

# TARD

24th Infantry Division Association

24th Infantry Division Association



FIRST TO FIGHT

# LEAF



## The MERCY TWINS in the KOREAN WAR

Volume 67 Issue No. 1

Winter 2013

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## Taro Leaf, Volume 67, Issue 1, Winter 2013

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UP NEXT**

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**ON THE COVER:** The Mercy twins, Robert is on the left, Richard on the right. Robert is an author and actor, Richard a retired law enforcement officer. Story on page 26.



**Greetings to all Taro Leafers:** Like so many veterans groups, we face de-clining membership due to an aging group of veterans and no draft. In 1970 there were 3.1 million (1.5%) uniformed members in the military out of a population of over 203 million citizens. In 2010 we had only 1.6 million (0.5%) uniformed in the military out of a population of 309 million.

At this year's Board of Directors meeting it was decided to allocate \$2000 in an effort to increase our membership. Tom Appler, Director-at-Large has begun a concentrated effort through Facebook to reach many soldiers who have worn the Taro Leaf. He has created a contest for new members. Please look at his letter in this Issue (page 29) and use it to help spread the word. Director-at-Large George Vlasic is insuring our reunion in Louisville will appear in various veterans' magazines.

The 24th Infantry Vets Facebook group has over 900 participants and continues to grow with those who served in Germany, Ft. Stewart, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm. Also there are other groups such as Augsburg Germany US Army Friends Lookup, Sheridan Kaserne Augsburg, Reese Kaserne Augsburg Germany, Amerika in Augsburg, and Friends of Augsburg Cooking Group. If you are a Facebook user look up these groups.

Tom Thiel has continued to scan issues of the Taro Leaf on to our website as well as several other activities. See his letter and article in this issue. If you have any back issues Tom needs, please send them to him. Visit our website: [www.24thida.com](http://www.24thida.com)

On the last page is a new initiative to gain more insight to what the membership wants. Please read David Valley's letter on this page. We plan to use this device to solicit nominees for the Verbeck Award, officer nominations, and other items.

We will need someone to assume the responsibility for the fund raiser after next year. Chaplain Carpenter has indicated 2013 will be his last year.

Unfortunately several of our members suffered damage to their homes due to Hurricane Sandy. Bill and Helen Kane lost their home. Bill Tricarico called to say he could not make the mini-reunion in St. Augustine Beach as his house was damaged. I am sure there are other East Coast Taro Leafers who are facing hardships due to this terrible storm. Join me in wishing them the best in recovering from their losses.

Wishing you and your families the best in 2013 and hope to see y'all in Louisville next September!

**Best regards,  
Don Magio**



**Hello to all you survivors of the Mayan Calendar's end time.** We survived another crisis, now all we have to worry about is keeping in good health. Big picture, other than personal matters, I am only mildly concerned about the future for my wife and myself. However, I have some serious doubts about the prospects for my kids, grand kids, and great grand kids. I pray they will have the blessings

in their lives that we have enjoyed. But worry, no, there's point to it as there is little or nothing we can do about the ways of the world.

It is appropriate at the beginning of a new year to reflect a bit, to mentally step aside from the everyday traffic of activities to survey your situation and perhaps set some new goals. I'm not big on New Year's Resolutions, I mostly go along with the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' philosophy, but as far as our organization is concerned, I'll try to do my job with as few screw-ups as possible.

My goal is to make the Taro Leaf every member's personal connection to the 24th Division's legacy. We living members and those who have gone before us are a legacy of lasting memories of profound experiences to hold onto with pride and satisfaction. The Taro Leaf and the 24th ID website, which Tom Thiel so ably maintains, are the lifeblood of our legacy and need your input to remain alive and vital. So, I urge those of you who can to make a special effort this year to contribute your thoughts, recollections, pictures, and stories which are pertinent to the 24<sup>th</sup>. You may mail or email them to me or Tom. It doesn't matter to whom as we will figure out where they are best suited. Our addresses are on the adjoining page.

It has long been a contention of mine, and perhaps others that the conduct of business at national reunions does not adequately represent the membership at large. It is the right opportunity for officers and directors to get together and conduct association business, but for items or issues that require a vote from the membership using only those members in attendance, it is inadequate representation. Also, considering the majority of attendees are there year after year, the same or similar conclusions can be expected. This is not to find fault with those who attend, they are doing their part, but rather to seek more consensus. After all, we have about 2,200 members who being voted for by about 100 members.

I have discussed this with Don, our new president and he agrees we should try to achieve more consensus, especially in regards to siting national reunions. His comments can be read in the adjoining column. Accordingly, we have introduced in this issue the member reply card. It can be cut from the back page and used to express your preferences and ideas.

**David Valley**



# Letters

**Dear Editor:** Beppu Southern Kyushu - I had the good fortune to connive an R&R to the hot springs/steam baths in Beppu for a 4 day leave from my Unit, **HQ 3RD BN 21 INF** at Camp Wood, Kumamoto. After boarding the empty GI Car with the white stripe along the side and hooked to a group of packed passenger cars with Japs hanging on, we crossed Kyushu in a few hours. Upon arriving in Beppu a Jeep took us to the Rest Center that was located up alongside one of the small mountains that rose above the Pacific facing a fair size city.

Upon being escorted to our quarters, my buddy, Harry, and I were given private rooms that were fairly spacious overlooking a small pool decorated with the usual evergreen sculpted miniature trees and with large fish swimming around - typical Japanese horticulture of which at the time we could care less. The room had a small cot with mattress and a mosquito net affixed apparently for nightly use. It came in handy since the night time creatures were too many. Thick woven mats on the floor - a true paradise. The meals were great, the weather good - what more could I want?

The following day we were escorted around Beppu for a short drive via jeep with driver. The City of Oita bordered Beppu and was well posted as "Off Limits to G.I.'s." The real meat of our relaxation however wasn't just an innocent few days.

The hot steam baths were the ultimate experience for the innocent soldier far from home. Each man was assigned a time and day for their steam baths that were located on another level and designed for individual use. Instructions were posted and a G.I., who must have been the General's son to get such a duty, met me and went over the procedure for entering the hot water. It was a rectangular pool about 5ft x 8ft and about chest high in depth.

Upon entering, one was to go slowly, inch by inch lowering their feet into the steaming hot water and then gingerly lowering himself until standing and then go neck deep. As I placed my toes into the water with a hot cloud of water vapor rising, I heard a slight noise and standing just inside the closed door was this purely unexpected beauty of a well endowed female; there were not many of them around Japan with everyone half starving etc .

The startling event for me, being an innocent, uninitiated 19 yr old was that she was naked head to toe and walking toward me. To me a naked woman was only in my mind prior to this. Being an upright Christian I did the right thing - RIGHT - wouldn't you ? I threw her outta there. Shame on Uncle Sam for putting me in that situation - Well anyway you get the picture. That's the way it was editor. Use whatever you want of this true story. *(Readers: Draw your own conclusions!)*

(SGT) T.J. "Tom" Sullivan, 5 Ward Way, Millsboro, DE 19966. 21st RGT, 1946-47, Member

**David,** The enclosed photos were sent to me by Robert "Bob" Maher. He is an association member that served with the 3rd Engineers in Hawaii 1938-40. At 93 years of age he thinks he is one of the oldest 3rd engineers still around. He lives at 14419 Holiday Dr. Kp N, Gig Harbor, WA 98329-512, Telephone on our records is 253-884-4392. Perhaps others from the 3<sup>rd</sup> may wish to contact him. I thought this, with the photos, might make a little human interest blurb for the Taro Leaf. **John Dunn**



**We made this tank trap, the largest and only one we made at Schofield Barracks. The tank from the 11<sup>th</sup> Tank CO had a nine-cylinder radial engine.**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Engineers Bivouac during maneuvers in 1940**



**Bob Maher standing near his squad tent when he served with the 3rd Engineers in 1937. The picture quality is poor, but you can see he was wearing leggings at the time.**

**Hello David.** We both have several things in common. I was in that same old Japanese Freighter and remember the “Ash Cans” dropping overboard for the submarine. Also, when we got to the train going to the “front” I remember the smell of the wounded and low sounding moans.

At the front I was assigned to the forward Command Post, S -2 Section, of the 34th RGT HQ under CPT Tommy De Costa . We were located in a schoolhouse about 500 yds behind the front lines, but still received artillery and mortar rounds. About the third day a T-34 Tank broke thru the line and was about 600 yds from us.

The big SGT Major asked MJR Wilson if he wanted him to fire the 75mm Recoilless Rifle at the tank. The MJR said “no”, if you miss he will know exactly where we are. I will call in an air strike.

The procedure to call an air strike, you first called Pusan, they called the coordinates to a carrier, then the carrier directed the aircraft. It took a while, and by that time the tank was only 300 yds away.

In a short time an F-86 Saber jet arrived and was so close to the ground that you could see the pilot and read all the markings on the jet. It was like watching a silent movie —the Jet’s sound waves were way behind him and as the Pilot fired the wing rocket all the sounds caught up with the fired rocket —the tank lit up bright white then red and yellow with black smoke filling the air. The big SGT Major asked MJR Wilson if he wanted him to go down and check out the tank. MJR Wilson said no one could survive that rocket.

Later when the 34th was reactivated, CPT DeCosta was transferred to the 21st and was KIA about a year later.

My wife too has Alzheimer's—this is her 8th year with this problem. She is in a home which cares for people with this problem. God has answered many prayers thru the years for us. We have been married 60 years.

Thanks for all the work you do for the 24th ID Association. **(SGT) Casey B Holland**, 118 Spring Hill Dr., Winchester, TN 37398-1463

**Casey:** Thanks for your letter and especially thanks for confirming my story about the submarine dropping depth charges. I was wondering if my memory of that event was faulty. **David**

**David** I would appreciate it if you would post the following: My wife Dotty & I (WWII, H Co., 34th RGT) are not sending Christmas cards anymore. We’ve gotten so many cards from 24th IDA members and others I didn’t even know, but I really appreciated that. We are hanging in there health wise and satisfied with our CA Assisted Living home. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. I still look forward to the Taro Leaf and read it line for line. God Bless you all.

**Eric Diller, Life 1185**, ediller@cox.net

## Letters

**Editor:** To all of you interested and all of you avid Taro Leaf readers, honorable officers, and faithful members of the 24<sup>th</sup> IDA – It may be fortunate that some of you may not admire poetry, But is my only way to express my feelings sincerely. You may know of the name, Helm, Merry, rhyming perfectly with my mantra, Hail Mary. Has she not performed well and worked very hard to gain the 24<sup>th</sup> IDA Verbeck Award? **P. “Ed” Rumbaoa, Member**, 21128 S. Menlo Avenue, Torrance, CA 90502

**Ed:** I don’t know about your poetry, I see little of it, but I wholeheartedly agree that Merry is a worthy recipient of the award for 2013. Others are welcome to advise any of our officers in support of Merry, or to make other recommendations. **Editor**

### 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Korean War Armistice July 27, 2012



**John Shank, 21st RGT “A Tanker” from Korea, was invited to attend the ceremony in Washington. With him are his nephew, Milo Shank, COL USMC and his wife who is a CMDR USN.**



**John is shown here with an Ethiopian who fought in Korea and is the grandson of Emperor Haile Selassie**



# Letters

**Dear David,** Enclosed are some pictures of my 17 month stay in Korea, 1954 to 1956. My first assignment was with the 24th Special Service Group. I was at an OP 3 months on the DMZ east of the Peace Bridge. Then I was assigned to the Far East Army and Air Force Motion Picture Service 24<sup>th</sup> Div. Branch. There we had a motion picture exchange unit and my barracks was in that unit. Here is a picture of Charlie, as we called him, really his name was PUK-WON-SIX. He was our interpreter. If anyone recognizes him I wish they would contact me.



The community center below had a theater and a PX. We also housed the Red Cross as well as the donut operation and handled USO entertainment to the troops. For a short time I worked at Panmunjom during the truce meetings.



Below is a picture of the North Korean guardhouse and our guards being given instructions

of how guard duty was performed with the truce buildings in the background. The community center was used by the 24th Division as well as the Turkish and Commonwealth. Some local entertainment that I hauled in an ambulance to outlying troops were the Kim Sisters who would sing "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White," and the "White Cliffs of Dover."



**Doney G. Wallace**, Life Member 2311, 1806 Amberwood Drive, Goshen, IN 46526-5536 doneywallace@comcast.net

**Mr. David Valley:** Association member Otis Solar has asked in the Taro Leaf (Fall 2012 issue) how he could be considered for a Presidential Unit Citation award which he believes he has earned but which was not given to him. After the passage of 63 years, I am sorry to say, it approaches the impossible but doesn't quite cross that line. It is out of the question that an individual veteran operating on his own behalf can pull it off alone. He will find that the bureaucracy placed between himself and his goal is much too formidable to surmount individually. His best bet now is to approach his local U.S. House of Representatives office for his district and at the same time, his U.S. Senate personnel with his request. Oftentimes there is a close connection between these representatives and the Pentagon office handling this type of inquiry—with far more push/pull than any individual could sustain attempting it solo.

Member Solar's best bet is to type out his request in as much detail as possible, send it to his elected officials, allow a few weeks time for a response and if none is forthcoming, begin a regular siege of telephone calls to their offices on a continuing follow up basis.

Having laid out all of the above, it would only be fair to Mr. Solar to illuminate the major hurdles he is facing. His biggest problem is that his DD 214 does not indicate the award. The Pentagon will surely use that omission as reason not to proceed. The usual process for the section handling cases such as this one is an attempt to go to archives containing unit morning reports in an attempt to determine if the applicant was, in fact, listed therein as being at Sanghong jong-ni, Korea on 27 May 1951.

The possibility of those morning reports being still available are slim to none. In addition, Mr. Solar states that when he served, it was under a different name than the one he now possesses. It could cloud the issue somewhat. Further, in his letter to the Association, Mr. Solar himself states he is unable to recall "...the date or village we were in..." Now this is not unusual for those who have experienced combat. Any up-on-the-line soldier from the 24th Infantry Division who was in Korea during that hectic and horrendous first year following the North Korean invasion, will tell you they had no conception of where they were at any given day nor whether it was a Monday or a Friday. The fog of war has always been so. But those in the Pentagon who have never faced the enemy find those memory lapses difficult to assess and act accordingly. Not out of dereliction to their duty but because they must reason to an almost absolute certainty that if an award is given, it is given to a rightful owner.

If Mr. Solar decides to go ahead with his quest, it would be helpful for him to understand that because of the particulars cited above, he will have a hard grind. This doesn't forgo the fact that if his elected representatives decide to get involved, Mr. Solar might indeed have good fortune and be working with people who know how to get things done in Washington and proper decisions made on his behalf.

**Albert J. Silverstein**, Easy Co. 21st, '45-'48, Member, 914-632-5799

## HELLO FROM GERMANY

**Don Magio:** I saw this on Facebook and the guy who wrote the article may send it to you as well. **Maurice Evans** mail137985@embarqmail.com

**Thanks, Mauice,** I'll send this along to Tom Thiele to put on the web and David Valley for the next Taro Leaf. **Don**



**To Facebook writer:** As promised here is the English translation of the text I wrote for the university about the "Last Chance", it would be great to have your feedback and maybe correct me if something is wrong (it might have some mistakes as my English is not 100% perfect). In the German version the level of language is also on a higher scientific sphere but I can't write like that in English so I just have the same content in simpler words:

You are now at the place in Pfersee, where the very popular bar Schlössle once invited (you) to a beer. The bar already had a legendary call since the late 1960s and is an example for the influence of the Americans on the Augsburg nightlife. The soldiers mostly called it the Last Chance because it was their last possibility to drink something on the way home from the city center. The big yellow house next to Stadtberger Straße is still easy to see from the surrounding streets. It became a housing area.

The Last Chance is just an example for many other places in Pfersee, like the Bonanza or the Siegeshalle.

This puts us the question, why exactly was this bar so popular among the Americans. The location next to the tram stop Bürgermeister Bohl Straße is a positive factor, and the Last Chance lies directly on the way from the city centre to the Sheridan Casern. The Flak Casern and the Reese Casern also are relatively close to the Last Chance though most American customers came from the Sheridan Casern which was the biggest of all caserns in Augsburg with over 70 hektare (*about 175 acres*).

With the Jugendzentrum Schlössle there was a youth center for the Pfersee youth near the Last Chance that interacted with the Americans in the Last Chance. Especially, German women were of interest for the soldiers. So sometimes there were hard struggles between

## Letters

soldiers interested in the same girl. In the early days of the Last Chance there were also often struggles about what music should be played. While the white soldiers preferred Elvis Presley, John Travolta and country music, the Afro-Americans wanted to hear soul. Such struggles, may it be about the music or about the women, could also end in broken chairs or physical attacks.

Something everybody agreed on was the food: The Last Chance was famous for good Schnitzel and pizza, with that people drank beer from Hasenbräu or a Goaßn`Maß, a mix drink of beer, coke and cognac.

In the end of the 1960s Josef Klein, called Joe by many Americans, took over the Schlössle. Around 1970 there was a general turn in Augsburg nightlife. Parallel to that the university opened and many young German people came to town and interacted with the soldiers.

So the Last Chance was not a place of particular American culture, but a place of encounter between the soldiers and the German residents. The bar stayed impregnated very much in the memory of the veterans, they organized some reunions and met again at places from their past. There even exists a Facebook Group of people that know each other from the Last Chance (as you might know, lol).

The Last Chance replaced home for many Americans that missed it. A special story is that the Last Chance used to play the old American folk song "I Wanna Go Home" (*Actually, I believe it was a Beatles hit. Ed.*) as the last song of the night reminding the customers that also the people working at the bar wanted to go home now. During this, some soldiers started crying; a veteran on this: "The bar always played "I wanna go home" at the end of the night. It had meaning to a lot of GI's that missed being home, though the Chance became home for a lot of us at Sheridan Park." **Jakob Mellir**

**David:** This story appeared in the Chicago Tribune recently. The old vet is still going strong. Jack Schaller fought in the Philippines during WWII with the 34th RGT. He worked in his father's tavern before being drafted. After 1945 he went back to work in the tavern and has been working there every since at Schaller's Pump 3714 So. Halstead St., Chicago, 773 376-6332. **John Trinca**







## Hello from Kokura, Fukuoka, Japan

**David:** I received the email below from Shoko Seina Shiraishi on Nov 27, 2012, and want to help her try to get answers to her questions about the Memorial Cross in Kokura. **Tom**

**Mr. Tom Thiel:** My name is Shoko "Seina" Shiraishi and I am living in Kokura where 24th infantry Division used be there. I am a singer who truly loves American Songs from 1930-40's, especially WWII era and also I am working about ex-POWs of the Pacific War. Why Japanese woman sings WWII song and doing about ex-POWs? My story is little complicated so would you please to check Angels Swing website? <http://angels-swing.com>.

I checked 24th Infantry Division's website and I called Mr. Donald E. Maggio and he gave me your contact information. In my hometown, Kokura, we have Korean War Memorial (Memorial Cross) which was build United Nations. Here is my post and photos about Memorial Cross. <http://angels-swing.com/archives/804> I knew it have been there since I was child but I didn't know why in my hometown. I asked older people about it but I couldn't get any details. I went to city office and library but no details. A staff of city office told me United Nations build and left no further information. I like to know why Memorial Cross was build in Kokura, and like to know episodes of Memorial Cross.

How many soldiers left to Korea from Kokura and never come back? I think Korean War is a part of history of my hometown and I like to remember their lives and history. Also I would like to know about Kokura during GHQ occupation and Korean War. If you can share your memories about Kokura, it would be wonderful. I look forward to hearing from you. Warm regards,  
**Seina Shiraishi**



**Members:** I would encourage all who can to go to the two websites Seina provided. They not only give more information on the Memorial Cross, but also on her goals and objectives. Rather extensive searching of the internet has not helped me very much. Of course the 24th Division was headquartered in Kokura at the start of the Korean War in late June 1951, and many of its men departed for Korea from there.

Our website, [www.24thida.com](http://www.24thida.com), has 74 separate articles, books, or Taro Leaf pages containing the word "Kokura." Most of these appear in the approximately 6,500 pages of Taro Leaf Publications that have been uploaded. The dates for these entries range from 1946 to 1950. General Dean's book, The General Dean story, provided the most evidence of the 24th's connection to Kokura. But, all of this occurred before the creation of the Kokura Memorial Cross. The website, [http://peace.maripo.com/p\\_crosses.htm](http://peace.maripo.com/p_crosses.htm), has this to say about the Cross: "1950 - United Nations Memorial Cross, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu Island (Japan). "Standing faced Korea, the soldier of the Allied Forces killed in the Korean War is commemorated." Inscription: "In honor of the fallen heroes of the United Nations erected in 1950 by members of the Kokura General Depot Camp Kokura Kyushu Japan." (Kitakyushu was created in 1963 and includes the old city of Kokura.)" A search of "Kokura General Depot Camp Kokura Kyushu Japan" yielded information that Kokura was home to graves registration and recovery. The US Army Quartermaster Foundation Quartermaster Review-May/June 1954, ([http://www.qmfound.com/homeward\\_bound\\_korea.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/homeward_bound_korea.htm)) indicated that "On January 2, 1951, Zone Headquarters was activated at Kokura." So, not only did US Forces leave from Kokura to Korea, a large number of them also "came home via the reverse route."

But, sadly, I am unable to give Seina answers to the who and why of the Kokura Memorial Cross! If you can provide any more information for Seina I would be most grateful.

**Tom Thiel, 24th Webmaster**  
**19147 Park Place Blvd, Eustis FL 32736**  
**Email: [24thidaweb@gmail.com](mailto:24thidaweb@gmail.com)**  
**Ph: 352-357-3943 or 352-408-6612 cell**



**Hi David:** In reference to item 2 on your list of queries in the last Taro Leaf: I was stationed in Beppu with CO A 19th RGT from Nov 1946 to DEC 1947. I was a PFC gunner on a 60 mm mortar in the Weapons Platoon. I had been a temporary CPL, but promotions were hard to come by in the regular Army. We were a bunch of 17, 18 and 19 year-old kids who had missed combat in WWII and joined for 18 months to get the G.I. Bill.

Contrary to reports, Beppu was not a country club as we did a lot of tough training under our senior NCO's who had re-upped and were combat veterans. We trained often with long marches, trips to the rifle range, guard duty often, and inspections. We grew up fast.

Beppu was a small city on the Kyushu south coast. The Japanese there were very friendly and docile. They were starving and liked the Occupation G.I.s. We could go into town without weapons. Beppu was also known as the "City of Hookers," and there were plenty of them around this nice sub-tropical climate. We spent our off-duty hours sightseeing, going to a local dance hall and chasing Japanese girls. Most were not too good looking, but even so a lot of guys went *Asiatic*. My best buddy, who was my squad leader, SGT "Chuck" Anderson was one of them.

When we were discharged at Camp Stoneman, CA you could choose to stay in the reserve and keep your old rank. I choose not to and wanted to go to college. Chuck Anderson did reenlist and the last time I heard from him, he had been called up when Korea broke out in 1950. I never heard from him again and hope he made it through the war.

One incident I can remember was in 1947. The 19<sup>th</sup> was alerted for possible deployment. We turned in all our belongings and were issued live ammo. We were going to Korea in 1947! After two days we got the order to "stand down" and it was all over. You see, there was trouble brewing there long before 1950.

I took my basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama. A real s...hole in 1946. Our 8-week cycle was cut from 12 weeks and we were shipped to Japan from Stoneman. We got to Yokohama after 19 days at sea. They needed replacements badly. My CO there was CPT Robert Nett of A CO. He was a nice guy who was a MOH winner for action in the Philippines during 1944-1945. (He passed away last year with the rank of COL.)

Occupation duty in Beppu was a great experience for a bunch of young guys and taught me a lot. After discharge I went home to upstate New York, raised a family, and graduated from Syracuse University. I was in the auto business and taught high school for 20 years. I moved to Alpine, CA in 2009 after losing my wife. My oldest son is a detective in San Diego. I really don't miss those NY winters.

Enclosed are some pictures from Beppu. Hope you can make some use of them (Jap film was not too good). Please return them to me. Keep up the good work on the Taro Leaf. **Ken Elow, Member**, 1750 Arnold Way, Apt. 139, Alpine, CA, 619 490-0788.



**My best buddy, SGT Chuck Anderson (left) Ken Elow (Me) holding onto road marker.**



**Hillman, Me, Blummer on the "General Brewster" heading for Japan, 1946**



**My best pals, Jerry Wohl, (Me), and Charlie "Chuck" Anderson in front of one of our popular hangouts in Beppu.**

# Letters

**Hello Daivd,** I received the following story from member Irven Thomas about his time spent on line near Kumsong in late 1951 and early 1952. He was in Dog Company, 21st Regiment, and he recalls they called the hill they were on "the yoke." When the 24th moved back to Japan, Irv was kept in Korea and assigned to the 224th Regiment, 40th Division. **Merry Helm** Here is what he had to say:

Our platoon sergeant was called "Three up and Two Down White." I never got to know him personally, but my feeling was he knew what he was doing (a professional).

I was assigned to a 75 recoilless rifle (a weapon with a kick from both ends). They took away my M-1 rifle and gave me a 45 cal. pistol. (When you take a rifle from an infantryman, he gets nervous.) I guess I felt I could do more damage if I threw it at the enemy.

Getting back to business – we had an apron of barb wire around our perimeter about 30 yards down the hill. Had to cut the brush away to lay the wire – threw it downside. I remember the Chogie train that brought the wire up the hill. Thought to myself how heavy the wire must be to climb the hill with.

I felt better after the wire was up. We tied empty M-1 rifle clips with wire onto the barb wire. That way, if anyone touched the wire, we could hear them. It was very dark – so anything helped. If you ever tried to aim at something you can't see, you'll know what I mean. We got hit one night. We couldn't see a damn thing. But we could hear them at the wire.

Someone lobbed a grenade and it landed in the brush we'd cleared when we laid the wire. The brush caught fire – THEN we could see them. The fire burned down – it got light out – so we ate chow.

When I think of all the training I got in basic and leadership school, we only had two night problems. But it seems like almost all we do is fight at night.

I never mentioned the names of my three buddies at the Company. They are Chuck Regal (who I saw on the way home). Sinclair (I think he was a radio man), and Ruska. Don't know first names.

I should add here that someone had a real brainstorm. They found that by shining a big searchlight (from the rear), and hitting the low clouds, it would reflect down on the hill and light up the whole hillside. I'm sure that saved a lot of lives. Relieved a lot of tension, too.

I did want to mention on Christmas Eve of 1951 we expected company, so we went on 50% alert. It's funny how you can try to see every rock, bush, and even the land flow. I strained my eyes and couldn't see anything unusual. It was very dark. When morning came and it got light out, about 10 yards from where I was standing there was a tree all decorated with pamphlets, like a Christmas tree. The pamphlets were like the ones that "Bed Check

Charlie" would drop as he flew over at night. They could have thrown a grenade easily – and I didn't see them.

One last thing. On New Years Eve 1951 – exactly at midnight – someone coordinated all the hills to fire at a single target across the Kumsong Valley. I believe the target was a field artillery piece that was in a tunnel -- they could fire it and then pull it back into the tunnel. Anyway, when they all fired at once, you could see the machine gun tracers – fan like. (In machine gun ammo belts, every 3rd round is a tracer, so you can see where you're shooting.) It was a sight to behold. If you were there, you'd remember. **Irv Thomas, Co D, 21st RGT**  
IrvJanThom@aol.com





# Remembering Pearl Harbor

## From Defense Video & Imagery and Distribution System

Seven Pearl Harbor survivors and members of The Greatest Generation Foundation, an organization dedicated to honoring veterans and the battles they fought in, joined hundreds of other survivors and veterans Dec. 7 to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.



Students learn about the attack on Pearl Harbor in American history books. They learn about the planes, the sinking ships and the devastation that was caused, but the vivid memories of those that survived that horrific day recall the experience more vividly.

"I was just finishing morning chow when all of a sudden the planes flew about 200 feet over our heads," said **Samuel Clower, former first sergeant of Headquarters Company, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division.** "We could tell that they were Japanese planes because of the rising sun emblem on them, but we had no idea why they were here."

In 1941, there were concerns that the Japanese would attempt to poison the water supply on the island of Oahu, so Clower took his company and setup a solid perimeter around the Schofield reservoir to prevent any type of sabotage.

"We shut it down immediately, but we still had no idea what was going on," said Clower. "I called the regiment to find out what was happening and they told me to gather everyone up because they were bombing Pearl Harbor and the barracks. The guy on the phone barely got those words out before they started bombing the airfield."

**Thomas Petso, then a 19-year-old infantryman assigned to be an intelligence platoon sergeant with the 24th Infantry Division,** was playing football on Wheeler Army Airfield that morning when the Japanese began their attack.

"We came over from Schofield to play football against the Air Force like we did every Sunday and the planes came out of nowhere," said Petso. "We

saw some planes fly over and then almost immediately they were coming from every direction and began bombing the airfield."

Surprised and confused, Petso ran for his barracks to grab his weapon. "We just ran for our lives," said Petso. "I was an infantryman, and I just wanted to get back to my barracks to get my rifle."

"It was happening so fast, we didn't have time to be afraid," said Clower. "That came later when we saw the devastation."

Although Wheeler Army Airfield and Schofield Barracks were the initial sites of the attack that day, they did not sustain heavy losses. In total, 33 personnel were killed and 75 more were wounded. Because most of the planes were lined up at the end of the airfield, Wheeler sustained a crippling loss of aircraft totaling 76 planes completely destroyed. The situation down the mountain in Pearl Harbor was completely different.

Read more:  
<http://www.dvidshub.net/news/99133/greatest-generation#ixzz2FKqOMesj>

## HEALTHY LUNGS SAVE A 5RCT UNIT

WITH THE 24TH INF DIV IN KOREA—Keeping a unit together during a sudden ambush in a pitch-black night along a desolate Korean road was the problem recently faced by 2d Lt Scheller Garlock of Baltimore, Md., a mortar platoon leader in a regimental combat team. But he saved it by standing in the middle of the road and yelling as loud as the Korean Reds, according to PFC Richard Baysinger of Void Water, Mich.

The regiment was proceeding up the main road to Manchuria in a night attack when the Red machineguns cut loose.

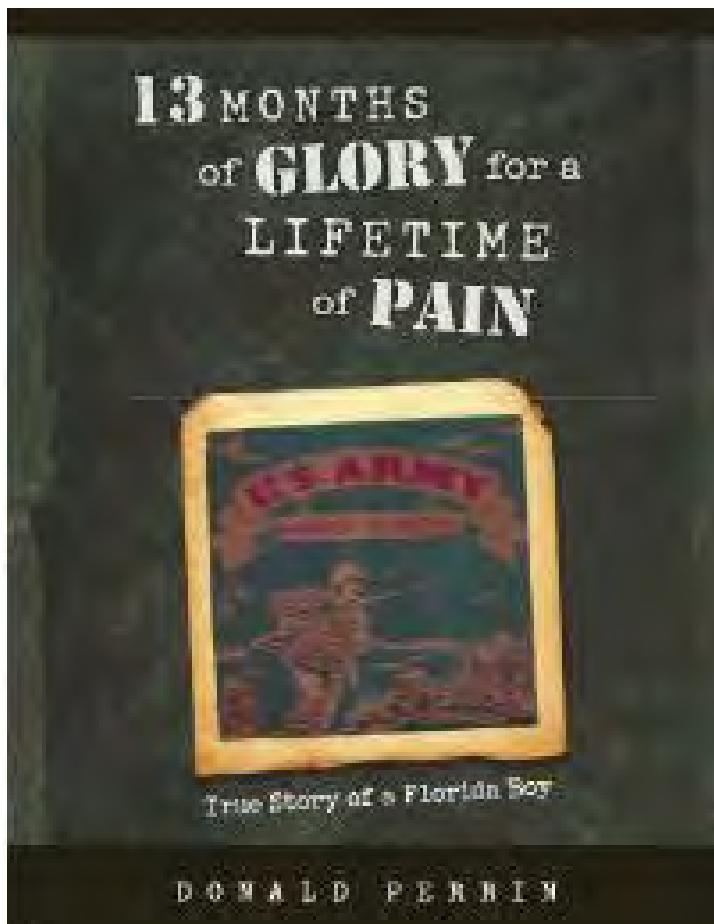
"Patrols were out, but you couldn't see your hands in

front of your face. The Red fire caused a lot of confusion, but Lieutenant Garlock soon had everything under control," PFC John Piazza of Brooklyn, N.Y., said.

"He must be lucky. He stood right in front of the guns and gave directions, for setting up a couple of our mortars," Cpl Fred Chavez of Albuquerque, N.M., said. "The mortars got to work, and we soon had the situation under control," he added.

It was acts of heroism like this that won Garlock a promotion from master sergeant to a commission during the early days of the war. *Pacific Stars & Stripes* 28NOV50

(Please note the obituary of Scheller Garlock on page 31



### 13 Months of Glory for a Lifetime of Pain, By Don Perrin, Charlie Company, 19th Infantry Regiment

A short review by Tom Thiel: I first met Don Perrin at the 2010 St. Augustine mini-reunion. He said something about writing a book. I forgot about it. When he came to the next reunion, Don had the book, and a copy of a professional reviewer's news release recommending the book. I came home and read the whole book, at one setting.

Don writes just like he talks—directly and forcefully. Like one man who has seen mortal combat to another. Consider, for example: "I don't know how many times I've gotten to a patient that there was no way I could save him. I always pulled his bandage off his belt, ripped it out, put the bandage on so he couldn't see. I would light a cigarette and put it in his mouth and say, 'You lucky bastard. You're going home.' If he was able to talk, he would usually say, 'No shit, doc?' I would say, 'Yep, all the way.' We were both thinking of different places.

When he would die, I would take the cigarette out of his

mouth and put it in mine. I felt he was part of me. I swore I would never quit smoking because I might lose him, but that never happened. In 1988, I had to give up smoking, and I was always afraid they would be gone, but they are still with me in my heart and my soul. The worst part of all this was if he was a good buddy, it was all I could do not to cry. But you can't linger."

Don's life's adventures in the book take him through many unusual life experiences; you have to read it to understand what I am talking about. His story was riveting to me; I'm sure it will be to you also, and have no hesitation in recommending it to you. Now you can read the professional reviewers release below.

"An Engaging Memoir Introduces Readers to Someone Who Has Seen It All" Author Donald Perrin narrates his firsthand accounts of the infamous Korean War

SEBASTIAN, Fla. — For the great Julius Caesar, one has lived long enough if both nature and glory has been satisfied. What if there's a heavy price to pay for that short and fleeting moment of glory's grandeur and splendor? Author Donald Perrin shares his life when he joined the ranks of men who fought during the Korean War in *13 Months of Glory for a Lifetime of Pain: True Story of a Florida Boy*.

Perrin's gripping autobiography starts with his first memory of living with his grandparents back in Central Florida and takes readers to the time when he signed up for the army as part of the maintenance team. Everything from then on in Perrin's life took a different turn even after he went back home.

A true story in itself, *13 Months of Glory for a Lifetime of Pain* narrates the author's experiences while he risked life and limb in the battlefield, and places readers to where the real action happens with his firsthand accounts of the raging war that happened between July 1950 and August 1951 in Korea.

The book specially dedicated to the author's comrades in the "Victory Division" who won more battles than any combat division in the history of modern warfare, *13 Months of Glory for a Lifetime of Pain* is a riveting and engaging memoir of somebody who has seen it all; someone who really came, saw and conquered.

*13 Months of Glory for a Lifetime of Pain* by Donald Perrin, True Story of a Florida Boy, Publication Date: June 30, 2011, Trade Paperback / \$15.99; 97 pages Donald B. Perrin, 7930 129th St., Sebastian, FL 32958-3633, Phone 772-388-9342



In the mail today (12/15/12), was a letter from a member of "The Royal Sussex" Regiment of the British Army. He is seeking information on a Tom Wright (21st Infantry, US Army) who he met while his Regiment was attached to the 21st Infantry in Korea. If anyone has any information on a Tom Wright in the 21st Infantry during the Korea, I would appreciate the information. My guess is it would have been sometime between September '50 and January '51 as he mentions we were on the River Insin (which could be the Imjin). I have checked the Honor Roll and only find a James Wright, KIA 1/29/51. **Wes Morrison**



# The Curious Art Of a Curious Man

By David J. Valley

Young boys have their heads full of adventures and pursue fanciful vicarious lives. It isn't long however before reality catches up with them and they settle into what's expected of adults. Some manage to escape from a routine existence for a few years, like a stint in the military, but there are darn few who manage to pursue an exciting life for decades. One such rare adventurer is a former Taro Leafer, Rod MacKenzie.

Not content being raised with wild animals as his playmates since his family was in the circus and carnny business (His uncle owned Benson's Wild Animal Park in New Hampshire which I often visited as a child.), he left home at age 16 and joined the Army. That was in 1952 and it wasn't long before he was in Korea with the 21st RGT lugging around a 57mm recoilless rifle. He saw some ugly combat action which haunted him. Five years later when he got out of the Army an astute psychiatrist noted Rod liked to draw and suggested he bring his nightmares into the open by drawing the scenes. Some of those drawings are shown on the following pages.

Rod took advantage of the G.I. Bill and got a degree in nursing, but he harkened back to his carnny roots and took up aerial trapeze work. Being strong and athletic he soon became a star solo trapeze performer and traveled with circuses.

About 1960 he went to Cuba and performed with a circus there. Apparently life was still not exciting enough, and he developed a relationship with a American of dubious character, William P. Morgan. This brought Rod in contact with revolutionaries, mobsters, and the CIA, all whom were operating in Cuba, most of it covertly. His "friend" Morgan went too far afield to suit Fidel Castro, who had him executed. Rod's skills and connections were noted by black-ops people and he was recruited by a U.S. agency and trained to produce false identity kits. His involvement in the clandestine world later brought him into proximity with an historic tragedy which convinced him to go back to the circus life.

Rod performed in Europe as a solo artist and as a "catcher" for a famous aerial troupe. From Europe he went with a circus to South Africa. He once again got involved with revolutionaries, but had to get out when it got too hot. A chance encounter with a female Belgium doctor doing relief work put him back into scrubs as an operating room nurse. He later went back to Belgium with this group when the warring situation got out of hand. Later he did more aerial performing in the U.S. In recent years he has been living a more stoic life working with a graphic business of his own which does theater backdrops,



By Roderick A. MacKenzie (1SGT)



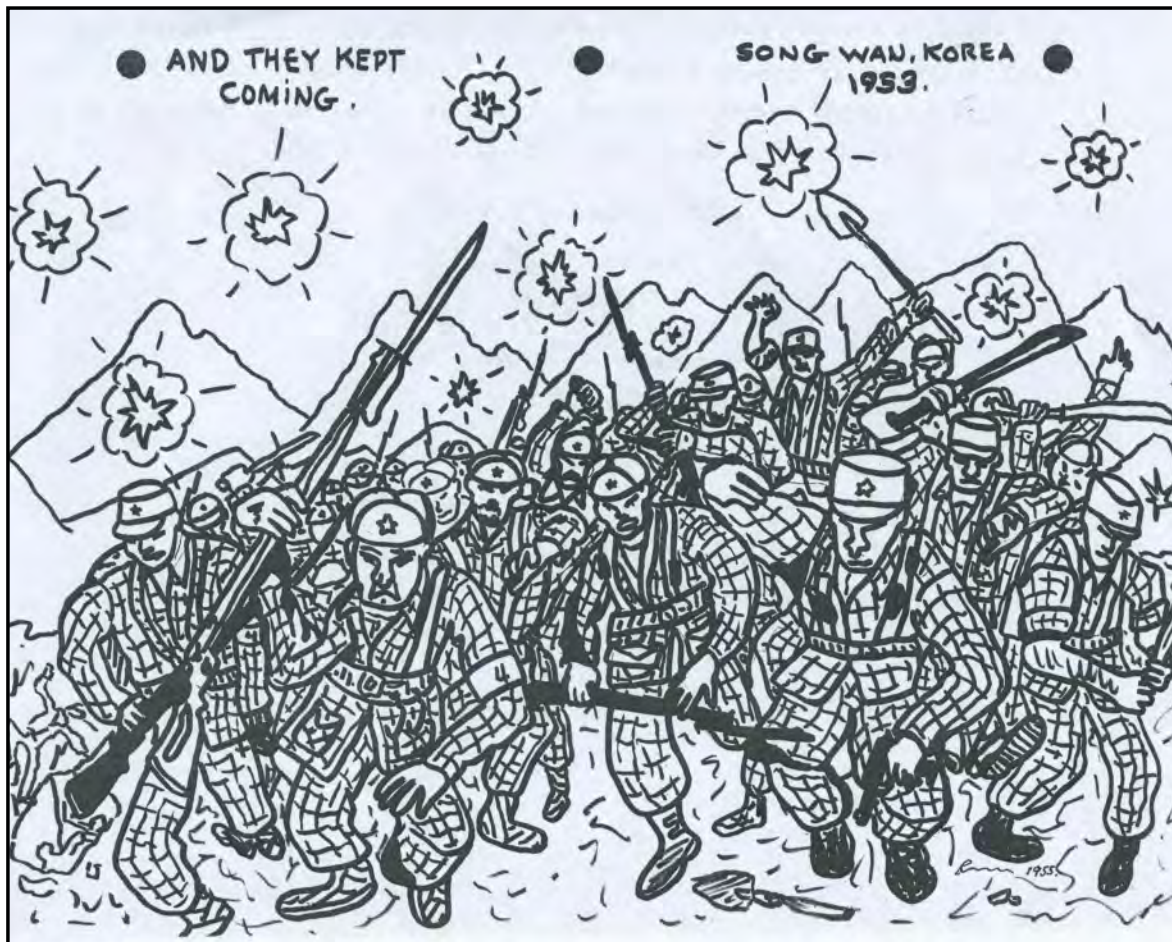


"I finally was  
made Gunner  
of this damn  
57 recoilless"

SONG  
WON  
KOREA  
1953.







"This is the way I remembered it. Years later the VA Psychiatrist suggested I draw it."





THE GROUND COMES MOMENTS AFTER THE HIT. CIGARETTES & CAMP FIRES KILL...



SUDDIN DEATH AROUND A NO. 10 TIN CAN OF GASOLINE - 21ST REGT. 24TH DIV - KOREA 1953.

I was right next to the guy who took the hit. G CO, 21st, an occupational hazard.

VISITS WITH BILL MORGAN - CANE FIELDS - CUBA 1958-1959



MEETING MORGAN IN THE BOONDOCKS, CUBA 1959.

My first meet with the infamous Bill Morgan. I brought a radio and some ammo up from Havana to his secret hideout in the mountains.





**19th & 34th Infantry Regiments' 20th Reunion, Pigeon Forge, TN, April 22-24, 2013 at the Holiday Inn Express. Our reunions began in 1994 in Myrtle Beach, SC. Since then it has grown in size and has re-united many wartime buddies. Later, the reunion moved to Nashville, TN, but in 2006, the group voted to move to Pigeon Forge in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This location offers many fine attractions including: the world famous Dollywood, shopping malls, many showplaces, and excellent dining. For information contact: Don Perrin, 772-538-2876, email: doc50korea@gmail.com**



HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1951

## Oahu Men Win Silver Stars

A Schofield Barracks soldier who killed four Communists in hand to hand combat and a Honolulu man who ignored an order to retreat have won Silver Star medals for their heroism.

They are Sergeant Prudencio E. Rumbaoa, son of Pedro Rumbaoa, Schofield Barracks, and Corporal Yoshinobu Teruya

They were members of the 24th infantry "Victory" division at the time of their exploits, although Cpl. Teruya has been rotated home.

### HAND TO HAND FIGHT

The army's citation said Sgt. Rumbaoa's platoon was attacking up a slope when it was pinned down by an enemy machinegunner.

Refusing to take cover, he "ran through the hail of automatic weapon fire to the enemy position and killed the enemy in hand to hand combat."

The citation added:

"Another position was now holding up the advance, and with the same determination he raced for the hole, jumped in and with his bayonet and rifle butt killed the three Chinese who were holding up the advance."



SERGEANT RUMBAOA



SOLDIER'S MEDAL

Private First Class Gerald J. Beall, Jr., RA19545748, United States Army, a truck driver for Company M, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, distinguished himself by heroism near Nullo-ri, Korea, on 22 October 1956. On learning that a Korean youth had been badly injured by the explosion of a land mine, Private Beall drove his vehicle to the scene of the accident. Fully aware of the danger involved and without benefit of a mine detector, he unhesitatingly entered the uncharted minefield and went to the rescue of the helpless man. With the help of two companions who followed him into the hazardous area, he evacuated the suffering man to the truck and took him to the battalion aid station for treatment. Private Beall's valorous actions were instrumental in saving the life of a young Korean, reflecting utmost credit on himself and upholding the traditions of the military service.

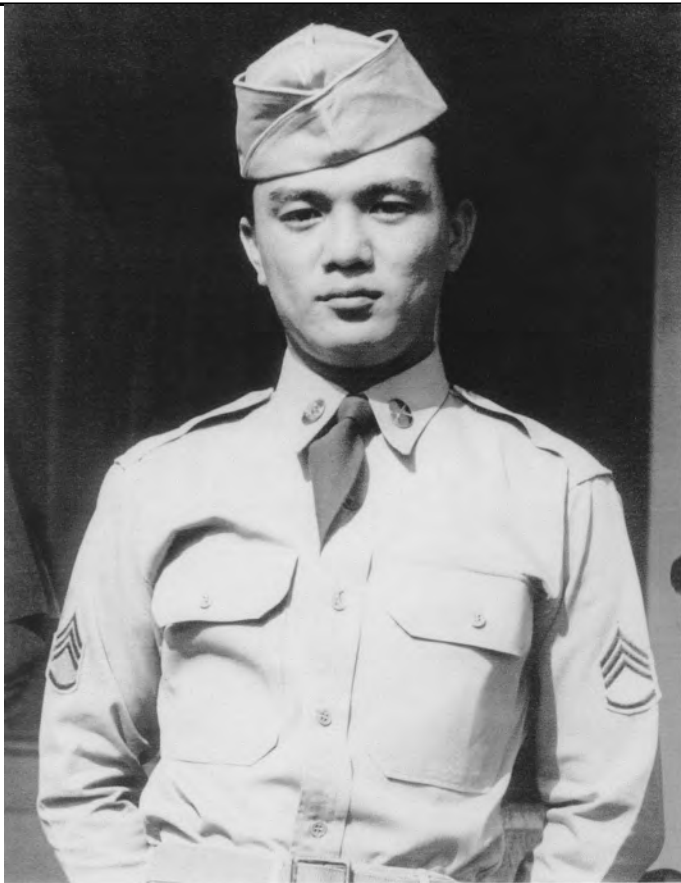


**Chaplain Bradford** was with Task Force Smith and was the first chaplain decorated in the Korean War. The Bronze Star Medal (with letter "V" device authorized) is awarded to Chaplain (Captain) Carl H. Hudson, 0970221, (then First Lieutenant), Chaplain Corps, U.S. Army, a member of Headquarters 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, who distinguished himself by heroic action near Osan, Korea, on 4-5 July 1950. His regiment was making its initial stand against overwhelming numbers of the advancing enemy. Throughout the engagement Chaplain Hudson repeatedly performed many acts of heroism and complete devotion



to his fellow men. Completely unmindful of his own safety he exposed himself time and again ministering to and aiding in the evacuation of the wounded. When the order to withdraw was received he moved among the men, encouraging them with words of solace and inspiring them to highest possible degree of determination. Chaplain Hudson's exemplary actions and complete devotion to the men of his command aided materially in the successful withdrawal, saved the lives of many of his comrades and reflect great credit on himself and the U.S. Chaplains Corps. Entered military service from Old Ocean, Texas.





### 41 Reds Accept Dare To Come and Get It

WITH THE 24TH INF DIV IN KOREA—Cpl. James J. Kawamura of Elelee, Kauai, HI, wasn't bluffing when he dared a group of counterattacking North Korean troops to "come out and get it." The 5th Regimental Combat Team BAR man has 41 dead Reds to prove it. It happened when the 5th RCT had taken an important position, dug in, and then was threatened by a counterattacking Red force.

"I looked up to where Kawamura had his BAR position and hollered to begin firing," said SFC Kenneth A. Spears, Campsville, IL. Kawamura began shouting in Japanese, recounted platoon Sgt. James H. Browning, Alabama City, AL, and the Reds got up and moved toward his position.

"Kawamura laid it on them," Browning said. "He kept hollering and shouting, and they kept getting up and going toward his position until the attacking force was broken."

"We couldn't figure out what it was all about until things quieted down," he continued. "Then it turned out that Kawamura had been shouting for them to 'come and get it,' giving away his position by doing so. Apparently, they came to get it. We counted 41 dead North Koreans when it was over," Browning concluded.

Corporal Kawamura, who won the Distinguished Service Cross for blunting the attack, has a slightly different version of the action. He said, "When the attack first started, I was scared. Then when Sergeant Spears told me to start shooting, I did. After that, when they began getting close, I started shouting at them. I don't know how I did it, but anyway, I just kept hollering until it was over." *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, date 5 Nov 1950

## Above and beyond...



The President of the United States of America, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Private First Class James J. Kawamura (ASN: RA-29040786), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving with Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Regimental Combat Team. Private First Class Kawamura distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces near Chindong-ni, Korea, on 7 August 1950. On that date, a force of some forty well-armed enemy penetrated the area of the platoon of which he was a member, and the order was given to withdraw to a more defensible position. However, Private Kawamura, armed with an automatic rifle, remained in place firing into the onrushing enemy. As they dispersed in the face of the withering fire, he shouted to them in Japanese and fired when they revealed their positions by answering. By his gallant stand, he inflicted at least twenty-five casualties on the fanatic forces, causing them to withdraw in such haste that they abandoned a machine-gun, and permitted his platoon to reoccupy the hill.

General Orders: Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea: General Orders No. 89 (October 1, 1950)

**A special presentation to the "Above & Beyond" section will be in the next issue of the Taro Leaf.**

Our historian, Merry Helm has found an unprecedented number of awards of the Distinguished Service Cross were given to men of the 19<sup>th</sup> RGT for action at the Kum River, Korea during July, 1950

## MEMORIES OF MINDORO, PHILIPPINES, 1944 By Charles E. "Chuck" Blunt



**SGTs Mendoza and Blunt on Mindoro, 1944**

The 19th Regiment, 24th Infantry Division was pulled out of Leyte after the fighting calmed down, to make a beach assault landing on the Island of Mindoro in the Philippine chain. We landed without too much resistance. We moved inland and ran into several pockets of Japanese Soldiers in bunkers and caves and we proceeded to flush them out until the island was secure. We set up positions all around the island.

My name is Charles E. Blunt (nickname Chuck). I was the Squad Leader in charge of a rifle squad of 12 men and a Machine Gun Squad. On the beach we set up a bunker for the machine gun with material that was supplied to sandbags us. We strung barbed wire in rolls on both sides of the bunker and along the beach and proceeded to dig in behind the bunker. Then we set up tents for our sleeping quarters, all the time maintaining guard duty.

Sgt Mendoza was my Assistant Squad Leader. The Island of Mindoro had become a supply depot for the Division, and they were landing all kinds of landing craft with supplies and equipment being unloaded on the beach. Also there were ships anchored offshore loaded with high octane gas, bombs etc.

Japanese Zero fighter planes almost constantly flying in from Manila on the Island of Luzon, which was still under

the control of the Japanese, were attacking us. As near as I can recall about four or five times a day. One day while being attacked we noticed one of our fighters chasing a Japanese Zero over the tip of the island. The Zero was evidently a Kamikaze, and was heading straight for one of the ships anchored in the bay loaded with high octane gas and bombs. He proceeded to dive right into the center of the ship, this created a huge explosion and implosion as the ship sank.

I observed a couple of minutes later a wall of water forming where the ship had gone down, at least twenty feet high. I alerted the machine gun squad and my rifle squad to move away from the beach double time. We were running as fast as we could and pieces of metal were falling all around us. After the tidal wave hit the beach we went back and discovered the machine gun bunker and all the barbed wire had been washed away and destroyed, we ended up doing it all over again.

A few days later we were alerted that a convoy of Japanese troop ships was headed our way from Borneo and the rumors were that they would be making a landing on Mindoro and try to retake it. We were put on alert and every one manned their positions. That night we observed flashes of gunfire several miles at sea. I had a pair of night binoculars and I was able to see what was going on.

We had a PT Boat Base on the island and what I saw was our PT Boats attacking the Japanese escort ships with the convoy offshore and doing a great job. The battle lasted for several hours. The next the information I received was that the convoy had sailed right by Mindoro, but the PT Boats had done quite a lot of damage to the convoy.

Things were quiet for a few days, and then we received some good news; a Liberty Ship with about 50,000 cases of beer had finally caught up with the troops. We had been promised six cans of beer a week; the bad news was that the infantry was going to unload the beer on the beach, one crew on a barge anchored along side the ship, and a landing craft acting as a shuttle transporting the beer ashore.

Each crew had a Sergeant in charge; I was the one in charge of a crew in the hold of the ship loading the beer into cargo nets which were then dumped on the barge and loaded on to the landing craft to be taken ashore. I sent two of my crew to a reefer for buckets of ice, which we filled up with beer to chill while we worked.

When we first started to work the soldiers were moving real slow picking up a case of beer and walking slowly to deposit it in the cargo net, but after drinking a few beers the cases of beer seemed to become lighter and the soldiers were tossing the cases of beer into the cargo net from about five or six feet away. For the next few days the soldiers drank their share of beer working around the clock. This how we finally caught up to our promised beer ration. **Charles "Chick" Blunt, Life Member 1271,** 77 Tulare Street, Brisbane, CA 94005, 415 467-0519.



### ***We are continuing the story of the early days of the Korean War***

Gen. Dean learned with great relief from a message sent him at 0220 8 July that Colonel Martin had returned from the town and that the supply road into Ch'onan was open. Sometime before daylight Colonel Martin went back into Ch'onan. About daylight a 2 1/2-ton truck came from the town to get ammunition. Returning, the driver saw an enemy tank approaching on the dirt road running into Ch'onan from the northwest. Others were following it. They came right through the mine field laid the day before. Enemy soldiers either had removed the mines under cover of darkness or the mines had been improperly armed; none exploded. The driver of the truck turned the vehicle around short of the road intersection and escaped.

This group of five or six tanks entered Ch'onan and opened fire on the railroad station, the church, several buildings suspected of harboring American soldiers, and all vehicles in sight. In the street fighting that followed, members of the 3d Battalion reportedly destroyed two tanks with bazookas and grenades. Pvt. Leotis E. Heater threw five grenades onto one tank and set it burning. Enemy infantry penetrated into the city about 0600 and cut off two rifle companies.

In this street fighting, Colonel Martin met his death about 0800. Martin had obtained a 2.36-inch rocket launcher when the tanks entered Ch'onan and posted himself in a hut on the east side of the main street. He acted as gunner and Sgt. Jerry C. Christenson of the regimental S-3 Section served as his loader. Sergeant Christenson told Major Dunn a month later when both were prisoners at the North Korean prison camp at P'yongyang that an enemy tank came up and pointed its gun at their building. Colonel Martin aimed the rocket launcher but the tank fired its cannon first, or at the same time that Martin fired the rocket launcher. Its 85-mm. shell cut Martin in two. Concussion from the explosion caused one of Christenson's eyes to pop from its socket but he succeeded in getting it back in place. On 11 July, the Far East Command awarded Martin posthumously the first Distinguished Service Cross of the Korean War.

After Martin's death, the enemy tanks and increasing numbers of infiltrating enemy soldiers quickly caused confusion in the thinning ranks of the 3d Battalion. It soon became a question whether any appreciable number of the men would escape from the town. Artillery laid down a continuous white phosphorus screen and under its cloak some of the 3d Battalion escaped from Ch'onan between 0800 and 1000. The battalion commander, Colonel Smith, was completely exhausted physically and was evacuated a day or two later. Colonel Wadlington placed Maj. Newton W. Lantron, the senior officer left in the battalion, in charge of the men at the collecting point. At 1000 the artillery began to displace southward. The 1st Battalion still held its blocking position south of the town.

## **SOUTH TO THE NAKTONG, NORTH TO THE YALU**

**Roy E. Appleman**



Back at Taejon, Dean had spent a sleepless night as the messages came in from the 34th Regiment. In the morning, General Walker flew in from Japan and told Dean that the 24th Division would soon have help—that the Eighth Army was coming to Korea. Walker and Dean drove north to the last hill south of Ch'onan. They arrived in time to watch the remnants of the 3d Battalion escape from the town. There they learned the news of Martin's death.

Dean ordered Wadlington to assume command of the regiment and to withdraw it toward the Kum River. Just south of Ch'onan the highway splits: the main road follows the rail line southeast to Choch'iwon; the other fork runs almost due south to the Kum River at Kongju. Dean ordered the 21st Infantry to fight a delaying action down the Choch'iwon road; the 34th Infantry was to follow the Kongju road. The two roads converged on

Taejon. Both had to be defended.

In the afternoon, a count at the collecting point showed that 175 men had escaped from Ch'onan—all that were left of the 3d Battalion. The 34th Regimental Headquarters also had lost many officers trapped in the town. Survivors were in very poor condition physically and mentally. The North Korean radio at P'yongyang claimed sixty prisoners at Ch'onan. The 3d Battalion lost nearly all its mortars and machine guns and many individual weapons. When the 34th Infantry began its retreat south toward the Kum in the late afternoon, enemy troops also moving south were visible on the ridge lines paralleling its course.

The enemy units that fought the battle of Ch'onan were the *16th and 18th Regiments* of the N.K. *4th Division*, supported by tank elements of the *105th Armored Division*. The third regiment, called up from Suwon, did not arrive until after the town had fallen. Elements of the *3d Division* arrived at Ch'onan near the end of the battle and deployed east of the town.

### ***The 21st Infantry Moves Up***

The 21st Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division had now crossed from Japan to Korea. Colonel Stephens, commanding officer of the regiment, arrived at Taejon with a trainload of his troops before noon on 7 July. Stephens, a bluff, rugged soldier, reported to General Dean for instructions. Within the hour Dean sent him northward to take up a delaying position at Choch'iwon, support the 34th Infantry, and keep open the main supply road to that regiment.

At Choch'iwon all was confusion. There were no train schedules or train manifests. Supplies for the 24th Division and for the ROK I Corps troops eastward at Ch'ongju arrived all mixed together. The South Korean locomotive engineers were hard to manage. At the least alarm they were apt to bolt south with trains still unloaded, carrying away the supplies and ammunition they had just brought up to the

front. American officers had to place guards aboard each locomotive.

Colonel Stephens placed his 3d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Carl C. Jensen, in position along the highway six miles north of Choch'iwon. A little more than a mile farther north, after they withdrew from their Ch'onan positions, he placed A and D Companies of the 1st Battalion in an advanced blocking position on a ridge just east of the town of Chonui. Chonui is approximately twelve miles south of Ch'onan and three miles below the point where the Kongju road forks off from the main highway.

Late in the day on 8 July, General Dean issued an operational order confirming and supplementing previous verbal and radio instructions. It indicated that the 24th Division would withdraw to a main battle position along the south bank of the Kum River, ten miles south of Choch'iwon, fighting delaying actions at successive defensive positions along the way. The order stated, "Hold Kum River line at all costs. Maximum repeat maximum delay will be effected."

The 34th Infantry was to delay the enemy along the Kongju road to the river; the 21st Infantry was to block in front of Choch'iwon. Dean ordered one battery of 155-mm. Howitzers of the 11th Field Artillery Battalion to Choch'iwon for direct support of the 21st Infantry. Also in support of the regiment were A Company, 78th Heavy Tank Battalion (M24 light tanks), less one platoon of four tanks, replacing the 24th Reconnaissance Company tanks, and B Company of the 3d Engineer Combat Battalion. The 3d itself was to prepare roadblocks north of Kongju along the withdrawal route of the 34th Infantry and to prepare all bridges over the Kum River for demolition.

Messages from General Dean to Colonel Stephens emphasized that the 21st Infantry must hold at Choch'iwon, that the regiment must cover the left flank of the ROK forces eastward in the vicinity of Ch'ongju until the latter could fall back, and that he could expect no help for four days. General Dean's intent was clear. The 34th and 21st Infantry Regiments were to delay the enemy's approach to the Kum River as much as possible, and then from positions on the south side of the river make a final stand. The fate of Taejon would be decided at the Kum River line.

### ***The Fight at Chonui***

On the morning of 9 July, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, completed moving into the positions north of Choch'iwon, and Colonel Jensen began registering his 81-mm. and 4.2-inch mortars. Engineers blew bridges in front of Chonui. By noon the 21st Regimental Headquarters received a report that enemy tanks were moving south from Ch'onan.

In mid-afternoon, Capt. Charles R. Alkire, in command at the forward blocking position at Chonui, saw eleven tanks and an estimated 200-300 enemy infantry move into view to his front. He called for an air strike which came in a few minutes later. Artillery also took the tanks under observed fire. Five of the eleven tanks reportedly were burning at 1650. Enemy infantry in Chonui came under 4.2-inch mortar and artillery fire. Observers could see them running from house to house. The men on the low ridge east of Chonui saw columns of black smoke rise beyond the hills to the northwest and

assumed that the planes and artillery fire had hit targets there. Aerial observers later reported that twelve vehicles, including tanks, were burning just north of Chonui. At dusk another air report stated that of about 200 vehicles on the road from P'yongt'aek to Chonui approximately 100 were destroyed or burning. The third and fourth tactical air control parties to operate in the Korean War (Air Force personnel) directed the strikes at Chonui.

While this heavy bombardment of the enemy column was still in progress, Colonel Stephens arrived at the forward position about dusk and announced he was going to stay overnight. In their front the burning Chonui relieved the blackness of the night. Enemy patrols probed their position. Unless all signs failed there would be action on the morrow.

About 500 men of A and D Companies and fillers for B and C Companies who had arrived at Pusan too late to join Task Force Smith for the Osan action comprised the composite battalion of the 21st Infantry at the Chonui position. They occupied a three-quarter mile front on a low ridge 500 yards east of Chonui and on a higher hill 800 yards south of the town. Rice paddy land lay between this high ground and Chonui. The railroad and highway passed between the ridge and the hill. Still another hill westward dominated the left flank but there were too few troops to occupy it.

From the low ridge east of Chonui one normally could see the road for a mile beyond the town, but not on the morning of 10 July. The day dawned with a ground fog billowing up from the rice paddies. With it came the North Koreans. At 0555 the American soldiers could hear enemy voices on their left. Fifteen minutes later those on the ridge at the center of the position heard an enemy whistle at the left; then firing began in that direction. Soon, some of the men near Colonel Stephens began shooting blindly into the fog. He promptly stopped them.

At 0700, enemy mortar fire began falling on the ridge. Lt. Ray Bixler with a platoon of A Company held the hill on the left. The rate of small arms fire increased and those in the center could hear shouting from Bixler's platoon. It was apparent that the main enemy attack centered there, coming from the higher hill beyond it. A concentration of friendly registered mortar fire covered the little valley between the two hills and in the early part of the morning prevented the enemy from closing effectively with Bixler's platoon. But an enemy force passed to the rear around the right flank of the battalion and now attacked the heavy mortar positions.

At the same time, enemy tanks came through Chonui on the highway and passed through the infantry position. The men on the ridge could hear the tanks but could not see them because of fog. At 0800 the fog lifted. Chonui was still burning. Four tanks came into view from the north and entered the village. Stephens radioed for an air strike. Then the men heard tank fire to their rear. The enemy tanks that had passed through the lines earlier were joining their flanking infantry force in an attack on the American heavy mortar position. Stephens had already lost wire communication with the mortarmen; now he lost radio communication with them. The mortars fell silent, and it seemed certain that the enemy had overrun and destroyed



them. Although artillery still gave support, loss of the valuable close-in support of the 4.2-inch mortars proved costly. North Korean infantry came from Chonui at 0900 and began climbing the ridge in a frontal attack against the center of the position. The artillery forward observers adjusted artillery fire on them and turned them back. Men watching anxiously on the ridge saw many enemy fall to the ground as they ran. The T34's in Chonui now moved out of the town and began spraying the American-held ridge with machine gun fire.

Shortly after 1100, intense small arms fire erupted again at Lieutenant Bixler's position on the left. The absence of the former heavy mortar fire protecting screen enabled the enemy to close with him. The fog had lifted and men in the center could see these enemy soldiers on the left. Bixler radioed to Stephens at 1125 that he needed more men, that he had many casualties, and asked permission to withdraw. Stephens replied that he was to stay-"Relief is on the way." Five minutes later it came in the form of an air strike. Two American jet planes streaked in, rocketed the tanks without any visible hits, and then strafed the enemy infantry on the left. The strafing helped Bixler; as long as the planes were present the enemy kept under cover. Soon, their ammunition expended, the planes departed. Then the enemy infantry resumed the attack.

While the air strike was in progress, survivors from the overrun recoilless rifle and mortar positions in the rear climbed the ridge and joined the infantry in the center of the position. At 1132, according to Bigart's watch, friendly artillery fire began falling on the ridge. Apparently the artillerymen thought that enemy troops had overrun the forward infantry position and they were firing on them. Enemy fire and tanks had destroyed wire communication from the battle position to the rear, and the artillery forward observer's radio had ceased working. There was no communication. Stephens ran to his radio jeep, 100 yards to the rear of the foxholes, and from there was able to send a message to the regiment to stop the artillery fire; but it kept falling nevertheless.

As the men on the ridge crouched in their foxholes under the shower of dirt and rocks thrown into the air by the exploding artillery shells, Stephens at 11 35 received another report from Bixler that enemy soldiers surrounded him and that most of his men were casualties. That was his last report. The enemy overran Bixler's position and most of the men there died in their foxholes. Even before the friendly artillery fire began falling, some of the men on the north (right) end of the ridge had run off. About the time of Bixler's last radio message, someone yelled, "Everybody on the right flank is taking off!" Stephens, looking in that direction, saw groups running to the rear. He yelled out, "Get those high priced soldiers back into position! That's what they are paid for." A young Nisei from Hawaii, Cpl. Richard Okada, tried to halt the panic on the right but was able to get only a few men together. With them he formed a small perimeter. At 1205 Colonel Stephens decided that those still on the ridge would have to fall back if they were to escape with their lives. On a signal from him, the small group leaped from their foxholes and ran across open ground to an orchard and rice paddies beyond. There they learned, as thousands of other American soldiers were to

learn, that crossing flooded rice paddies in a hurry on the narrow, slippery dikes was like walking a tightrope. While they were crossing the paddies, two American jet planes strafed them, thinking them enemy soldiers. There were no casualties from the strafing but some of the men slipped knee-deep into mud and acquired a "lifelong aversion to rice." Stephens and his small group escaped to American lines.

In this action at Chonui, A Company had 27 wounded and 30 missing for a total of 57 casualties out of 181 men; D Company's loss was much less, 3 killed and 8 wounded. The Heavy Mortar Company suffered 14 casualties. Of the total troops engaged the loss was about 20 percent. Upon reaching friendly positions, Stephens ordered Colonel Jensen to counterattack with the 3d Battalion and regain the Chonui positions. Jensen pressed the counterattack and regained the ridge in front of the town, but was unable to retake Bixler's hill south of the railroad. His men rescued about ten men of A and D Companies who had not tried to withdraw under the shell fire.

Jensen's counterattack in the afternoon uncovered the first known North Korean mass atrocity perpetrated on captured American soldiers. The bodies of six Americans, jeep drivers and mortar-men of the Heavy Mortar Company, were found with hands tied in back and shot through the back of the head. Infiltrating enemy soldiers had captured them in the morning when they were on their way to the mortar position with a resupply of ammunition. An American officer farther back witnessed the capture. One of the jeep drivers managed to escape when the others surrendered.

American tanks on the morning of 10 July near Chonui engaged in their first fight of the Korean War. They performed poorly. In the afternoon, tanks participated in the 3d Battalion counterattack and did better. One of them got in a first shot on an enemy tank and disabled it. Two American light tanks were lost during the day. Elements of the N.K. *4th Division* had pressed on south after the capture of Ch'onan and they had fought the battle of Chonui. Leading elements of the N.K. *3d Division*, following the *4th* by one day, apparently came up to Chonui late on the 10th. They found the town such a mass of rubble that the reserve regiment bypassed it.

Air power had one of its great moments in the Korean War. Late in the afternoon, a flight of jet F-80 planes dropped down through the overcast at P'yongt'aek, twenty-five air miles north of Chonui, and found a large convoy of tanks and vehicles stopped bumper to bumper on the north side of a destroyed bridge. Upon receiving a report of this discovery, the Fifth Air Force rushed every available plane to the scene-B-26's, F-80's, and F-82's-in a massive air strike. Observers of the strike reported that it destroyed 38 tanks, 7 half-track vehicles, 117 trucks, and a large number of enemy soldiers. This report undoubtedly exaggerated unintentionally the amount of enemy equipment actually destroyed. But this strike, and that of the previous afternoon near Chonui, probably resulted in the greatest destruction of enemy armor of any single action in the war. (Footnote 37 endpoint) **To be continued in next issue.**

# ALL POWs ARE HEROES

By David J. Valley

Some months ago I read the book, "Suncheon Tunnel Massacre Survivors." At an earlier West coast regional meeting Nick Cortese had told me about it, later he was kind enough to send a copy to me. Frankly, although I spent nine months in Korea as a rifleman with the 19th RGT from July '50 to April '51, I didn't look forward to reading the book. I could imagine these POWs went through hell; I had seen some evidence of how cruel and inhuman the Commies could be. However, upon reflection, I thought I owed it to these heroes to learn more about what they suffered, and if only vicariously, to share the hell they endured.

The book written by Pat McGrath Avery and Joyce Faulkner is well researched and presented in an easy to read and follow format which traces the experiences of many individuals. What I found most interesting were the recollections of the men who endured these unbelievable ordeals in their own words. Most of them, as I was at the time were 18 and 19 year-old guys, just ordinary kids not long out of high school. How they summoned the courage and strength to survive is hard to imagine. I wonder if I could have done any near as well and thank God I didn't have to be tested.

This past October my wife and I went to the Korean War Veterans Reunion in Laughlin, NV. There, I met one of the Suncheon Tunnel survivors, Walter Whitcomb. Walt, though confined to a wheelchair and on oxygen was lively and cheerful. He is shown in the picture below with Jesse Rodriguez (left) and Nick Cortese. It was an honor for me to meet him and thank him for his courageous service.



Since I met Walt I was interested to take another at his experience. I won't begin to try to copy his entire story from the book, (which I highly recommend for reading), but I will relate some of the details to give you an idea of the kind of guy Walt Whitcomb is.

He was born on an Indian Reservation; his mother was a Seneca Indian, very passive, and his father was abusive. Walt was a small kid and had to be scrappy to get along. He skipped school often and got into serious trouble by stealing a car for a joy ride. His father wouldn't put up bail and Walt spent eight months in jail. A judge finally gave him the Army option which he readily took. After basic he was sent to the 29th RCT, K CO, on its way to Korea, arriving in Pusan on 24 July. The next day he was caught up in the fighting West of Chinju, at Hadong. The 2nd BN, 29th was expecting minor resistance but ran headlong into the 6th NK division on a push to Pusan. Walt was soon caught up in the confusion and horror of battle.

"We were trapped in a gully. It seemed like everyone around me was running—and the enemy was shooting at us. We zigzagged across a muddy field. I was loaded down with mud. There was nothing but blood and guts all around. The smell of death drifted up into my nose. I'd gag—and start to slow down and then someone else would die—and that would impel me into action again. I don't know how I got across that field. God must have had me by the hand. It didn't seem real. I knew a guy who got killed—we shot pool together—and then, bang—he was out of life. I hid in a rice paddy. When I got to the river, there were so many bodies in it that it ran red with blood." The North

Koreans went downstream and hid in the rocks.

"During the battle, my old self surfaced. I thought, 'I got to get even.' I learned to hate all over again."

Walt made it to another rice paddy, crawling for several hours. When he stood up, enemy soldiers surrounded him. They offered him a drink from a canteen. Thirsty from his efforts to escape the carnage around him, he took a big gulp only to choke as the liquid burned his esophagus. It was sake.

***Continued next page.***



## All POW's...continued

Over three hundred green recruits died that day—many others went missing. Jim Yeager, and his friend John Toney were among those taken prisoner with him. Walt and about a hundred other POWs were rounded up and taken to a church, but were soon under fire from allied airplanes. A rocket fired into the church killed twenty of the POWs. Then began the death march north.

"My feet were numb. After the second day my legs began to swell too. At night we slept close together to keep warm. As we marched South Koreans tried to give us food. In Taejon we met up with another POW group and were put together. We were lucky if we received anything to eat or drink, maybe a clump of rice the size of a golf ball. They mixed barley into the rice which made us sick."

Many POWs were dying as they marched from wounds or other disorders. Tears on muddy faces were a common sight.

"The important thing now was to survive - to be stronger than we were - to let them know I was stronger than they were. My feelings for my father resurfaced. When I was twelve he beat me with a 2x4, so I started hating him. A person filled with hatred can endure an awful lot of pain. So now, as a prisoner, I reacted like I did at home. I put one foot in front of the other thinking, 'my turn will come - eventually it will be my turn.' No matter what happened I kept telling myself, I could make it just a little bit more."

It turned out to be a lot more as Walt endured the death march, and later, wounds from the tunnel massacre. There were sixty-eight POWs murdered in the Suncheon Tunnel, but Walt was among the twenty-three wounded among bodies of the dead who survived. In my book they are all heroes of the highest order.

***The factual material of the foregoing text was taken from the book "Suncheon Tunnel Massacre Survivors."***

***You can reach Walt Whitcomb by writing to: 2345 190<sup>th</sup> St., SP #34, Redondo Beach, CA90278, or email at: [www1031@aol.com](mailto:www1031@aol.com)***

## RETURN TO KOREA

from National Defense Daily

US ARMY 24th Infantry Division, Veteran Bryant visits ROK ARMY 2nd Infantry Division. He did his military service at the Yang-Gu province after the Korean War. Through a photograph of the past, Veteran Bryant was able to locate where he was 58 years ago. Republic of Korean Army Second Division greeted Bryant with a warm welcome to South Korea once again. Once, an area filled with only dust and dirt, has changed dramatically over time. Stepping foot on Yang Gu soil again, Dick set his hands against the ground and recalled his memories of the past.



**Dick Bryant with his son, Mike, and 2nd ROK Division Chief-of-Staff, Colonel Mun-Sik Kim**

"I always wanted to visit the place where I was 58 years ago. This was one of most meaningful moments in my life, spending my service here in South Korea. I wanted to revisit the place once more before my time is done here in this world. I've come all this way just to see how much the place has changed. However, through Second Division's utmost polite manner and welcome, I was able to get a great recall of the past and I want to thank them very much for making this wish come true."

**David:** I served in Hqs. Co., Division Hqs. at APO 24. I was in the 24th in 1954 and 1955 at Yanggu, then Camp Hakata, Japan and lastly up MSR 1 from Seoul toward the DMZ (we took over from 1st Marine Division near a little village named Tonggu) at what later on became Camp Howze. Yes, I am a member of the 24th ID Association.

**Dick Bryant**



Just as I was putting the finishing touches to this Taor Leaf, I received a call from Renaldo Sanchez, P.O. Box 40355, Santa Barbara, CA 93140, Tel. 805 626-1551. He said, "This is probably like looking for a needle in a haystack, but I sure would like to locate my buddy from Korea. We served together from August, 1950 to about July, 1951. I only remember his last name, Roberts, he was probably just a PFT or PFC. He was with me in the Machine Gun Platoon, D CO, 21st RGT. He was from Florida and had the bluest eyes of anyone I know." If this rings a bell with anyone please contact Reynaldo.

# BOOK EXCERPT: “I Heard No Bugles”

**Chapter: Run to Chinju.** I made my way beneath the dawn-tinged pines along the skyline towards the dim sound of equipment rustling somewhere ahead. The last man in the column was startled.

“Hey, Mercy, where the hell did you come from?” My pale-skinned, 110-pound fellow New Yorker in the 3rd Platoon flashed his uneven hound-dogged toothed smile.

“That’s what you get for not checking to your rear, BB,” I said. We scanned the sky for the reassuring signs of a plane and saw only plumes of black smoke swirling up on the right flank. The NK tanks had captured Chinju. Unseen was their fast moving division on our left headed for the city of Mason, only fifteen miles from Pusan—we were sandwiched in between two forces.

Ahead, the single-file column rounded a huge lime-green boulder and walked down into a narrow box-like gorge. “There’s less than sixty men there, BB, where’s the rest of the Company?”

He shrugged. “Who knows? These guys are a mixed bag. G Company men, replacements from last night and God knows what else.”

Concerned, I asked, “What about my brother’s platoon? Barszcz, and Hungerford; and our weapons section?”

He stared blankly. “Beats the hell outta me. The Company got separated last night when some nit up front stopped to take a poop and everybody behind him thought it was a rest break.”

I eyed him suspiciously. “BB, you’re making this up, right?”

He got defensive. “No, honest, Merc. Maybe the guy who stopped first was asleep or something, ‘cause when he pulled out, the troops ahead of him were gone. I guess he was afraid to call out because of the Gooks being around and all, you know what I mean?”

“Sure,” I nodded, “he had to feel a little stupid, too, for losing what’s left of the Company.”

I felt apprehensive looking down the slope’s sixty-yard decline into the sandy weed-filled ravine we’d have to cross. A smooth flat-faced cliff on our immediate left fell straight down into a basin that was rounded out like the interior of a stone cup with thirty-foot high walls on three sides. Its only exit out was a narrow sixty-yard long S-shaped curve that sliced between our hill and the adjoining slope that stretched four hundred yards up to a rocky moonscape-summit.

Exhausted by worsening dysentery and the record-breaking humid heat I decided to rest in the small swatch of cool shade near the lopsided boulder: I’ll catch up with the column on the next ridge...or maybe tonight...when it’s cooler. I camouflaged myself beneath a swept up pile of leaves and, while watching BB following down the column, I drowsily sank into unconsciousness from where an inner voice later bellowed: Wake up or die!

Startled, unfocused I thought it was a dream until seconds later machine gun fire sent me into a long seemingly slow-motion dive into the ravine. The gun’s position, some thirty yards beyond the boulder where I’d dozed, was impossible to see. They’d walked right by me, not four feet away along the crest. The hallmark trail of discarded equipment led them to us.

Another burst fractured rocks above the S-shaped curve, severed dead trees and burned into the back of the desperate



**Author Robert Mercy**

column headed up to the high ground. My search for the roaring gun intensified in paces with the inescapable screams that come from the wounded and the dying: One burst blew open the torso of a G.I. from groin to chin. Another’s legs were pulverized and the last man in the column, where I would have been, was near decapitated: Was that BB?

A final withering leaden gale raised gusts of blood-stippled dust into a sudden eerie silence, save for the metallic jangle of the dead G.I.’s helmets that rolled back onto the valley floor. The NKs, with their nasty screwdriver-tipped bayonets, would soon be down to mop up. I snake-bolted through the high grass, coming face to face with a racked-with-fear sweat drenched 200-pound teenager with a bullet wound in each leg.

He cried out, “In God’s name, please! Take me out!”

I nodded and dashed into the nearby crevice of a rock wall and squinted up its narrow thirty-foot shaft. It sprouted some twigs, a few inch-wide stone protrusions and showered down dust from the machine gun vaporized rocks above. Drawn back to the wounded soldier who saw the improbability of the climb written on my face, he whispered, “Please, don’t let them get me!”

I pitched a single grenade by his side. “This is the best I can do.” I’ll never forget his pained expression.

His eyes churned with fear before his head lowered in despair. “Hail Mary, full of grace,” he began and I, unseen, drew my pistol: Will God punish me if I kill...or leave him...and...will the shot give away our position? I remembered a film clip of a WW1 soldier shooting his friend to spare him the torture he’d expected.

I made the nauseating nightmarish choice, and crawled up the funnel to the ridge, which violated every belief and cherished honor code I held. I reached the crest where burp gun rounds pelted down around me then rolled as though hit, the enemy fire shifted. The wounded soldier’s head was in my sights for the coup de grace I earnestly wanted to give; but was appalled instead by my inability to shoot: Would I ever know why?



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**Email: 1k34cspd@gmail.com**

QM Notes: I recently secured a large quantity of hat pins, medals, patches, etc. from Albert McDoo with the 5th RCT out of Tampa. Their QM had passed away and they were getting rid of his inventory cheap so I got a good deal on the items. I am in the process of going through these items for inclusion in our inventory, which will hopefully be ready for the next TARO LEAF. In addition I would like to encourage all TARO LEAF readers to use my email to

request items **before** ordering to see if I have the certain items they want. This will accomplish two things, first save you 45 cents in postage and second, once they email me I can send them a more user friendly inventory list than what appears in the TARO LEAF. Thanks for your understanding.

Quartermaster, John Walters  
EMAIL: 1k34cspd@gmail.com

# Notices

## ABOUT OUR DUES

How much are present annual dues to the Association and when are they due?

Current dues are \$15 annually and are due in the month that you joined the Association. Your Association membership card has the month and year that your current dues expires; they should be renewed by that month.

The association does not send out invoices for dues, and I have to admit that I have been lax in sending out "Past Due Notices," as this is an expensive task for the Association.

Look at the address label on back page of this Taro Leaf. The first line is a series of letters and numbers related to the Postal Service and has nothing to do with the Association. **The second line (immediately above your name), is the date that your dues expire or have expired.** Any date prior to 11/01/12 indicates your dues are **past due** and states when they expired.

For those who are in arrears on their dues, I trust that you will get current as soon as you can.

If at all possible I would like to encourage members to pay multiple years in advance. This would cut down significantly on postage and other expenses related to processing dues payments.

### LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Current Lifetime Membership is \$200.00. This can be paid in a lump sum, or \$40 per year for 5 consecutive years, or sooner. I just had a member pay \$40 per month for five months, to complete his Lifetime Membership. If the \$40/5 year plan is selected the Lifetime membership is effective on the completion of the payments.

The Lifetime Member receives a 2"x3 1/2" brass plated card about the size of a credit card.

The plate is embossed *24th Infantry Division Association-Life Member*. On the left side is the outline of an Infantry Soldier. On the bottom right is the colored division patch. The recipients name is engraved across the plate along with his Life Member Number.

John Dunn, SEC./TREAS.

----- Cut out and mail -----

## 24th Infantry Division Association



John A. Dunn, Sec'y./Treas.  
9150 Highway 51  
Westover, AL35147-9527

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Enroll as Member
- ☐ Reinstate as Member
- ☐ Enroll as Associate Member
- ☐ 12 Months Dues \$15.00
- ☐ Life Membership \$200, or
- ☐ Installments \$40 / 5 years

**CHECKS PAYABLE TO  
24TH INF. DIV. ASSOC.**

**Unit**

**Bn.**

**Co.**

**P**

**It./Bat.**

**Squad**

i.e. 5th, 19th, 3rd Engr., 955 FABn., Etc.

**Location(s)**

i.e. Pearl, WWII, Japan, Korea, Germany, Ft. Stuart, Lebanon, Somalia, Desert Storm, Ft. Riley, etc

**POW** ☐

**Location**

**From**

**/ /**

**To**

**/ /**

**Other Unit Service**

**From**

**/ /**

**To**

**/ /**

**Sponsor**



# DONATIONS to TARO LEAF

## SEC'Y/ TREAS. REPORTS

Member	Unit	\$
Albrecht, Samuel	3rd Eng	10
Byrem, Robert B.	3rd Eng	5
Davis, Dayton	34th Inf	5
Ebert, Clayton W.	3rd Eng	10
Edwards, John T.	3rd Eng	10
Fijol, Stanley	21st Inf	10
Garry, William W.	34th Inf	40
Gavin, Thomas J.	26th AAA	10
Gonzales, Dan M.	5TH RCT	5
Hawthorne, Raymond S.	11th FA	100
McCourt, Jack G.	24th Div	5
Mecca, Daniel	13th FA	25
Nunnally, Charles E.	11th FA	15
Poynter, Eugene A.	34th Inf	30
Repko, Louis	34th Inf	5
Rochon, Louis W.	5th RCT	10
Swanson, Myron J.	19th Inf	10
Van Kirk, Viola	Assoc	15
Vlassic, George J.	21st Inf	25

### IN HONOR AND IN MEMORY

This column is dedicated to those that wish to make a donation to the association in honor of, or in memory of a friend, family member, or comrade in arms.

An anonymous life member of the Association makes the following gifts to honor those men who, as total strangers, helped him in a time of great need:

Donald Van Beck	\$200
Oliver Christiansen	\$200
Bill Freshcorn	\$200
Harley Joseph	\$200
Charles Lane	\$200
Ralph Peterson	\$200
Unnamed	\$200

Also, the same donor makes gifts in memory of:

Billy Freshcorn	\$250
Clayton L. Carsten	\$750

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Bane, Paul D.	24th Sig	C	Desert Storm
Dove, John R.	19th Inf		Germany 61-62
Godfrey, Warren, J.	19th Inf	B	Stewart 86-89
Tricarico, William V.	19th Inf	F	WWII 43-46
Wilburn, Phillip D	69th Arm	HHC	Desert storm



A sergeant was addressing a squad of 20 and said: "I have a nice easy job for the laziest man here. Put up your hand if you are the laziest." 19 men raised their hands, and the sergeant asked the other man "why didn't you raise your hand?" The man replied: "Too much trouble, sarge."

The recruit complained to the sergeant that he'd got a splinter in his finger. "You should have more sinse," was the harsh comment, "than to scratch your head."

What soldiers smell of salt and pepper? - Seasoned troopers.



## Website News

Tom J. Thiel, Webmaster  
[www.24thidaweb.com](http://www.24thidaweb.com)  
19147 Park Blvd., Eustis, FL 32736  
Telephone: 352 408-6612

Our project to digitize all Taro Leaf publications and make them available to the world via the internet is proceeding, albeit much more slowly last quarter because of other pressing duties!

In addition to those mentioned in the last Taro Leaf, I received some from Vonnie Mullins, former Editor. Vonnie also gave me some detail about issues I had listed as missing, but that were never produced.

Still missing are Taro Leaf publications of the 1950's and many issues before and after that (the table in this column, Taro Leaf Summer, Vol 66 NO 3, is still current).

About 6,500 pages of Taro Leaf Publications have been uploaded so far.

**Website Search** My extremely limited knowledge of web programing has prevented me from incorporating a website search capacity, but I have learned that the Google search engine will provide it for us.

For example, if you want to find some article authored by David Valley on the website, including inside Taro Leaf Publications, open Google and enter: "david valley" + "www.24thida.com" as shown in the inserted screen capture. In 0.16 seconds, Google found 29 such occurrences on the website. The first 3 are also shown in the figure. Links for those found inside a PDF file only take you to the first page of that document; you must then use the search capability provided by your PDF viewing software.

Note that only Google provides this; Bing only found 2 results for the above search for "David Valley."

Materials other than Taro Leaf magazines are also being uploaded. I appreciate your cooperation. This is your site, so I need your material for the site. Please send what you have to the address below, or call me to discuss putting your material on your web site for all the world to view.

I am now getting regular feedback to the website from mostly the outside world, so it is being seen well beyond our ranks!

**Tom J. Thiel**

**To Members:** *Many of you may not know what all is involved in the work that Tom does on the website. I don't know exactly either, but I do know it takes countless hours and at times a great deal of patience when things get messed up, as they often do. So if you get a chance let Tom know you appreciate the work he does, and if you can help with his projects, please do. Editor*

## NEW MEMBERS RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Tom Appler, Director-at-Large for recruiting, will be initiating a Membership Drive contest for Facebook members who are 24th ID veterans.

It begins for any member who joins our organization from January 1st, 2013 until September 22, 2013. This group currently has 900 members, as of this printing, and is growing every month. All former members of the 24th ID, that are not currently members of the 24th IDA, are eligible.

A Facebook notification will be entered two times per month, starting in January for reminder purposes.

The Rules:

1. Not currently members of the 24th IDA. Must have been a former member of the 24th Infantry Division, wearing the 24th patch, wherever they served.
2. Must join the 24th IDA between 1/1/2013 and 9/22/2013.
3. Payment of \$15.00 for the first year must be received before September 22nd, 2013.
4. 24th IDA Secretary/Treasurer John Dunn, will receive and verify payment on time. Membership applications can be found on our website: [www.24thida.com](http://www.24thida.com) or on page 28 of this Taro Leaf. Applicants should complete and send it to John Dunn.
5. Prize award will be \$ 250.00 picked at random during the Louisville, KY national reunion, September, 2013. Person may not need to be present to win prize.
6. One winner selected. If he chooses Life Membership and makes payment before Sept. 22, 2013, the award will be \$300.00. Life membership must be paid in full to be eligible \$200.00 before deadline date of Sept. 22, 2013.

It is very simply contest. If there are any questions, please call Tom Appler, CW4, USA Reserve, (Ret.)

410-848-1081 (H)  
24th Inf. Div. Supply & Transportation BN, 1964-1966,  
Augsburg, Germany,  
Email: [tom-steph@comcast.net](mailto:tom-steph@comcast.net)



**Ralph W. Shelton (SGT)** was born 1929 and died at age 81, 29 June 2010 in Sweetwater, TN. He served in Korea with the **21st RGT**. The Korean War casualty roster indicates he was wounded twice and return to duty. First WIA was 15 July 1950 and returned to duty 7 September 1950 (FECOM) and the 2nd WIA was 13 February 1951 and returned to duty (FECOM) 29 March 1951.



**Albert Fassi**, a member of Cannon CO **34th RGT** was stationed in the Pacific during WWII. He entered the U.S. Army on March 7, 1941. During World War II he served a little over four years. He fought in the Phillipine Liberation Battle and in the New Guinea Campaign. His date of separation was May 18, 1945 with the rank of Technical Sergeant. **Life**

**Member 1776.**

I received a mailed note saying "**Dick**" Tse, HQ CO, **34th RGT** passed away November 10, 2013." I did not find the name on the Association roster. It was mailed by M. Harba (illegible) from San Francisco. **Editor**

**George W. "Bud" Waggoner** of Burlington, KY passed away October 7, 2012. He served in the **19th RGT** in WWII and was a Pearl Harbor survivor who participated in six beachhead landings as a radioman. **Life Member 589.**



**Frederick P. Verhulst** of Northbrook, IL died in March, 2012. He served with the U.S. Army, **24th ID** during the Korean War. **Member**



John K. Baird, "Jack", of Colorado Springs died October 30, 2012 at the age of 80. Jack was a Korean War veteran. He served as a CPL. with the **34th RGT** HVY MORT. After the armistice was signed he was assigned to guard POW's. He told that while American POW's were beaten, starved, and executed, the Chinese POW's

enjoyed barracks with stoves as he and the other guards lived in their 2 man tents. Jack finished his tour as Company Clerk, "Someone found out that I could type." He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Isabelle. **Life member 2152**

(MJR) **Scheller Garlock** died January 20, 2008 at age of 86. He enlisted in the Army in 1946 and worked his way up in the ranks. He was a Master Sergeant in the Korean War and received a battlefield commission to lieutenant. He served with the **5th RCT**.

## FALLEN COMRADES

**John Kuns, Jr.** passed on November 26, 2012 in Somerdale, NJ. He served with CO A, **21st RGT** in Korea.

**Will Ed Green** died April 7, 2012. He was a tuba player with the **24th infantry Band** and also served in Korea. He is survived by his wife, Lil, 443 Burkhaven Loop, Ocdee, FL 34761.

**Donald F. Vail** passed away November 30, 2012. He was 1st SGT in H CO, **21st RGT** and participated in Operation Nomad. He provided the map which was on the Taro Leaf cover in October, 2008. **Life Member 2188.** Condolences may be sent to: Donis Vail, 1112 Keiffer Dr, Olney IL 62450



## Verbeck Award Committee

These Members have kindly agreed to serve on the Award Committee for 2013. Give some thought to whom you might nominate for this prestigious award. In the next issue we will provide a postcard for your reply.

**Tom J. Thiel**, Chair, 19th Inf. E  
19147 Park Place Blvd  
Eustis, FL 32736-7262  
Ph: 352-408-6612  
24thidaweb@gmail.com

**Daniel A. Cretaro**, 34th Inf D & 19th Inf M  
5823 Archwood Dr.  
San Antonio TX 78239-1409  
Ph: 210-653-2251  
dac2729@aol.com

**Melvin L. Frederick**, 19th Inf E  
950 W. Barney  
Owatonna MN 55060-3800  
Ph: 507-455-1639  
melfrederick@msn.com

**Gene E. Spicer**, 19th Inf HQ  
8937 W. 750 N  
Commiskey IN 47227-9345  
Ph: 812-873-6548  
gspicer@seidata.com

# **24<sup>th</sup> IDA NATIONAL REUNION 2013**

**Sept 22-25, Hotel Holiday Inn  
Hurstbourn, Louisville, Kentucky**

**Rates \$77.00 plus tax/night**

### **Tours and Events Planned:**

- Fort Knox - We'll be having lunch with the troops!
- Church Hill Downs Racetrack • Downtown Louisville
- Louisville Slugger • Frazier International
- History Museum • Side Trips to the Horseshoe Casino
- Military Drill Team at our Breakfast
- Display of WWII Korea and Modern Day Military Vehicles
- Hawaiian Theme Banquet

#### **Cordinators:**

**BG Gene E Spicer Ph: 812-873-6548**

**gspicer@seidata.com**

**Ken Fentner 716-688-7360**

We will have a spectacular 24th Division memorial blanket (queen size) at the reunion for auction.

The custom designed blanket will feature our division patch and all our Battle Honor Ribbons.

The next issue of the Taro Leaf will have extensive details about the Louisville Reunion.

## **Florida 24th IDA Group**

### **2013 DUTCH TREAT LUNCHEONS**

- Feb 6th •May 1st
- Aug 7th •Nov 6th

**11:45 a.m. Golden Corral**

**1720 Citrus Blvd  
Leesburg, FL 34748**

**Space limited to about 50  
please make reservations**

**By contacting: Tom Thiel  
352-408-6612, or  
fl24thida@gmail.com**

**or Bill Stokes, 352-750-6741  
wsswriter@centurylink.net**

## **L CO 21st RGT REUNION Branson, MO**

**A special reunion for special  
people in America's Showplace  
Capital. There are an incredible  
number of Headliner Shows and  
many other attractions in this  
compact city in southern  
Missouri.**

**May 1-5, 2013**

**CONTACT: George Vlasic, 910 287-5618  
geonanvlasic@atmc.net**



# 24<sup>th</sup> IDA West Coast Reunion

## 24-27 March, 2013

# Aquarius Casino Resort

1900 So Casino Dr,  
Laughlin, NV 89029

800-662-5825 for  
reservations

CODE C-WCR 13

**ROOMS**  
**\$29.00**

Contact: Byrd or D.J. Schrock for more info: Write to P.O. Box 1626  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636, telephone (520) 678-0207 or (520) 678-0513  
or email: byrd2a@cox.net

Registration Fee: \$20 per Family Banquet Dinner: \$36 (evening of 27th)

***According to our Catering contract***  
***Dinner fees are non-refundable after 17 March 2013***

----- Cut Along Dotted Line -----

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Roast Sirloin of Beef \$38 x \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

Chicken Cordon Bleu \$38 x \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

Filet of Salmon \$36 x \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

Registration (\$20 per Family) = \_\_\_\_

(total) \$ \_\_\_\_

**Mail dinner fees, registration form  
and fees to:**

**Byrd Schrock**  
**P.O. Box 1626**  
**Sierra Vista, AZ 85636**

***Checks payable to Byrd Schrock***

# FL 24th—5th RCT Mini-Reunion—the last!

**St. Augustine, November 2012, by Tom Thiel**

Although our joint Florida 24th Group—5th RCT mini-reunion was a good one, we nevertheless decided that it will be our last. Just too few members attended. And many of those who did came from considerable distances.

Mega-storm Sandy contributed to this somewhat; Bill and Helen Kane learned that their New Jersey home had been badly flooded. And new 24th IDA VP Bill Tricarico was planning to come, but cancelled because his home in East Rockaway, NY was extensively damaged by Sandy. Carl and Flora Groth were first-timers at our reunion; they are from Livonia, MI. And we were very pleased that new 24th IDA President, Don Maggio, from NC was there; thank you, Don. St. Augustine has been a nice host city, although I only go to reunions to soak in the ambiance of the Hospitality Room! But we agreed to try something new in the future—a cruise from Port Canaveral, FL, in 2014!

I admit to being a land-lubber, and have been on no cruises since I left the Gen. Weigel in 1952! But our Florida 24th Group has been unable to come up with a Mini-Reunion Committee to take on the tremendous responsibilities of running a mini-reunion. That's what made our joining up with the 5th RCT's mini was so attractive—Helen and Bill, and Tony and Carol, did all of that grunt work. And we thank them

profusely! But with a cruise, I understand that travel agents do most all of that work. We have made no contacts yet, but I've been told that tickets may be as low as \$30 to \$50 per cabin per day.

So, let me take this opportunity to invite all members of the 24th Infantry Division, and of the 5th RCT Associations to join with us on a cruise from Port Canaveral, FL in February-or maybe March 2014. We picked February 2014 because it was approximately mid-way between the 24th IDA Reunion in Omaha, and the 5th RCT reunion in May, I think in Branson, MO. And it also is when we have a large number of snow birds in FL. Air fares into Orlando are among the more competitive anywhere, and transportation from there to Port Canaveral can be made a part of the package. The Space Shuttle Atlantis has been moved to its final resting place in the display area in the Kennedy Space Center's Visitor Center.

Please let us know now if you think you would like to go with us on the cruise. For the 24th IDA folks, please call or email me, Tom Thiel, at 352-357-3943 or 352-408-6612 cell, or 24thida@gmail.com.

For the 5th RCT, please contact Bill Kane at 407-275-7450,



**St. Augustine Reunion Business Meeting participants, from left: Tom Thiel, Heidi Edgar, Frank Jennings, Don Maggio, Tony Polemeni, Bill Kane, Frank White, Carl Groth**



**Editor's Note:** Although the proposed cruise is being organized as a regional reunion, there's no reason why members from anywhere in the country cannot come along. Cruises organized for a group will usually get a substantial discount from the usual fares. This may compensate for whatever additional costs you'll have to get to Florida. If you have never been on a cruise before, there's nothing better than taking one with a whole lot of friends. A cruise offers other great advantages such as having as all you want to eat, interesting places to visit, and many shipboard activities just a short walk away...a great way to treat yourself for a lifetime!





**Photo 1 Caption:** Florida 24th IDA/5th RCT Mini-Reunion Saturday Banquet attendees, from left: Maxine and Frank Jennings, Tony Polemeni and Carol Regalado, Jerry and Judy White, Heidi Edgar, Helen and Bill Kane, Gloria and Cal Narram, Flora and Carl Groth, and Don Maggio. Others attending but not shown in the photo were Heidi's husband Matthew, Marysue (Jerry and Judy's daughter) and George Woodward, and Tom Thiel.

## **Reunions in San Francisco, Boston, Phoenix, San Diego, Houston, Branson, Miami, Seattle, Los Angeles, Laughlin, Tampa, Norfolk, or any other place that suits you! (See back page)**

### **ALL MEMBERS:**

Please fill out and cut out the adjoining postcard and mail it to the association.

We are hoping to get a better consensus as to where the reunions should be held in the future.

We each have an indefinite number of possible reunions in our future, so we would like to accommodate our members the best possible way we can.

By sending in the card we can plan better and it by no means obligates you.



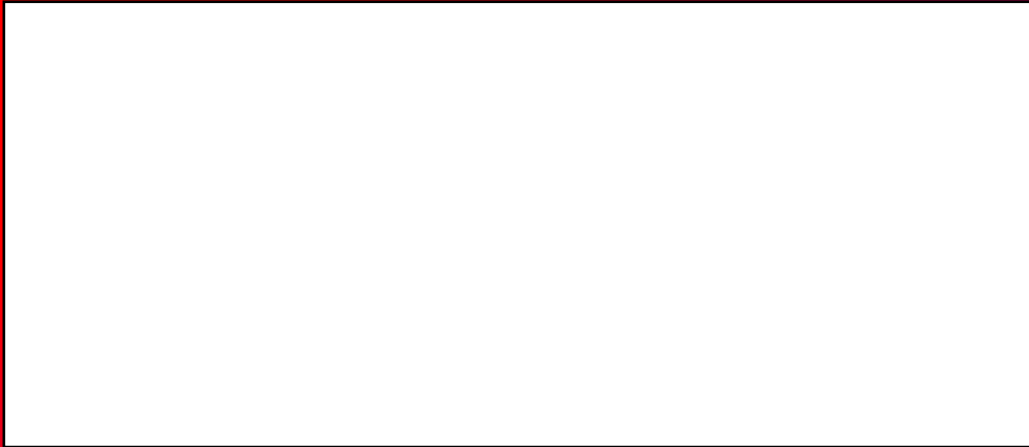
**PLACE  
32 CENT  
STAMP**

**24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association  
Post Office Box 500907  
San Diego, CA 92150**



**John A. Dunn, Secretary/Treasurer**  
**24th RGT Division Association**  
**Hwy. 51, Westover, AL 35147-9527**

**NON PROFIT U.S.**  
**POSTAGE PAID**  
Permit #1040  
Leesburg, FL 34748



**MEMBERS: Check your dues date above your address**  
**12 months dues = \$15.00**

**Send Dues & Address Changes to:**

John A. Dunn, Sec'y.-Treas.  
24th Infantry Division Association  
9150 Hwy. 51, Westover, AL  
35147-9527

**Send Obituaries to: Taro Leaf Editor**

(Please include a photo if available)  
Post Office Box 500907  
San Diego, CA 92150  
**24thtaroleaf@gmail.com**

Using a "built-in" postcard  
is a new wrinkle for us and  
we hope our members will  
take advantage of it to  
express their opinions and  
ideas.

If we have a reasonable  
response we may use it in  
the future to poll members  
on all sorts of subjects.

If you have a suggestion as  
to how we might use the  
postcard, please let us  
know.

1. Do you approve of the policy of having our national reunions  
in a central location? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Would you favor alternating locations between central, eastern,  
and western cities? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. My preference for a reunion city would be \_\_\_\_\_.

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

comment \_\_\_\_\_