



Walking Point

The newsletter for D Co. 2/8 Vietnam 1965—1972

Vietnam Vet Story

by William Harrington, Range, 70-71



We were young, barely in our twenties, and not very worldly. Most of us had not traveled over a hundred miles from home. We had only visited another state if we had relatives living there. Our major concerns were who would be our date for the Friday night football game and whose older brother would buy us beer.

It is kind of ironic that we could die for a country that wouldn't let us buy beer.

We received combat training, but no training could prepare someone for the horror of war. After Basic and AIT we were shipped to a strange land-Vietnam, a name we knew from the news but most of us would have had trouble finding it on a global map. Strange you could be in the US and eighteen hours later in the middle of a war. You might say you adjusted fast or you got to go home early in the wrong part of the airplane. It was hot and smelly but our home for the next 365 days. We came to do our patriotic duty like our fathers (WWII) and grandfathers (WWI), but quickly learned we were in the middle of a Political Conflict that was not popular with the American people.

I am sure, like me, my Cav brothers will never forgive the news media, war protesters, and Jane Fonda.

Our enemies were hard to define: Charlie in bush or local villagers with hand grenades in their pockets, ground bombs or traps, snakes, animals and insects. Attacks could come at any time, thus we had to be on alert twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. We didn't fear dying, but we did fear not coming home whole or a *Dear John* letter. (*Thankfully I never received one.*) Feeling abandoned by our country, we decided not to fight for it but for ourselves and each other with the goal that we would all come home. A noble thing it was, but not very realistic. You cannot advance into an enemy bunker complex and not get people hurt. This led to our biggest pain from the war, guilt. We had a feeling that we didn't do enough or we second guessed decisions we made in battle because our Cav brothers did get hurt.

War had its horror which we have trouble forgetting, but like a painted lady, it had its addictions. It reduced life to its simplest form: survival, living or dying. We escaped the stresses that society puts on you like which side of the tracks you live on, what kind of car or house you have, how good is your job, what is your skin color, etc. (*My guess is this is why some vets live as recluses.*) Yes, we were all truly equal, grunts in the bush fighting for one another.

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Vietnam Vet Story (continued)

This also led to something we cherished, the bond between us. It was intense, strong and has been hard to find back home. It was truly the best of times and the worst of times.

We spent most of our tour in the bush on search-and-destroy missions. Our lives developed a pattern - up at daylight, walk all day, circle up at dusk, and sleep all night. Although in a war zone the terrain was beautiful and animal life was abundant. The skies at night, untainted by an industrial society, were full of stars. It was an amazing sight.

Sometimes after returning home and someone would ask where I had been, I would reply, *"I took a year off to backpack in a foreign country." We seldom talk about Vietnam with anyone.*

Every three days we were logged (received supplies). Excitement filled the LZ because the first chopper would have a red bag (mail from home), our only connection to the real world. Opening a letter from home gave us the feeling of being there - get a letter from mom and you could smell the chicken and dumplings, the perfumed letter from a sweetheart and you could feel yourself beside her. But when one looked over the LZ filled with a cloud of home, reality set in - not all would return home in the same condition they came over in.

With our rucksacks (backpacks) full, we left the LZ to circle up for the night. There was always a nervous feeling that first night after being logged because Charlie knew we were in his back yard, exactly where we were. Would this be the night he would come out to play? Sometimes the mental burden weighed more than our rucksacks. And speaking of our rucksacks, it was hard to imagine that everything you owned or needed was carried on your back. Who knew how much they weighed, filled with food, water, ammo, poncho, night shirt, bug spray, writing material, books, radio, and so forth? *RTOs like me would add another twenty-five to thirty pounds to the load.*

After a certain amount of time your company took its turn and guarded the fire base. We enjoyed this time. We got to take a shower and eat food cooked in a mess hall. We would stay up late each night telling each other stories about home, what we would do when we got home, what would be our first meal, etc. *If we live, our 365 Days of War are over, and we get to go home.*

We were happy but sad because we were leaving and others were staying, our new brothers. We felt like we were abandoning them, but at the same time we were excited to be going home. Like before but in reverse, we go from the middle of a war back into society and its stresses in just eighteen hours. Adjustment again must be fast or you become lost. There was no help or time to decompress from the guilt, horror, the loss of the intense bonds made among us, or physical damage your body had received. *Some are still adjusting or never will.*

Because it was an unpopular Political Conflict, most people hated it and did not want to celebrate it in any fashion. For us, the returning soldiers, there were no parades or even a simple official welcome home. Our country had no pride in what we had done. That hurt and we all felt it. Kind of sad but we wanted no sorrow. Remember, it was the best of times also.

In Vietnam, we learned how to trust people and what we could trust them with. A Vietnam vet can shake someone's hand and look them in the eye and know if they have grit, *True Grit*. We learned to laugh and how to tell stories. We learned how to put things in perspective and not to sweat the small stuff like a bad day at work or stock market: no sweat- nobody died or was wounded. We learned that life is a gift not to be taken for granted - it can be lost quickly. We learned about a world outside our home state. We learned about the evils of politics. We received an education no college could offer, education about life. We saw strong men cry and weak men charge machine gun fire. We left home as boys and came home as men.

We sometimes wish we didn't have to endure it but we know it made us better. Vietnam was truly the best of times and worst of times. Thus, my love for my Cav brothers can never be broken. *That's our story, or maybe it's just my story.*

New Members since the June, 2011 Newsletter:

Mitchell Smith, Sr., Skull 71-72

Mike Mileski, ARDF, 67

Deceased Member/s: (Date of Death)

Edward Kotch, Wild Cat, 66-67 (29Jun11)

Gary W. MacLachlan, 65-66 (16Dec10)

Johnny Varnes, Skull, 70-71 (31Oct11)

Don Mangles, Cat 68-69 (1Jan2012)

Ellis Ford, Range 68-69 (21Jun2010)

Membership count:

Active Members: 678

Members Online: 264





Angry Skipper Association, Inc.™



June, 20 thru 24th, 2012 Reunion Registration Form Denver, CO

Name: _____ (AKA) _____ Platoon: _____ Yr(s): _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Ph: _____
 How many will be in your group? _____ E-mail: _____ In Case of Emergency contact: _____
 List First names of all in your group: _____

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Cost/Person</u>	<u>No. of</u>	<u>Total</u>
June 20 (Wed)	Golf at Bear Dance in Larkspur (\$89 Green Fee w/cart)		_____	pay at site
June 21 (Thur)	Golf at Fossil Trace in Golden (\$55 Green Fee w/cart)		_____	pay at site
	- 8:30a to 3pm Ladies shopping trip to Estes Park Tran.	\$24.00	_____	_____
	- 9:30am to 3:00pm. Fort Carson Tour Transportation	\$34.00	_____	_____
June 22 (Fri)	Trip to Coors Brewery and Clear Creek Canyon Trans.	\$24.00	_____	_____
June 23 (Sat)	4:30pm Group Photo (Everyone) Digital from ASA website		_____	_____
	4:30pm Group Photo (Members Only) Donate for Cost		_____	_____
June 23 (Sat)	5:30pm Reunion Banquet (check meal selection below)	\$45.00	_____	_____
	# of Top Sirloin w/Port Wine Demi-Glaze _____ # of Sautéed Chicken w/Creamy Tarragon: _____			
	# of Tuscan Salmon w/Lemon Basil Cream Sauce _____ # of Chef's Choice of Vegetarian _____			
Shirts & Caps	Number of Reunion Shirts: _____	\$25.00	_____	_____
	Sizes: Small: _____ Medium: _____ Large: _____ XL: _____ XXL: _____ XXXL: _____			
	Number of Boonie Hats: check here for CMB _____	\$18.00	_____	_____
	Sizes: Small: _____ Medium: _____ Large: _____ XL: _____ order by Apr 30, 2012			
TOTAL EVENTS REGISTRATION				\$ _____

MEMBERSHIP & REGISTRATION FEE:

Membership Life Card @ \$200 ea.	.00
Registration Fee:	35.00
Total Registration & Membership Fee: \$.00
Contribution/donation:	.00
Total Events Registration from above:	.00
TOTAL PAYMENT:	\$.00

_____ Check here if you are not attending and want shirts & caps mailed to you. Add \$10.00 for postage and handling.

Please register by June 8, 2012. Please complete form and mail with check (payable to Angry Skipper Association, Inc.) or with credit card info to:

Stacey Smith
 Register with Ease
 473 Las Cruces
 Winter Haven, FL 33884
 Ph: 863.325-0077
 Fax: 863.325-0051

PAYMENT METHOD: _____ Check Charge to (check one): _____ MasterCard _____ VISA
 Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____
 Signature: _____
 Month/Year

Do not send this form if you registered online at : <http://www.angryskipperassociation.org>



Hotel Reservations, Phone 877.303-0104

Tell them you are with the Angry Skipper Association group. Online Hotel registration at the ASA website.

**You must arrange your own Hotel room. It is not included in this registration.
 Your Welcome Package will be available in the Hotel Lobby. Please pick up your package when you arrive.**

Denver, CO 2012 Angry Skipper Association, Inc. Reunion

Our reunion will be held at the **Denver Marriott Tech Center, 4900 S. Syracuse Street, Denver, CO 80237** from **June 20 thru June 24, 2012**. You must call the Hotel and make your own reservations. Their number is **877.303-0104**. The hotel will honor the discounted group rates for 3 days prior to June 20th and 3 days after June 24th, for those early arrivals and stay-over's. These **rates are good until June 6, 2012**, so please register before June 6th. **Hotel room rates will revert to market after that date.** The hotel rates are as follows:

Deluxe Guest Room: \$ 105.00 (singles and doubles)

Online Hotel Reservations are here: https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=3713396

You must tell the Hotel you are with the Angry Skipper Association for these preferred rates. They will not change the rate if you forget to tell them you are with the Angry Skipper Association group.

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/dentc-denver-marriott-tech-center/> This hotel is the 3rd largest hotel in Denver, with 11 floors, 628 guest rooms, 12 suites and 20 junior suites. This hotel has a smoke free policy. The State of Colorado recognizes the Association' tax exempt status which will save us a little \$\$\$, as well. There are 25 restaurants within walking distance, or a short shuttle ride. The Hotel provides a complimentary 5 mile shuttle to get to area attractions easily. Thank you to John (Skull, 70-71) and Pat Bourdelais for all their help in locating and negotiating with a suitable hotel for 2012.

The hours for the Hospitality suite is from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. The Hospitality suite will open Wednesday, June 20th at 12:00 p.m. and close at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 24th. When you arrive, please pick up your welcome package in the Hotel lobby. The package will contain your meal tickets, name tags, agenda, shirts & caps, etc.

The registration process will be handled by Register with Ease again, just like last year. VISA and MasterCard will be accepted, as well. Register With Ease has set-up a website for online registrations. Go to <http://www.angriskyipperassociation.org> for a direct link, or you can mail the registration, with check or credit card information, to the address on the registration form. You may also fax the form, with credit card info, directly to Stacey. Or, register on-line, then send the check, payable to Angry Skipper Association, Inc., to Stacey.

We will have Boonie hats this year, with embroidered CIB or CMB and CAV patch.

Group Photographs: We will have digital pictures posted on the ASA website for members to download and print. Please make a small donation to cover the cost of the photographer.



Details of Events:

Wednesday 6/20: Golf at Bear Dance in Larkspur. Cost \$89.00 green fees w/cart. Club rentals are \$50.

Thursday 6/21: Golf at Fossil Trace in Golden. Cost \$55.00 green fees w/cart. Club rentals are \$40. **Thursday 6/21:** Ladies Shopping trip to Estes Park. This trip would be from 8:30 a.m. to about 3:00 p.m. Pat Bourdelais will serve as head shopper. Cost \$24.00 for Transportation.

Thursday 6/21: Fort Carson Tour. This trip would be from 9:30 a.m. to about 3:00 p.m. It's a guided bus tour of the Fort with a stop at the Mountain Post Museum and Lunch with the soldiers at the Stack Dinning Facility (\$4.25 cash only). Cost \$34.00 for Transportation.

Friday 6/22: Trip to Coors Brewery, tour and tasting, (still the largest single brewery in the world) and then a scenic bus ride up Clear Creek Canyon to the Ameristar Casino in Blackhawk. Where you will find several restaurants and all the gaming you want. This trip would be from 9:30 a.m. to about 4:00 p.m. Cost \$ 24.00 for Transportation.

Saturday 6/23: Business Meeting at 8:00a.m. in the Hospitality Suite;

Reserved for your choice of events/destinations/tours. John & Pat Bourdelais has compiled a list of attractions to select from. Personal or small groups can be organized to selected destinations for the day.

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.® Treasurers Report

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.®
 Profit & Loss (unaudited)
 January 1 through December 31, 2011

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.®
 Balance Sheet (unaudited)
 December 31, 2011

Ordinary Income & Expense
 Income

Banquet/s	\$ 4,640.00
Donations	4,282.25
Membership Dues	400.00
Registration Fees	1,315.00
Group Photograph	815.00
Tours	3,966.25
Shirts, Hats, Patches	<u>2,025.00</u>
Total Income	\$ 17,443.50

Expenses

Banquet—Saturday Event	4,697.33
ASA Website	00.00
Corporate	46.04
Flowers/Funeral	00.00
Insurance	332.00
Legal	75.00
Member Assistance	00.00
Merchant Account	1,030.78
Photographer	845.00
Postage & Delivery	736.01
Printing & Reproduction	852.00
Professional Services—Reunion	3,085.45
Tours (Transportation)	4,150.00
Shirts, Hats & Patches	<u>1,693.70</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 17,543.31

Net Income (Loss) (\$ 99.81)

ASSETS

Current Assets:

Checking	\$ 744.75
Deposits	00.00
Accounts Receivable	<u>00.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ <u>744.75</u>

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	<u>00.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ <u>00.00</u>

Equity

Opening Bal Equity	3,316.97
Retained Earnings	(2,472.41)
Net Income	<u>(99.81)</u>

Total Equity	\$ 744.75
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$ <u>744.75</u>

Veterans Day celebration leads to surprise reunion By Natalie Strom

The Veterans Day Ceremony at Veterans' Memorial Park on November 11th was certainly one to remember. Special Guest Speaker, General James K. Guest (Commander of D 2/8th 66-67), would definitely agree. During his speech he explained to the large crowd why this particular Veterans' Day was so special to him.

"Veterans' Day is a day to remember the life-long friendships that were forged on the battlefield. This is one of the greatest benefits of being a veteran," General Guest told the crowd. With that he invited two men onto the stage, both who served under him during the Vietnam War. VFW Commander of Marco Island, Jim Lang, and veteran John Kutay joined Guest as he continued. The story that unfolded next was truly inspiring. (Lang and Kutay were D 2/8th 66-67)

In 1966 General Guest was Captain of the Company both Lang and Kutay served in. As Lang explained, "We threw (Kutay) on a chopper one night never expecting to see him again and he survived even after taking eight to nine rounds from an AK-47."

After nine long months of being "put back together," according to Kutay, he was finally released from the hospital. Forty-four years have passed since that time and General Guest had never seen him since.

While helping to plan the Veterans Day Service and new Memorial Dedication to the Veterans' Community Park, Jim Lang decided to plan a surprise for his two friends from service. He invited General Guest to speak at the event, not informing him that Kutay would be there. At a dinner hosted for the General the night before Veterans Day, Guest and Kutay were reunited. It was a long-awaited moment for both soldiers.

"After 44 years, I just can't even tell you how I feel. I've thought about (Kutay) over the years many times. He was a great soldier," explained Guest. According to Kutay, the reunion "was very warming."

The Memorial Dedication and Veterans Day Celebration certainly kept that spirit alive. It is one that many will never forget, especially for General Guest and his fellow soldiers and friends, Jim Lang and John Kutay.

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<http://coastalbreezenews.com/2011/11/29/veterans-day-celebration-leads-to-surprise-reunion/>

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*"Remember the bad times once,
Remember the good times forever"*

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www.angryskipperassociation.org

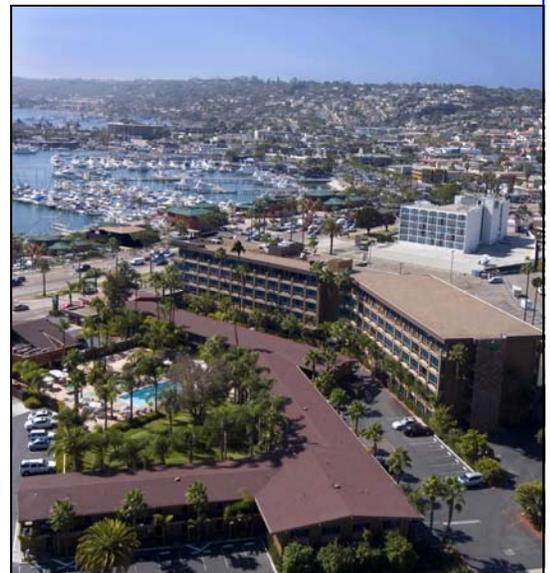
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Holiday Inn San Diego Bayside
4875 North Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92106
June 19 to June 23, 2013

Just minutes from area attractions and the San Diego Airport, our hotel on San Diego Bay is perfect for business or leisure travelers. Always accommodating, the **Holiday Inn® San Diego Bayside** hotel promises a quality experience.

With Sea World, the Zoo, Seaport Village and Old Town, the Gaslamp Quarter and downtown less than 10 minutes away, our centrally located hotel allows San Diego guests the perfect opportunity to stay and play. San Diego hotel guests are also close to popular sporting events like Red Bull Air Races and Rock & Roll Marathon, as well as the home of the Chargers and Padres.

Guests of this hotel in San Diego are near Liberty Station, San Diego Convention Center and businesses including Northrop Grumman, SPAWAR and Lockheed Martin. We offer event space for 10-200, a Business Center and a complimentary airport/train station shuttle. Whether you're here on vacation, business or planning a San Diego Cruise, our hotel's accommodations are sure to please. Guests can enjoy amenities that include a Fitness Center, pool, whirlpool, a 9-hole putting course and more.



<http://www.holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/san-diego/sanby/hoteldetail/photos-tours>