

# *Bravo Regulars*



**B Company 3/22**



*Vietnam Service*

[www.bravoregulars.com](http://www.bravoregulars.com)

**DECEMBER 2013**



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# REGISTRATION FORM

## BRAVO REGULARS 2014 REUNION

July 23, 2014 – July 27, 2014

Registration Fee: \$75.00

Per Couple: \$140.00

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name (if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Vietnam Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to arrive on (date): \_\_\_\_\_ I plan on departing (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of additional guests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lodging Available:

Crystal Inn—801-736-2004 Ask for Cindy Hornsby in reference to BRAVO CO. RSVP  
[Cindyh@crystalinns.com](mailto:Cindyh@crystalinns.com)

Baymont Inn & Suites—801-886-1300 Ask for Beatrice Cervantes in reference to BRAVO  
CO. RSVP [Baymontwvalley@gmail.com](mailto:Baymontwvalley@gmail.com)

Country Inn & Suites—801-908-0311 Ask for Celina Milner in reference to BRAVO RSVP  
[www.countryinns.com/westvalleycityut](http://www.countryinns.com/westvalleycityut)

### Reunion Gear:

Shirts-- \$25.00 S M L XL XXL XXXL

Hats-- \$15.00

### Activities:

City's Finest Tour— \$50.00 Lunch included <http://www.saltlakecitytours.org/>

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO: Kereti (Tony) & Roxanne Togisala**

5571 West 4260 South West Valley City UT 84120

(951) 722-5667



## Editor's Notes

David W. Lowell  
Editor  
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(520) 762-8609

Seasons greetings to all my Bravo brothers. In case you didn't hear it from anyone else last Veterans Day, thank you for your service. Dee and I thanked each other. She's also a vet, having served three years caring for the sick and injured at Walter Reed Medical Center.

The combat story for this issue covers the landing at LZ Gold. First, there is an excerpt from the after action report for the aviation group that dropped us in, followed by personal accounts from 1st. Sgt. Jones and myself. All stories converge at the 'Big Bang'. Top Jones was the most accomplished warrior I have ever met or even read about. As a survivor of World War II and the Korean War, he had already earned multiples of both Silver and Bronze stars and THIRTEEN Purple Hearts when he joined us at Ft. Lewis. He truly was one of our finest!

Lis' Young is looking for input on the quilt project for Reunion 2014. Please help her if you can.

Walt Shugart has memorialized our fallen at the Virginia War Memorial. Thank you, Walt, for your support of us and veterans everywhere.

Journalist Nick Carey is still looking for Bravo members willing to talk about your service. With each contact, I learn as much from his perspective as he learns from mine. Being involved in his project has been a rewarding experience for me as well. Please re-consider participating.

Lastly, George Baxter has provided some new information for our Memorial Page. Thanks, George, for your efforts.

John Otte and I are working on an overhaul of our website. We're keeping the same basic look but are updating about everything. The changes should be completed in January. If anyone would like input, please contact me.

Dee and I want to wish everyone a very joyful holiday season. See you in Salt Lake City! Until then, may peace be with you.

*Dave out*

Submissions may appear disjointed at times but are often edited for space, content and/or excerpted from larger personal communications between members. Submissions can be sent to either my email or home address (880 N. Solar Drive, Vail, AZ 85641) or to any Officer. Any photos submitted by mail will be scanned and returned

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Submitted by Editor—Re: LZ Gold After-Action Report**

On 19 March 1967, the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion distinguished itself by exceptionally valorous actions in the prelude of what was to become known as the battle of Suoi Tre—the most significant one-day battle to date in the III Corps Tactical Area. The 145th Combat Aviation Battalion was operating in direct support of 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, with the mission to conduct a combat assault into a landing zone located approximately five miles north of Suoi Da, Republic of Vietnam. The initial operational plans were made for the assault to take place on 16 March 1967, several miles further north of the actual landing zone; however, obstacles prevented the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (Mech) and the 22nd Battalion, 34th Armor from securing the landing zone as planned. On the evening of 17 March, the assault was rescheduled for 19 March with the landing zone changed to the new location. The armored and mechanized elements were unable to meet this new schedule. It was then decided that the assault would be conducted into an unsecured landing zone with the armored and mechanized elements scheduled to reinforce the infantry at a later time. The hazards of this unsecured landing zone were known to be many as there were relatively few clearings in the dense jungle which were adequate for airmobile operations. Past experience indicated that when there were few clearings in the area, the Viet Cong either mined or established ambushes on or near the potential landing zones. Professionalism and esprit de corps prevailed as the aviators of the 68th and 118th Assault Helicopter Companies eagerly awaited the termination of the twenty minute artillery preparation which would mark the beginning of the first lift. The assault was under the control of the Commanding Officer, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. The lift units were supported by gunships of both assault helicopter companies and those of the 34th Armed Helicopter Company. The first lift encountered little resistance upon entering the landing zone, but received automatic weapons fire upon departure. At the moment the aircraft of the second lift touched down, a command detonated 155mm artillery round was exploded. (Other sources have reported it as a landmine, dud bomb rigged for command detonation and a munitions pile also rigged—Editor.) Two helicopters were completely destroyed and five others seriously damaged from shrapnel. More mines were detonated and the landing zone became a holocaust of fire and flying steel. The Viet Cong were in well-established bunkers and had numeric superiority—it was later learned that major portions of two Viet Cong regiments were engaged in the battle. Heroism became the norm rather than the exception. Realizing the necessity for reinforcing the ground units already in the landing zone, the decision was made to land additional troops into a landing zone immediately adjacent to the initial landing zone. The 118th Assault Helicopter Company “Thunderbirds” and the 68th Assault Helicopter Company “Top Tigers” wasted no time getting another load of troops aboard and into the air. The tremendous urgency of the situation was realized by all. The lift approached through sporadic ground fire which culminated in the detonation of another mine which damaged the lead aircraft. The next element approached through a withering hail of automatic weapons fire and was met with another mine upon landing. Initially suppressive fire from escort groups was impossible due to friendly elements scattered throughout the area. Showing the utmost in determination and a remarkable tactical grasp of the situation, the armed helicopters located the enemy emplacements and supported the troop carrying aircraft by delivering accurate and deadly fire on the enemy. The armed helicopters were only able to accomplish the needed accuracy by flying directly into the barrage of fire. Their actions were instrumental in preventing the loss of additional lives and aircraft. Under the calm, inspirational leadership of the battalion commander, the companies performed in a manner that was in the highest traditions of Army Aviation. The courageous air crews flew eight lifts into the landing zone after the initial holocaust with individual acts of heroism being numerous as indicated by five individuals being awarded the Silver Star, 19 the Distinguished Flying Cross, 14 the Bronze Star for valor and 96 the Air Medal for valor. Four enlisted crew members of the first helicopter downed in the landing zone immediately began stripping the helicopters of radios, weapons and other valuable equipment. Realizing that the landing zone was in imminent danger of being engulfed in flames, they secured fire extinguishers and flack vests to fight the blaze. Failing to thwart the fire, they ran through the inferno looking for the wounded. As the blaze advanced, it set off hand grenades that had been dropped during the confusion of the initial mine explosions. (Munitions on the field were from combat loads being stripped from casualties for transport. Describing us as confused is insulting! - Editor.) These men began giving medical aid to wounded infantry soldiers and loading them onto helicopters which came back on successive lifts. They voluntarily remained in the landing zone under heavy fire throughout the morning and afternoon. Another enlisted crew member braved the exploding mines and rescued his critically injured pilot and mortally wounded door gunner from their burning helicopter. Then he carried the pilot under intense automatic weapons fire to an evacuation helicopter across the landing zone. He returned and removed the radios and weapons from the helicopter prior to returning to the evacuation helicopter where he performed life saving first aid to the wounded. A warrant officer’s aircraft received extensive damage during the initial blast; however, he determined that the urgency of the situation warranted the helicopter being flown and he made three successive lifts in his damaged ship to deliver reinforcements to the beleaguered ground troops. These are only but a few examples of the many actions of bravery which occurred during this action. There were cases of downed aviators taking machine guns and providing suppressive fire in the landing zone for successive lifts instead of being immediately evacuated.

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Reminiscence from 1st. Sgt. James T. Jones to Editor—Re: LZ Gold**

I came into LZ Gold on the second lift, right hand side, near but not at the front. Approaching, I got out onto the skid, staying close to the body, to get a better view. Everything looked fine as we descended. I had just straightened out my arm and leaned out to begin judging when I could safely jump when the chopper blew up, (actually the explosion was under him, but it would have felt that way to him—Editor), sending me flying while still about 50 feet up. I was the only survivor, just because I was outside. Everyone else was still inside and didn't have a chance. I was pretty banged up and bleeding out of one ear from the landing, but got it together enough to do triage at the dust off LZ before taking myself out with the last.

### **Reminiscence from Editor—Re: LZ Gold**

The first flight into LZ Gold had my 2nd platoon in the front on both flanks, with likely some other Bravo elements at the rear. Gun #1 was on point at the right and gun #2, with me, was on the left. The terrain was a seasonally dry swamp bed covered in tall, dry cutgrass, limiting visibility on the ground. We landed toward the west and the guns 'set up' defending that direction. The choppers departed and with no incoming, both guns 'pulled up' and began 'shadowing' the platoon across the LZ toward our assigned area northeast (to our right rear). Gun #2 got caught between the flanks of the 2nd flight and 'took a knee' just short of the right flank, staying up for visibility to the pilots. As the lead copper floated past about 10 feet high, there was a single very powerful blast in close proximity to my front right (east) under the flight line. Seconds later, as I lay floundering on the ground (concussion, otherwise okay), a chopper passed low overhead from the right and hit the ground thirty feet to my left, exploding on impact. Joe Rennison, the other survivor from Weapons Squad, had laid down with the arrival of the lead chopper a few seconds before the blast and was unharmed. He took the gun and joined the rifle squads on the push out to the perimeter. I, moving slowly due to a balance problem but improving as I went, found no other survivors west of the blast and moved east, finding and evacuating two wounded from the burning LZ. Second platoon had under a dozen remaining in the field and only one M-60.

### **Submitted by Michael Sanders—1st Platoon—Re: 1st. Sgt. Jones**

I visited with Top at a long term care place near Olympia, WA. He was fighting cancer, but was still a mountain of a man. I think this was in 2004. I'll check the area obits and find a date for you. There is something I think you should share with everyone. Top said that he was sorry he had been so hard on the company. He added that he was afraid that you guys wouldn't make it if he didn't push very hard.

### **Submitted by Lis' Young**

After hearing about the wonderful progress that Tony and Roxanne have made for our 2014 Reunion and by request from them, I have begun planning the next quilt. I received a great idea from Judi Silberies. Although the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war is not until 2015, we do not have a reunion in that year so this year would be the one to kick start the event. I need you to fill me in on what you would like to see on that theme. As always, any pictures that you have should be included. Your thoughts and ideas will be greatly appreciated. You can contact me at 573-721-2311 or email to [bravo2010reunion@yahoo.com](mailto:bravo2010reunion@yahoo.com). I would like to thank Dennis Earwood again for the awesome pictures he sent for the last quilt and Judi Silberies for the wonderful idea for the next one. You guys are what makes the quilt special and unique so hope to hear from you all soon. Can't wait to see you guys in Salt Lake. It is going to be a great reunion. Tony and Roxanne are rocking on the plans.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### Submitted by Walt Shugart—CO 1/67-4/67

The Virginia War Memorial—Following World War II, the Commonwealth of Virginia authorized the construction of a War Memorial honoring those Virginians who paid the full price for securing our freedom. By the time construction was begun, the nation was involved in Korea, and national involvement in conflict has continued to the present day. Currently 11,634 names are inscribed on the walls of the Memorial—9,398 from World War II, 850 from Korea, 1,379 from Vietnam, and seven from the gulf wars. Additionally, over 200 fallen from the global war on terror are memorialized inside the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center, which was constructed to an expanded War Memorial and dedicated in 2010. All those KIA who served in B Company are memorialized in a paving brick in a rose garden adjacent to the Galanti Education Center. Two names of B Company soldiers who gave their lives in Vietnam are inscribed on the



Memorial Wall—Fred Patterson from Appomattox and George Munday from Richmond. While an institution of the Commonwealth, the War Memorial is supported by private donations as well, for the conduct of educational programs directed at middle and high school students. A virtual visit to the Memorial can be made at <http://www.vawarmemorial.org/VAWM/default.aspx>.

### Submitted by Nick Carey of Thomson Reuters

I have interviewed a couple more Bravo Company veterans since we last communicated, men whose kindness and willingness to talk, like your own, I am incredibly grateful for. For them, as with you, I have or am in the process of preparing transcripts so you know that this process is transparent and above board. Although I have made great progress and am happy to have a slightly better picture of Bravo Company, the unit is still under-represented compared to the others that were at Fire Support Base Burt. I know that I ask a great deal, but if anyone else would be willing to talk, I would love to hear their story. I suspect that what I will need to do, however, is attend the reunion in Salt Lake City next year (if I am welcome, of course). The good news is that I recently interviewed the former lieutenant colonel who was 3rd brigade's executive officer at the time of Burt. He is probably the only American alive to say definitively why Burt was built and why the battle happened on January 1. His account flat out contradicts the official after action reports and the historians I have spoken to, but confirms the suspicions of the enlisted men on the ground. As this former colonel told me, sometimes the history books get it wrong. I do hope that more men come forward to talk to me. That said, I fully understand it if they don't want to. I am not sure I could if I were in their shoes. If anyone wishes to contact me, they can email me at [Nick.Carey@thomsonreuters.com](mailto:Nick.Carey@thomsonreuters.com) or call at 312 636-8837.

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submitted by George Baxter—CO—8/70-11/70

In looking at the memorial page in the last newsletter, I am aware of several members of the company in 1970 who have passed away since Vietnam and are not listed. I have checked the dates of birth and social security numbers from the company roster with the social security death index, so the information is accurate. They are: William D.Samson, Com. XO (2005), Douglas Watella, Com. RTO (1984), Dwight W. Jessup, Com. Senior Medic (2002), Herbert L. Pruitt (1997) and Larry P. Eason (1984). Also, the name of the Kit Carson Scout who died in the 10/02/70 helicopter crash is Bui V.T. This information comes from the accident report made by the aviation unit involved, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company. You can view this report by googling 'helicopter UH-1D 64-13526". For some reason, they chose just to use initials for his middle and given name (although the middle name is almost certainly Van). I hope this info is of some use to you in keeping up the memorial page. Thanks for the good work you're doing on the newsletter.



## Association Business

John Otte  
Treasurer/Locater  
bravo6xray@aol.com  
(310) 539-0886

### Financial Report Income and Expense

Sept. 1, 2013, Balance	\$7,464.10
<u>Income</u>	
Dues	\$2919.00
Dividend	
Total Income	\$2919.00
<u>Expenses</u>	
Newsletter	\$553.75
Webpage	75.15
Total Expenses	\$628.90
Nov. 30, 2013 Balance	\$9,754.20

### Treasurers Report

#### IT'S NOT TOO LATE

For those of you who have sent your voluntary dues, the Bravo Regulars Association would like to thank you for your support. We would also like to remind any of you who planned to contribute and haven't done so yet, there is still time.

Your response to our dues request is appreciated.

**“DEEDS NOT WORDS”**

*John*