

the pointman

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 1997

A Publication of Company F 50th (Inf) LRP / 75th (Inf) Ranger



DAN NATE



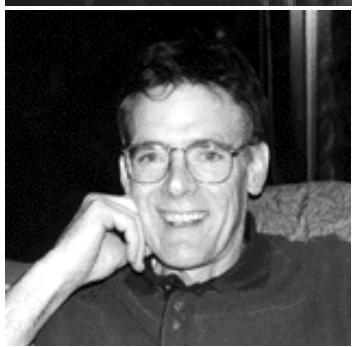
DICK EWALD



"YESTERDAY . . .



. . . AND TODAY!"



RICK CARR



BOBBY ETHRIDGE



FIDEL JOE AGUIRRE * RICHARD C BABB JR * LARRY PAUL BLACKMAN * STEVEN E COLLIER
JOHN F CRIKELAIR * DONALD ALLEN DAVIS * DUANE A DE VEGA * MACK DENNARD JR
JOSEPH E FITZGERALD * CARL D FLOWER * ALVIN W FLOYD * REID E. GRAYSON JR
HOWARD B HANDLEY * KENNETH HARJO * EARNEST HEARD * JOHN A JAKO VAC
LENNIS GODDARD JONES JR * GREGORY KELLY * ERVIN L LAIRD * MILAN L LEE * CHARLES MACKEN
DONALD R MAYBERRY * GARY R MCFALL * BRIAN K MCGAR * HUBERTA MERIDETH * DOUGLAS POLLOCK
ROBERT B PRITCHARD * CHARLES ROGERSON * RAYMOND SULLIVAN * MICHAEL F THOMAS
ROBERT C THOMPSON * DONALD W TINNEY * ARTHUR TOMASCHEK * JOHN H WHITE * FRANK WILDER



Hey Guys-

Been kinda quiet around the campfire since last years reunion.

If you haven't received your issues of the Pointman for the past two years don't worry about it . . . there haven't been any! This was due largely to a lack of funds (which was temporarily taken care of by your brethren at the last reunion), and lack of input . . . we need material for future issues and we'd love to have yours! Happily some help has already arrived and beginning with this issue we are introducing a new section called Hearts & Minds. It will be written by family members and is co-edited by Penny Round and Mary Grieve (thank you kindly ladies).

Our next big Reunion is scheduled for next summer '98 at Fort Benning, Georgia, so start making plans NOW to attend. Wouldn't it be great if we could hit 100 this time? Exact dates have not been determined but we will find a way to let you know. Our parent organization is the 75th Ranger Regiment Association. Remember to join/renew your membership send your \$20 to: Treasurer, 75th RGR REGT. ASSN., 8688 RUFFIAN LN., NEWBURGH, IN. 47630 .

Many of you are aware from the postcards I sent out that our three 25th Inf Div LRRP MIA's, Joe Fitzgerald, Brian McGar, and John Jakovac's remains were recovered, identified, and interred at Arlington National Cemetery on April the 9th. Dan Pope put a section up on the 75th Ranger Regiment's Home Page that is both well conceived and appropriate — for those of you with internet access it is "must read" stuff and can be located at: <http://www.75thassoc.org/mia/>

A number of you have, or are in the process of, filing your claims for PTSD. Hey, it's not up to me to say how or if you are effected but if you have doubts, just ask your wife (or ex-wife) and maybe that'll provide you with the appropriate insight? A valuable resource for completing the paperwork right the first time (for any disability claim—and worth every cent) is the PTSD Guide to 100% Compensation—send \$29.95 to VIETNAM DOOR GUNNERS ASSOCIATION 1400 West First Street, Lee's Summit, MO 64081-1720.

We've located the 1:50,000 maps we used in the field at the Library of Congress Map Room. You can contact the Library of Congress for maps (they are black & white and cost to you is \$4.00 a section. After Action reports are available from the National Archives at Suitland, Md. I hope to begin the (long term) project of putting those I have up on our website in a passworded directory in the near future—stay tuned.

Oh yeah, speaking of our website . . . we have one!
We've been at <http://www.lrrp.com> for an entire year this October coming—cool, huh?

Opps! (the late & final word)

Those of you that found it difficult to obtain a copy of Patience Mason's ("Recovering from the War") or Ron Zaczek's ("Farewell Darkness") books mentioned in the last issue can purchase them from the FVVM. Contact the Friends at (703) 525-1107, or write 2030 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 412, Arlington, VA 22201.

The Friends can also secure name rubbings at the Wall for you—contributions are not required but, as they are a non-profit (currently suffering financially) organization doing good work for a lot of us and surviving families—I would encourage you to send a buck or two their way if you have it to send. Be sure to visit the Friends home page at <http://www.vietwall.org> and in particular their IN TOUCH PROGRAM.

In Touch, by the way, is a program that puts together surviving families (and friends) of veterans whose names are on the Wall with veterans who served with them. It is my personal favorite and well reinforces the Friends "Helping with the healing" slogan. For those of you who, like me, carrying any baggage regarding Vietnam . . . your involvement can be a large part of "the cure."

Remember, most surviving children of our brothers who gave their lives In Country barely (or never) knew their fathers, and many of us have a story, a moment, an anecdote to share which would mean so very much to them and provide a window of healing for them (and us). We have F Company members among us that can attest to this who I expect will share with you in future issues of the Pointman.

AND DON'T FORGET:

**OUR REUNION IS NEXT SUMMER AT FT. BENNING
JOIN THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT
SEND YOUR BRICK MONEY TO DAVE JACOB
SEND POINTMAN CONTRIBUTIONS HERE
SEND YOUR STORIES & COMPLAINTS HERE
KEEP US ADVISED OF ADDRESS CHANGES
VISIT OUR HOME PAGE OFTEN
WE MEET AT THE WALL EACH MEMORIAL DAY
BECOME INVOLVED
CALL AN OLD FRIEND
AND NEVER, NEVER FORGET!**

We put this issue together somewhat hastily as I find myself still "moving in" more than 8 months after my move--my apologies for that. I thank you for your understanding and promise you will see a better product in future issues.

Hello David,

(read to F Company at '96 Reunion)

I'm writing this in regards to my brother **Larry W. Workman**.

He had been interested in one of your reunions, but internal medical problems made it difficult for travel.

We laid the Warrior to rest yesterday 6-6-96 with as much military honors as we could including displaying service photos and medals and ribbons. Larry had a severe case of PTSD and anxiety and etc as you all are familiar.



The VA Clinic in Biloxi, MS was a life saver for Larry and made it possible for Larry to share his last days up here in Toledo, OH with his family. We laid him to rest with due honors (2 Bronze Stars, Air Medal) and love.

Pass the word that if your and Larry's LRRP friends need any clinic help it would be wise to contact Mr. Roy Martin or Dr. John Liberto at the Biloxi VA Domiciliary. Phone 601-385-5747.

These two counselors in Biloxi were far more than therapists they became like family to us. I'm sure it would be worth everyone's while to check with them even if its just for information.

I was with the 2nd Marine Division on Okinawa in 1966 waiting to be rotated to DaNang and Chu Lai area, but got short on duty and rotated back to USA for discharge. I was wanting to get over and help my brother in a sense, but as it turned out, I was intended to help him in a special way in the year of 1996 in a place called Toledo with one of his biggest battles; one which no one is supposed to fight alone.

Don't forget at your reunion to tell others that may still need clinical help to call Biloxi, I feel they are the hope the lost ones need.

Please keep me posted on your next reunion, I would personally like to meet anyone who knew my brother or was in his patrols.

If there are any LRRP Vietnam vets in my area, I could make myself available if anyone needs to just talk.

Thank you and God Bless all veterans from their life and efforts, I remain,



(Larry Workman on the right)

Dear Dave,

I just received the latest copy of The Pointman and I just wanted to say thanks for a job well done. I also wanted to order 2 Company F Memorial Day Shirts, 1 Large and 1 Med. I will not be able to be with you guys at the Wall this year, because I will be on a much deserved honeymoon with Fawn, my wife, and best friend. I wish I could be two places at the same time, but that week is the only time we could get reservations at the resort in Cancun. I think you understand you guys are great but she is so much prettier . . .

The other reason I am writing you is that I just wanted to pass on my thoughts on the reunion. When I first was contacted by Bill, I was very hesitant about going to Columbus. I felt that I did not deserve to be included in a reunion of you truly outstanding Warriors. My tour in Viet Nam was only 5 months in duration, I went on emergency leave due to my father's death, received a hardship discharge due to the family situation and never returned. I have carried this guilt with me for the past 25 years. I felt that I let all of you fine people down by not coming back to Cu-Chi. I can honestly tell you it has been one heavy load to carry in your rucksack for that amount of time.

When I graduated from college and reentered the Army, I promised myself that I would be the kind of officer and soldier that would do justice and bring credit to the Tropic Lightning patch on my right shoulder. You people were the yardstick, I measured myself and my units on, I trained my soldiers on the basis of whether they were prepared to go to combat and could they perform as well as Company F, 50th Infantry (LRP).

I hope that I have done you justice over the past twenty years. That having been said I cannot thank all of you enough for making Fawn and myself welcome at the reunion. Talking to Bill, Emmett, Tom Cahill, Bobby Ethridge, Billy Thornton and yourself David made it very easy to feel at ease with you all. Words cannot express the pride I feel that you have allowed me to be included in this proud and noble fraternity. I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Once again Thank You,
John K. McGee

Editor's Note:

Although this is an old letter I wanted to share it with all of you because there are a lot of our guys that feel like this. I told John in my written response that he has nothing to apologize for. You see I remember him, and I remember that he was, in fact, one of the "good guys."

He was right on one point though . . . Fawn is indeed much prettier than any of you guys!

CU CHI 1966

I don't know what we expected, but the blast of stifling, musty, hot air gave us a sobering introduction to Viet Nam. The "bravado" that we developed in the annual 5 1/2 day training at the Division's Special Asian Warfare Training and Orientation Center (SAWTOC) scarcely prepared me for the realism that I now faced.

As part of the battalions advanced team, I had flown 5 days in one C-124 from Hickam, AFB, with two jeeps and 2 3/4 ton trucks with trailers. We drove off to join other parts of the division in its new home as the 25th Infantry Division began its 25th year of service and, once again, division troops were in combat.

"Hells Half Acre" was a peanut field around which a ditch had been dug by the 65th Engineers ditch digging machine. Home was two shelter halves with a poncho on the top and one the ground. I had built these before, but then it was only for a couple of weeks and I didn't have all my "stuff" with me. We had a litter bag available for water, and all the dust, rain, bugs, rats, C-rats, and "spider-holes" we wanted.

The Engineers had dug a hole for a water purification unit and a shower point. Standing in line to use a GP medium tent in which a mobile shower unit had been set-up was well worth the effort. The unit showers, wing tanks, and 55 gallon drum showers weren't to appear for a while.

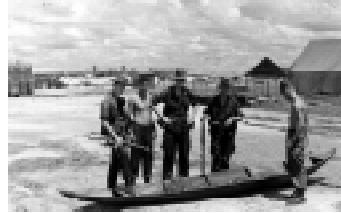
The first few nights were spent in the ditch as occasional motor rounds and green tracers crossed the area. Later we just lay where we were unless we had guard duty. It wasn't that we were becoming braver, it was that we were developing early stages of the bone-tired, live for today, attitude that we all have felt.

There wasn't a large PX or clubs, the roads were dusty until it rained and then it was a quagmire that slowed supplies, floated our stuff, and filled the "fighting" trenches with water. The VC were still "popping up" in many places especially in the Wolfhound area.

It was under these circumstances that men like yourselves answered the call for a special need, to work with limited resources, limited experience in the techniques needed, and with limited understanding of the nature of their missions.

The 25th Division LRRPs were assigned to D Troop 3/4 Cav and had the honor of having RECONDO #1 come from among our ranks. SGT Irvin Hermann was the number one graduate of RECONDO CLASS NUMBER ONE!

Classes 1, 2, & 3, had 25 members from the 25th Division graduate from the school. I guess that our unit took the point from the start.



We were used and "mis-used" quite a bit. There were some interesting missions however. We went on an aerial recon and "found" some sampans (picture nr. 1) I am the 2nd from the right.

We used the sampans to setup an ambush south of "Ann Margaret" (picture nr. 2) in hopes of catching the "bad guys" who took random pot shots at the bunker protecting the bailey bridge. Like many of our missions, it was a good idea at the time.

The days I spent with the LRRPs provided me with a sense of fulfillment that I didn't have with another unit. I returned for two more tours in 'Nam, and like I said the days with the LRRPs were the best. I went through CU CHI in '69 and was surprised to see how much it had grown. On my third tour, I served as an adviser with the 18th ARVN Div, and had the opportunity to go through Cu Chi again in '71. Boy had the Vietnamese torn every thing down.



It guess I was symbolic? I saw both the birth, the vitality, and the demise of a fighting base of operation for one of the Army's fightingest Divisions. The NVA and VC may have it now, but they sure as heck didn't get it from us!

Marshall C. Huckaby. 1SG (Retired)
LRRP 66.-67, Recondo # 111

As Red Cross recreation workers (better known as Donut Dollies), our job was to try to bring the men a little bit of home and a respite from the war. We did this primarily by visiting units on base camps, LZs and fire bases, bringing audience participation games which we had made up.

I always volunteered to take the run to the LRRPs during my time at Cu Chi (Nov. 67-April 68). My enjoyment came not only from their receptiveness to our silly games, but even more so from the obvious pleasure they had in bantering with each other. The faces of the LRRPs in the picture on the cover (of this issue) are a reflection of the fun we shared together.

One of my most poignant memories of Vietnam is of one such visit which was different from the others. Something felt strange because the guys weren't responding in their usual enthusiastic way. Our program was about famous people, so finally to draw them out I asked, "Who's the most famous person in your unit?" They told me a name which I didn't recognize, so I asked who he was and if he was there. There was a pause and then someone said, "He was killed last week."

The game was over. We put it away and just sat and talked. Once again the war had intruded on that brief moment of escape.

Nancy Smoyer
Donut Dollie, '67-68



"Hearts & Minds"

THROUGH THE YEARS



I've asked myself how did I make it 20 years married to a Vietnam Ranger. My husband told me he would give me his purple heart because I survived a different kind of war. I told him that I didn't want what he had earned. I wanted the purple heart I had earned. It's kind of a standing joke between the two of us.

My husband and I have attended several VA counseling Centers over the last twenty years. My husband wasn't very receptive to the group counseling session. I, however, could not go without attending at least one a week for over a year. I recall the first one I attended. I was extremely apprehensive. I walked into a room full of strangers and listened to them explain their week's experiences with their vets. I kept thinking to myself, "Boy have I been there." It wasn't long and it was my turn to introduce myself to the group. The words were coming out slowly and I was on the verge of tears. All of a sudden I was rattling off word after word and crying uncontrollably.

I couldn't wait to go to the next meeting and talk to women who had similar experiences and learn how they dealt with it. With the help of my new found friends I was able to take self defense courses and learn to survive on an equal basis with my husband. I had a counselor tell me once, "If we were to grieve the loss of a loved one and do nothing else, it would take three days." Society doesn't allow us to take three full days to grieve. When I look back on that experience, I realize that our vets went through similar experiences in Vietnam.

Life must go on. Imagine the losses our vets have suppressed over the years. To help our vets we must be strong. There are days when I wonder where will I get the strength to get myself through a crisis and before I know it the crisis is over and I've learned another one of life's lessons.

We would like to encourage your letters and ideas to keep our section of the newsletter in circulation. Encourage your Mother-in-laws and children to put in their input. Please call/contact Penny or me soon.

Mary Grieve
P.O. Box 711
Asotin, WA 99402.
(509) 243-4082

My husband and I like to start our morning reading the following poem (below), called "**Promise Yourself**".

HI EVERYONE!

Last year I read a short review of Recovering from the War, by Patience Mason, in the Pointman. It had dawned on me earlier in the week that my husband suffers—literally—from PTSD.

It was a painful and upsetting realization. Why hadn't I understood sooner, especially when it suddenly seemed so clear? I felt guilty for not having understood instinctively, though I realized the guilt feelings were not only counter-productive but undeserved, as well.

I don't know a lot about PTSD, just whatever the mainstream media has tossed at us over the years. Based on the strength of Dave's book review, brief though it was, I felt the book might be a good place to start, particularly since it was written for the women who live with the Vietnam Vets—the people who love and care about them.

I located a copy and started reading. I wish I could thank Patience Mason personally, as well as the many Vets that shared their experiences with her. At least I can thank Dave, for mentioning the book in the Pointman.

Not knowing many details of my husbands experiences in Vietnam (who describes himself as "not a talking kind of guy"), I decided a couple of years ago to read the stories of other men who were there. I didn't want historical or scholarly material—I was interested in personal experiences. Even though I had already read several that Patience Mason recommends, I find that she was able to put much in perspective for me.

Since that time I have made contact with several women whose partners are in the Ranger group. It's been an interesting and rewarding experience. I've made several of those "Hi, you don't know me but . . ." long distance phone calls and have gotten positive responses every time! I have felt an immediate bond with these women who I imagine are quite different from me in many ways, but who understand some things better than my best friends.

A big hug to Dave for giving the friends and families of the guys this space in the newsletter. I hope we'll hear a lot more from you.

Penny Round
Box 737
Black Hawk, CO 80422
303-582-5379



*Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
To think only the best, to work only for the best, and expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.*

Hi Everyone!

I can't tell you how much I hated not being out there in the land of Big Foot with ya'll (I'm from Georgia--can you tell?). This is only the second reunion that I have missed, and it was lonely back here in Georgia--okay, I lied-- it was really quiet and peaceful. However, I did miss seeing everyone.

Over the years, I have really began to look forward to the reunions. When I went to the first one in Dahlonega, I was almost afraid to attend. That was about the time that the television writers started to write shows based on the Viet Nam veteran. The media portrayed the men as delusional, anti-social, paranoid, and confrontational. Of course, that wasn't the worst of it. The writers seemed to take particular interest in making the guys alcoholic and drug dependent.

When I got there, I found reality very different. I found men who were employed, married, intelligent, and personable. They were so happy to see each other again after all those years and yet were still kind enough to include the wives. They talked about their families, homes, jobs, and churches.

If they discussed Viet Nam, it was usually a funny story. Sometimes they discussed or asked questions about an incident which was still haunting them. However, this was to help them get the peace that sometimes is so tough for them to find. No one had a flashback, and no one was anything other than thoughtful--to each other and to the family members. I loved you from the first time I met you and have looked forward to every other summer since.

The reunions have really started to become a family vacation. It is wonderful to meet the wives, girlfriends (not at the same time!), children, and other loved ones. The gals are now starting to branch out on their own--I mean really how many Hey, honey, have I told you about can one take! So, we tend to go our separate ways.

We go visit some historical places, stores, local attractions, malls, parks, craft places, kiddie places, and anything else that we decide upon. As you can tell, we can certainly find a lot more to keep us happy than merely shopping!!

One of my friend's husband was also in Vietnam . One day she and I were talking, and she began to tell me about some problems her husband has had in recent years. As I listened, she became aware that I understood. We discussed how difficult it is for others to understand that Viet Nam came home in the duffel. As with all of our live's experiences, these remain a part of us and shape who we are.

I hope that by the next reunion that even more of us can get together. If you have never been to a reunion before, you must come. It is a HOOT!!! After all, who doesn't enjoy going to a reunion where half can pretend you are young again, and the other half get to say, Yeah, right!

Alice Hiltibrand
3056 Apache Drive
Columbus, Georgia 31909

(I would love to hear from you, and it would give me an excuse to not talk to my children.)

Hi Everyone!

It was about this time four years ago when Joe asked me if I would consider using our vacation to go to a Ranger Reunion at Ft. Benning in June of 1992. He seemed excited about the chance to see some of his old army buddies and to visit Ft. Benning. At the same time he was somewhat leery of exactly what we could expect from the trip. I have to admit I envisioned spending my vacation (which, by the way, I was planning on our usual lounging by the seashore) with a bunch of Vietnam Vets, as they swilled beer and rehashed old war stories. I could not think of a place where a wife could be out of place and excluded from the general conversation. But, I knew that trip meant a certain type of closure for Joe as well as the opening of new doors, so I agreed, halfheartedly, that we should go.

Joe and I didn't meet until he had been home from Vietnam for several months. From the beginning of our relationship I heard stories about his friends, team members, LRRPs, the country, R&Rs, and insertions. The same names were frequently peppered throughout his stories, Ray, Jesse, Scott, Sonny, Purdy, Bill, and Dave. I only knew these people in my mind's eye hope was for at least one of these characters from his stories would show up at Ft. Benning and make his trip worthwhile. But the trip wound up meaning much more than seeing old friends. The respect and honor shown to all who showed up was overwhelming and totally unexpected. Those of you who attended that first big get together know exactly what I mean.

From the minute we arrived at the hotel, the sense of continuation was overwhelming. These men, many of whom had not seen one another in twenty plus years were still connected. Time had changed appearance and led many to different life styles but time had also enhanced their memories. Everyones sense of camaraderie and closeness again encircled the group. Immediately and without reservation, I was pulled into this wonderful circle with you all. I felt honored and special to have been accepted so warmly and openly.

Since Benning '92 the circle has continued and grown stronger. I look forward to the future reunions.

If any wives or girlfriends wonder, just as I did, what to expect from attending a reunion, I'd tell them to encourage their husbands or boyfriends to plan on the trip. I have seen firsthand the wonderful effect it has had on Joe. And, as for yourselves, expect to become part of the circle without end or measure.

Sincerely,

Martha Stevens
91 Adams Drive
Newport News, VA 23601-3001

P.S. I hope we don't have to wait until next year to hear from you, Ray Armstrong . . . Please write!

"THE NET"

I am never sure whether I said it, thought I said it, or just meant to say it. As a Vietnam Vet I know that "CRS" comes with the territory. One of the things that falls into the "thought I said" category is about computers & the Internet. Internet — If you're lost already just ask your kids (or grand kids) and they will surely set you straight on "what is the Internet."

What it was about that I was supposed to have said was, "If you don't already have a computer and modem, don't go out and buy one." Negative . . . if I said that, negative my last transmission. If you don't already have a computer and modem GO OUT AND BUY ONE IMMEDIATELY! That's right, do it right now, then come back and read the rest of this newsletter.

There is no reason not to (except for not having the money to buy one), and there are too many reasons to invest in one to talk about here, so I'll just touch on a few.

We have our own website. Yep, that's right, we have had visitors from (in addition to the good old USA) each of the following countries since the inception of our home page in October 1996: Ukraine, United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Russian Federat, Norway, Belgium, Mexico, Denmark, Iceland, Croatia, Netherlands, Korea (South), Germany, New Zealand, Spain, Singapore, Italy, Brazil, Japan, France, Malaysia, Ireland, Portugal, and Switzerland.

Advances in technology have made it possible to own a Pentium class machine marketed by world class companies like Compaq, Toshiba, and others for under \$1,000.00 (monitor not included). I realize there are machines available now beneath that price point, but if you buy from the guy putting them together in the basement and selling them out of his trunk , you may be in for quite a surprise come time for warranty work . . .

There are presently 35+ of us F Company types listed on the web with e-mail capability (e-mail? Again remember, "the grand-kids"). What's more, we have through the efforts of a couple of our guys, a real-time chat channel, the LRRP LIST (e-mail discussion list), and access to a CU-SEE-ME Reflector which (if you have the little \$95 camera) allows us to see each other in real time as we send "chat" back and forth. There are multiple software packages out there that allow us to send and receive voice, some of it in real time.

What does all this mean, other then the average computer weighs and occupies less space than a 1982 IBM Selectric? Well, you will be able to view the more than 200 (and growing) pictures at our website. You will be able to contribute articles and information to the Pointman and not even have to purchase a stamp or envelope to get it to me. You will be able to send sitreps and receive the latest poop via the LRRP LIST, visit "the Wall" in D.C. or find out when the "Moving Wall" is going to be in or near your community, visit strange lands in the comfort of your own home, peruse the shelves of the Library of Congress, sign up with FVVM's IN TOUCH Program, write your Congressperson, identify resources, and complain to me for having spent all this money on your new computer. Now that's cool!

And hey, if that isn't enough reason, for the really neat stuff . . . remember to ask the grand-kids!

HUH?

Why in the Sand Hill would anyone in their right mind want to go marching halfway across the country just to go to one of those things anyway? Darn good question!

Having been to the last three consecutive reunions I'm probably not the best person to ask. If you're too busy, can't get the time off or just really into maintaining that special "I am the Lone Ranger" image and can't stand the thought of loading the wife and kids into the old station wagon and coming out for a really great time . . . save the excuses Buck-o, don't come.

If having the opportunity to see the bricks we've paid for dedicated at the Ranger Memorial, or meeting the modern day guys many of whom worship the ground you walk on, or seeing guys that have only waited about 30 years just to hear that you made it home and you're doing okay, then stay the heck in East Egypt where you belong . . . we don't want to see your sour-puss anyhow!

Grapevine has it that in some camps you guys don't have the support of the family to make the trip—don't feel bad (they think they need you), in others, they would do most anything just to get rid of your goat smell'n butt for a couple of days.

If you're so happy lounging around like an old dog in front of the idiot box, don't want to treat yourself to a #1 good time, feel good, and probably laugh til you puke, ignore this column completely, move on, and definitely don't call any of these guys who were in Tacoma with us last summer because they would probably tell you the same thing!

David Jacob	Rich Martin
Dennis Hackamack	Bill Mrkvicka
Charles & Doris Boyle	Joe Little
David Krein	Jim Hargett
Emmett Hiltibrand	Phillip Loftus
Marshall Huckaby	David Regenthal
Charles Rose	Dennis & Jill Petersen
Tim & Theresa Walsh	Bobby Ethridge
Dick Guth	Joe & Diane Cassilly
Ted & Nancy Miller	Gilbert Perez
Jay Hickey	Dave Boilard
Harvey Lindsey	Dan Nate
Jesse Salazar	Joe Gentile
Bruce Craft	Jerry Camellari
Roberto S Pama	Thomas Gurrobat
Dick Ewald	Rick Carr
Ray Armstrong, Pat Serna	Ron Harrison
Bear Hart, Dwight Hampton	Gordon & Mary Grieve



Next "BIG" reunion is scheduled for Fort Benning—Summer '98. Plenty of time to dream up a ton of reasons not to be there . . . hey, don't wait, get started now, you may be able to establish the new record!

APRIL 9TH - ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Gentlemen-

Many of you know through the mailing we did that on Wednesday, April 9th we paid our final respects at Arlington National Cemetery to the three returned members of 25th Division's LRRP Team #3A, lost on May 31st, 1967. A few people have e-mailed me wanting "my take" on the experience. This is mine, excerpted from a post I sent to a couple of our guys the other day . . .

. . . I had not realized how much all the cross traffic, phone calls, etc., concerning McGar, Jakovac, and Fitzgerald had affected me . . . that is until Corky pointed out how "nuts" I had been acting. Thought I had a handle on that by now . . . silly me. Our turnout was something less than I had hoped for, but still it worked out to be just about right. In attendance besides myself were (our guys): Bill Mrkvicka, Jeff Sandell, Rich Martin, Marshall Huckabee, Eugene Simpson, Dan Nate, Nancy Smoyer (my favorite Donut Dolly), and Bill Shanaman. Some of you might remember Shanaman--he was Company Commander from early '68 til around the end of July/early August '68. Jeez, the guy still fits into his uniform! Most of us had dinner together Tuesday evening, then ran over to the Wall. Got back around 11pm or there abouts . . . in time to greet Marshall then return to the Wall for his first visit. Bill Shanaman made his first the following day escorted by our own Nancy Smoyer, and his two handsome sons.

Roy Boatman, Steve Crabtree, and others were there to represent the 75th Ranger Regiment. There were also a couple of Colonels from the active duty--I think one of them was the deputy commander of the Ranger School. There were two representatives from each of the three families. We met and spoke with them prior to the service at the chapel. Joe Fitzgerald's sister, JoAnne, is a sweetheart, I'm sure you will like her. "Crabs" told her about the bricks, and she wants to come to Benning next summer (while we are there) to see the Ranger Memorial and visit with us. They were somewhat impressed that we were there so many years after the fellows were listed as missing that they made the funeral director put our vehicle up at the head of the line, right behind the van provided for the family members to move from chapel to grave site.

We were (and honored to be) asked to be "honorary pallbearers." Our duties were to line the walkway as the casket was brought into, then out of the chapel, and to "stand by" at the grave site. Our little group was called to attention, then told to PRESENT ARMS each time the casket passed, by the NCOIC of the OLD GUARD during the ceremony. Naturally the ceremonies were emotionally taxing. I can tell you that none of this was especially "easy" for me . . . I was afraid I was going to burst out in tears right in the middle of everything. My plan was to stare off at a distant fixed point over the shoulder of the fellow standing directly across from me (you know, the one who seemed to be studying my face for the slightest evidence of a "chink" in my armor). That, and a cold brisk wind blowing telltale wisps of moisture from my eyes (barely) got me through it.

We were last to leave after the services at the grave. We were walking right behind JoAnne, when she stopped suddenly, turned to say something to us but was unable to speak momentarily then began to cry. Huck immediately hugged her, and I (big dummy that I am) patted her back and held her hand. She finally was able

to say that she wondered if she could have the banner from the wreath of flowers the 75th had sent. Without a word, Huck shook his head in the affirmative and calmly walked over to inform the funeral director of the request . . . he returned with it in no time. I can not tell you how much I admire this guy.

After saying goodbyes to the family (and after Dan finished his interview with a newspaper reporter), we met at the NCO Club again for about an hour of picture sharing and filling holes in our collective memory banks.

Afterward we headed for our respective homes--Dan and I riding with Rich back to New Jersey. I need tell you that I believe we represented F Company well! I am proud of those able to be there, and equally proud knowing those that weren't had a prayer in their hearts or a special thought for the families McGar, Fitzgerald, and Jakovac on that day . . . this is all anyone can ask of themselves, and the most we can expect of one another. They are finally home at last! God bless them and their surviving loved ones who must carry on.

I asked that any and all in attendance send me a couple of sentences, or a paragraph reflecting any thoughts or feelings regarding their experience, for the Pointman . . . And that is what follows here. Later my friends. **David R.**

. . . The feelings about last Wednesday are kind of hard to express. The ceremony was impressive, well done, and well attended. It was a great honor to stand in as honorary pall bearers for our fallen brothers. I am proud that our F Company guys could make it to Arlington to honor three LRRPs who were not known well to us. This is the comradery that we have come to know in our special group. We are different from other soldiers, our mission was, and still is, unique. We can still count on our brothers in arms now as we did then, almost thirty years ago. Where needed we will again rise to the challenge and group together to do what needs doing.

Rich M.

. . . Even though I have been far removed from it, I have been watching and I think you all did a gallant thing, and you are to be commended for it. I am to far away to have been involved in it, but we did pray for you guys and for the families. To some of you this probably doesn't go to far, but I know in my heart that it does. It had to be bittersweet for sure, just knowing that after all these years, there they were, and they were going to rest in the land of the free, and you and their families were there to witness this event. I personally thank every one involved in this and I hope that this attitude would continue in the future. **Richard E.**

. . . I have had some strong feelings about the three men recently buried, but I'm comfortable that I really know their stories very well. I mostly hear about McGar and his family. What can you tell me about Fitzgerald, Jakovac and their families? **Dennis P.**

. . . Your last statement just placed you higher on my "Guys I respect list". I tried to put David and Bill on it but couldn't spell Rengenthal, . . . Rigenthal, . . . Reagonthal, nor Mikverka. .Myrkvica, . . Mervika, . . . well I guess you can see my problem . . .

All B.S. aside, after Nam I did not have a lot of friends that I felt I could be honest with, and knew what I really felt, that is until I went to my first reunion in Tacoma. Now things have changed for me. While in Arlington, David gave me one of his "you gotta go to the

Wall and now is a real good time" tours of the place. I didn't know if I really wanted to see it or not, but now I have the rubbings of the names of two LRRPs I knew and whose bodies I had to identify. I have them framed and hold them very dear. They are my tie with the past and release for the future. We can truly say "Been there, done that!" **Huck**

. . . well you know what I am very touched by the recent events and I feel very bad I was not there but I was in spirit . . . oh hell, I know I misspelled it but you are doing a great job and I love you for it. **Harvey L.**

. . . You asked that we write to you after the service for our Brothers who had finally returned "home." As I said that day, for me, it was also an opportunity for me to pay my final respects, not only to Joseph Fitzgerald, John Jakovac and Brian McGar, but also to Ray Sullivan, Harjo, Babb, De Vega and all the others that were taken from us at such a young age. I found it very difficult (back then) to walk over to the 3/4 Cav and have some "sky pilot", who didn't even know these men, try to put into words what their life meant and how great their sacrifice. B.S.! The loss that I felt on those days was beyond words . . .

On April 9th, 1997 I was able to put another piece of baggage into a special part of my heart where I am able to deal with it on another level. The loss of these men, as well as all of our brothers, will never be forgotten. I was proud and very honored to have been asked to attend and participate on this day. **Sandy**

Most of us came home to no special greeting. Some of us came back to scorn for having served our country. Team 3A, No one in the company really knew them, and three members of Team 3A didn't come home for 30 years.

By the time the three were found and returned their parents had passed. The remaining family members seemed cool to anyone other than family participating in services for them. The news leaked out that they were coming home and that they were to be buried in Arlington Cemetery. Damn! At least fellow LRP's should welcome them home. The word began to pour out. On relatively short notice, 8 members of the 25th Division LRRP's / Co. F planned and attended the ceremonies.

The word continued to spread. Representatives from the 75th Association, representatives from the active Army, veterans from associations in the home states of members of team 3A, and others came to Arlington Cemetery. Appropriately it was a cool day. The ceremonies by the staff at Fort Meyer were impressive and the type one would expect for heroes. The history of the old chapel on the base, and the meaning and membership of Arlington Cemetery both gave a dignity to the occasion which was warranted. The burial in Arlington was impressive, sobering and showed the respect of the country for these men - a respect they deserve. Yet, for these three who gave all, it was somehow not enough.

The members of Co F were asked to be honorary pallbearers. While we didn't speak of it, while standing at attention during the ceremony, the wind and cold kept us mentally sharp. And those damn tears wouldn't stop sneaking out.

In spite of all that, Team 3A is finally home.

Bill M.

RANGER MEMORIAL BRICKS

We have, gentlemen, an opportunity to place "our guys" who paid the ultimate price together on the Ranger Memorial walkway at Fort Benning. If we dig deep in our jeans right now and put up the bucks we can make this happen in time for them to be in place by the next big reunion set for Summer of 1998. You should also know that we expect Joe Fitzgerald's sister to be there.

Hey listen, I know that money doesn't just grow on trees — neither do the bonds of comradeship born of the difficult circumstance of war. But, if you have it, now's the time to buy a brick for our remaining brothers (16 have already been purchased), 14 are already in place for:

BLACKMAN	BABB
LAIRD	DAVIS
FLOWER	GRAYSON
ROGERSON	WILDER
FITZGERALD	DE VEGA
JAKOVAC	THOMAS
MCGAR	PRITCHARD

How much you say? \$240.00 buys a brick, \$120.00 buys half of a brick. I won't get into all that high level math regarding a quarter and an eighth of a brick and so on — not that every penny won't help, it certainly will, but if we kid ourselves by thinking that everybody is going to send a little all at once, then it just won't happen.

Team leader (and able bodied assistant) are listed below. The deadline is Thanksgiving! Send your bucks to them now at:

**DAVE JACOB
11904 SOUTH EAST TAYLOR
PORTLAND, OR 97216
(503) 253-1483**

**RON HARRISON
31216 72ND AVENUE, SOUTH
ROY, WA 98580
(206) 843-1347**

I spoke with Steve "Crabs" Crabtree (back in April at Arlington), regarding whether or not it would be possible to hold a block of bricks in the Ranger Memorial for F Company so that we could put our guys along-side or near each other? The answer was yes—(or at least it was back when the question was asked). So let's not make 'em nervous about whether or when F Company is going to complete this mission, please.

**Remember, the deadline is Thanksgiving!
Buy a brick - Our guys are waiting . . .**

Duty Called and we answered.

*My fellow Lurps and I were going home,
for we'd pulled our last patrol;
no more drinking piss-warm beer,
we were headed for something cold:*

*Our rucksacks were put away,
we'd had our last firefight;
we settled down and began to relax,
as we climbed into the night:
drifting in and out of a fitful sleep,
reliving scenes we'd never forget;
slowly we neared our homes once more,
to get the reception due a combat vet:*

*The stewardess began to cleanup the plane,
getting everyone ready to land;
she gazed down at my sleeping friends,
youth forever lost, doing the job of a man.*

*No parade, no crowd, not even dignitary,
awaited to greet our brave young band;
but didn't we do what we were bid,
yet, not a person wanted to shake our hand.*

*"No big thing," remarked my friend,
"ain't the first time we seen tough times";
So we headed toward our next flight home,
but our path blocked by a group bearing signs:*

*"Baby-killers, devils, and demons,"
screeched this scruffy, sign carrying nut:
with beads and rings, and faded jeans,
and hair down to his butt:*

*"It's not our duty, and not our place,
to fight Nixon's and McNamara's war;
we burnt our draft card to make our stand,
We'll show the government just who we are:"*

*"We do you mean, you worthless crud,"
my buddy said to that piece of crap;
"and put your finger in my face one more,
and I'll close your filthy trap!"*

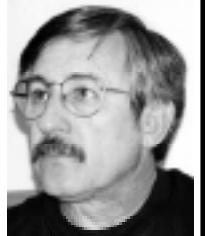
*"Do you think that it is a bit ironic,"
my friend said, glancing at me;
"That demons like us just keep on dying;
so that his kind can speak so free!"*

*We shook hands and said our last good byes,
and each headed in our separate ways;
knowing that the bond that had been forged,
would carry us through the coming days:*

*Now we weren't Rambo or supermen,
merely duty bound and patriotic GIs;
who pledged to give our country everything,
and many even gave America their lives:*

*There were many kinds of hats in Viet Nam,
steel pots, berets, and other things like that;
but it wasn't headgear that answered the call,
it was the the man serving under the hat.*

Marshall Huckaby
April 12, 1997



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**Forwarding and Address
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