

Bravo Regulars

B Company 3/22



Vietnam Service

December 2008

Happy Holidays!



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President's Message

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Since Christmas will be past by the time you read this, I hope that you had a Merry Christmas or Happy Hanukkah, as applicable, surrounded by all your family and others who love you. Although sometimes I think family members can get on your nerves, I believe that the holiday season is meant to be shared.



Bob Hemphill

And -- I wish you all a Happy New Year. I know happiness in the New Year depends to a large degree on one's economic situation. I hope that the current economic crisis -- involving reduced investment worth and unemployment -- is not adversely affecting you. If it is, hang in there. Things must get better. Hopefully, this crisis will bottom out and the economy will begin to improve by Spring or early Summer. Maybe it won't be such a bad year after all.

Our prayers go to Dennis Amily, with hopes that he is feeling better and is back on his feet before long. I know that Dee is taking good care of him. Please let him know you are thinking of him.

On a different note, I want to emphasize the importance of getting PSA tests at least annually at our age. If you have not yet had to deal with prostate cancer, stay vigilant. A PSA test every 6 months is not too often. I had to deal with it in 2006. If it wasn't for the PSA, I would never have caught it until it was too late. I had no enlargement nor would anyone paid attention to it without the elevated PSA. My urologist said that those in my state usually died, because if it isn't enlarged, nobody pays attention until it is too late. So please get those PSA tests. Also, if you have dealt with prostate cancer, be sure to make a VA claim, because it is considered to have been caused by Agent Orange and is presumptively recognized for service connection for those of us on the ground in Vietnam. That means that you can be compensated for it.

I recently made another trip to Vietnam. Dau Tieng is growing. The old Battalion Headquarters building is the only one I recognized from the war days. It is now the office of the Dau Tieng Rubber Corporation. The old above ground swimming pool still exists, but it is now full of holes and covered with vines. I ran into a Vietnamese woman who said that she lived there and worked in the base camp during the war. She stated that she remembered the Americans and was glad to see us return to visit. We had our picture taken together. I thought she said something about remembering John Otte, but maybe I misunderstood....If anyone is interested in going back to Vietnam, let me know. The natives are friendly, and the amenities are much better than in the old days. (Would you believe 5-star beach resorts??)

For those of you who remember my motorcycle at the reunion, there is one thing to consider in life: Chrome up, Rubber down.

Take care --Bob



Bob w/Old Friend of America



New Dau Tieng Bridge



3d Bn 22 Inf HQ Bldg



Enlisted Swimming Pool @ Dau Tieng



Road to Dau Tieng Rubber



Gondola Up Nui Ba Den



Gondala Down



Gondola & Slide Down Nui Ba Den



Dau Tieng Kids



Vietnamese Family Car



Ben Cui Rubber Worker



Cao Dai Temple Tay Ninh City

Chaplain's Message



Ted Rowley

Christmas 2008

It was a clear cold night here in Wisconsin. With an almost full moon, clear sky, and 25 degrees headed down to zero, I walked out to check on my girls. It was warmer in the coop, but only two eggs to show for a days work. If the girls are thinking like their food provider is, it would be of asparagus and strawberries in the warm spring and summer sun. Boy I can't wait. As I get older, I guess I'm a bit envious of you guys who live in a warmer climate.

I got a Christmas tree today, an 8' balsam. I love that Christmas smell in the house. I have a old Vietnam friend in Kansas who has planted hundreds, maybe thousands, of trees in Kansas in memory of all the guys lost in Vietnam, What a Christmas gift! Deeds not words! I wonder how many deeds like that one have been done which we have never heard about? Maybe there are not so many. My dad, now 94 years old, was in the CCC during the depression. He planted many trees in northern Wisconsin, he said there was no work to be had at that time. One thing about wood you get twice the heat from it than any other fuel. You get hot cutting it and you get heat when you burn it.

Christmas is all about a tree, Him and You and Me. He comes into our hearts and lives at this special time of year. Like the sunrise in the morning, best time to see that morning star in the east. He lights up our lives with friends and comrades, and especially children all around His tree. He truly is the tree of life.

The ornaments of the house of God are the people who frequent it. Now you don't want to be the angel on top of the tree, there is another story for that which I can't discuss at this time, but be a reflecting light, a ribbon of hope, a flower of faith, or a Christmas basket full of love. That's up to you. And do it with a smile. because Jesus in me loves you. Maple, Oak, Cedar or Pine, I'm not sure they were just comrades of mine. They are all God's Christmas ornaments, and what a beautiful tree they make. They are my comrades you see!

A Blessed Christmas,

Ted



Editor's Notes

Walt Shugart

With so much happening world wide, it's difficult to know where to start. I'll try to stick to good news. First, as previously noted, John Gority did a magnificent job with this year's reunion. John has sent me three items I wish to share with all of you. First, John expressed concern that Phil Maceno who had volunteered in 2006 to work as co-chair of the 2008 Reunion was overlooked. John credits Phil, his brothers, and son not only assisted with the planning, fundraising, preparing and serving the "Pig Roast", providing the flags and decorations as well as cleaning the facility before and after our arrival and departure. Attendees certainly do owe Phil and his family a debt of gratitude.

Second, John has submitted to the newsletter the final reckoning for this year's reunion with income including in-kind donations at approximately \$7,900 and expenses exceeding income by approximately \$500. Fortunately, our treasury was available to make up any shortfall John experienced. Those of us who have held reunions recognize the fiscal resources, time, effort, and additional help it takes to stage one successfully.

Finally, John sent a clipping from the *Altoona Mirror* describing why a contemporary member of his platoon had avoided reunions feeling that he was responsible for John's injury. Finally, some thirty years of bearing that guilt, he attended a reunion and became reconciled with John. Which emphasizes the point those of us who attend Bravo Regular Reunions experience the healing and warmth of fellowship shared among former comrades in arms.

Speaking of reunions, Larry and Lis Young have begun the work on our next reunion in the Ozarks in 2010. Mark the tentative dates July 7-11, on your calendar now and plan to attend. Details will emerge with each succeeding issue of the newsletter, so stay abreast. In order to keep mailing costs down, please let John Otte, our Treasurer/Locator know if you are content to forego the hard copy by mail and to use the full color edition found on line at It will save publication costs and postage from the treasury.

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War Stories

Walt Shugart

Despite the horror of war, most veterans will admit that between moments of stark terror, there are periods when things happen which are, if not funny, peculiar to say the least. It is my hope that you will submit for publication such anecdotes for publication. Here's a couple. While I was CO, Patrick Toyama was the company. RTO. Whenever halted, Patrick always stopped in the shade leaving me in the sun. I appreciated his doing his job, but his technique for movement always left me in a hot spot.

John Otte

In mid 1967, the Company was lifted to an LZ near the Cambodian border. The LZ was really cold since it was in two feet of water. We moved to our objective, a spot exactly like the one we left. We walked for an hour or so, when I heard the unmistakable sound of an M79 grenade launcher going off, but never heard an explosion. We got a message that the dog handler had been shot with a grenade launcher. When LT Lambert and I reached the area, the dog handler was being pulled out of a small river. PFC George Duplessis from Louisiana had fired his M79 accidentally hitting the dog handler. Fortunately, the projectile had not traveled the distance to arm. That was good, but its speed could have caused death or serious injury which was bad. As luck would have it, the round hit the victim's ammo pouch on his web gear saving his becoming a casualty, but it left a hell of a bruise.

I made contact with the Dog Handler, Robert Bruce Vaughn. He remembered that Duplessis was nicknamed called Duffis. He also remembered LT Lambert's large handlebar mustache. George was a great guy who tagged everyone in 2nd platoon with a nickname.