a nightmare. The Mekong Delta compounds the horror. To fight here means tortuous slogging through snake-ridden swamps, where sucking mud grips the legs like wet concrete. The enemy may be only five feet away, yet unseen in the thick jungle”

....”First, the war. I saw it blazing most fiercely in South Vietnam, where the U.S. Navy’s “miniature battleships,” painted green and built expressly for combat along the Mekong Delta waterways, pitted their rapid-fire cannon against Viet Cong rockets made in the Soviet Union and in China.”

Those deadly rockets spewed from bunkers hidden in dense greenery, sometimes along canals so narrow that the boats could not turn around. “It’s like the old days,” said the commodore of the River Assault Flotilla, “exchanging broadsides at 15 to 20 yards, pointblank

.....I went on a mission with the unique Mekong Delta Mobile Riverine Force. The troops came from the U.S. Army’s 9th Infantry Division. The U.S. Navy contributed River Assault Flotilla One, specialized armored craft up to 60 feet long: troop carriers, boats with tiny landing pads for helicopters, flame-throwing boats, monitors carrying mortars and turrets with cannon. But for all their armor, ever vulnerable to VC rockets.

The Riverine Force normally sought out so-called VC main-force units along the canals. But now there would be a sweep of an island in the Song Tien Giang branch of the Mekong. I heard the briefing on the flagship.

Thoi Son Island, five miles long, one-mile wide, eastern tip just south of My Tho. Known VC liaison route. From here the 516th VC Battalion could mortar My Tho. One of its platoons might be on the island, probably also elements of the 332nd Sapper Company, to set booby traps and snipe at shipping. Our artillery stood ready near My Tho, air strikes were on call.

Our assault boats would surround the island before dawn. A plane would play a tape, telling the people not to run-whoever ran would be considered VC. “We want to walk up to them and question them.”

In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one of their fallen comrades. In some instances, the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam. It’s \$25 for four issues.

Serena Barnes, for Michael Barnes, 2nd Brigade 3rd/47th 9th Inf.

David Wilson. 2nd/60th KIA 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton, 4th/39th KIA 06/25/69, Steven Murrar, 4th/39th KIA 05/26/69, Harvey Crabtree 2nd/4th Arty KIA 06/19/69, and Dennis Mattox 1st/501st 101st Abn. KIA 08/23/69

Donut Dollie Emily Strange, by Bill Dabel, C-1 3rd/39th

Orville “Lee” Daley, for Roger Valentine, CSI USS Askari ARL 30 (1967-1968)

Robert Flaige, for SFC Fernando Quintero, KIA 02/27/68, and SP4 Robert “Bob” Jenks, E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68

Bill Frede, for BM1 Guy Dail, BM3 Johnny Maness, and SN David Flamburis, T-112-2, 1967

Patrick Haggerty, in memory of CDR Charlie Cox, CO RivDiv 111 (11/67 to 11/68), and Capt. Jim Gautier, CO RivDiv 11 (12/68-6/69)

Susan Hanmer, for SFC Michael Hanmer, RivRon 13 and 153 (07/69-02/71) Susan T. Henderson, for Ross D. Henderson, Gunner USS Luzerne County LST-902 (2/70-12/71)

Gordon Hillesland, for Pat Lawson, NSA Dong Tam (67-68), Mike Mosey, NSA Dong Tam (67-68), and Joy Hurd (6/68)

Joe Hilliard, for Jim Schwan from Wisconsin, and Buck Grant from Alabama Bruce Jensen, in memory of Frederic Peers Webb, A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67 J. R. Johnson, 3rd/47th 9th “Recon” (05/66-01/68), in memory of Walker, Gotch, Paredez, Nelson, Hayes, Howard, King, Twitchell, Spake and Chesnoski

Frank Jones, For Arthur Delmar Grant “Buck” RivRon 13/15 (07/69-07/70)

Frank Jones, for SFC Michael Hanmer, RivRon 13 and 153 (07/69-02/71)

Jerry Lippincott, in memory of Freddie Tapper USN IUWG-1

Adam Metts, for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 3/31/69

A.R. “Monty” Montillo, in memory of John Sperry

Christopher Olsen, for Ralph Bigelow, T-131-8

Theodore and Anita Richter, (Ralph’s sister) for Ralph Bigelow RivRon 13 T-131-8

Theodore and Anita Richter, (Ralph’s sister) for Ralph Bigelow RivRon 13 T-131-8

Larry Ruebke, in memory of Alan Trucano

Dave Schell, in memory of SFC Mike Hanmer RivRon 13 & 153 (7/69-2/71)

John Smith, for Paul D. Jose, B Co. 3/60 KIA 11/01/68

Charlie Thompson, in Memory of Doyle E. Templeton, 2nd/39th 9th Inf.

In memory of my Brothers, B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division

continued in next newsletter



Mobile Riverine Force Association

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