

Bravo Regulars



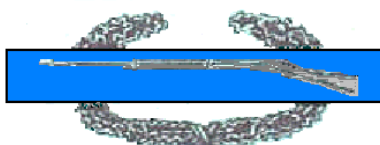
B Company 3/22



Vietnam Service

www.bravoregulars.com

March 2016



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President's Message

Ted Silberies
President
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Greetings Bravo Brothers,

These past two years since our last get-together have flown by quickly and it's been an honor to serve as your President. I'm truly looking forward to seeing everyone at our reunion in Naples, Florida next month, so make sure you've sent in your reservation. Also, have plans for a place to sleep and bring along your family if you can. We'll be telling tales of our times in-country and of our times since then. We might also play some cards and dominoes, do a little site-seeing and will enjoy the festivities our host has planned. In the end, a good time can be had by all.

While we're on this subject, I'd like to encourage each of you not only to attend, but to also seriously consider volunteering to host our 2018 reunion in your own hometown. Past hosts are available for advice if you need them. Do you have your own idea as to how a reunion should be carried out? Sounds like you should volunteer to host our next one.

I've heard we're in need of raffle donations. If you or a business in your area would like to contribute something, please bring the item(s) with you. This (along with the 50/50 and quilt raffle) has always been a popular fundraiser.

Do you have a phone number, address or email change or addition that we need to have on file? Sometimes Area Codes and Zip Codes change (that's been happening here in California). Help us keep your information current. Look at your current Bravo roster and if there is any new information, or if you know of a correction for someone else, please contact our Secretary, Dave Lowell.

I'll see you in Florida!

Ted

Cavalry
Painting by
Norm Bergsma





Vice President's Column

John Gority
Vice President
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I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We're hoping that Punxsutawney Phil, the weather predicting groundhog in our region of Pennsylvania, is right and Spring is upon us.

Donna and I are so looking forward to our Bravo Reunion 2016 in Naples, Florida. I hope everyone will get their registrations in so Richard Ward and Doreen Clark, Event Coordinator, can determine how many members and guests will be attending the planned activities.

On a sad note, I found out that Allen Haskins passed away on June 4, 2015. He served in 1967 with the third platoon. Allen and I were trying to save Sgt. James Watanabe when he was killed by friendly fire on 9/26/67. This was one of the most tragic, heart-wrenching events during my service in Vietnam.

Hope to see many of you in Naples in April.

John



John Otte
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Association Business

Financial Report Income and Expenses

Dec. 1, 2015 Balance **\$12,005.75**

Income

Member Dues **285.00**

Expenses

Newsletter **592.21**

Bank Fees **15.00**

Feb. 29, 2016 Balance **\$11,683.54**



Editor's Notes

David W. Lowell
Editor
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Welcome back Bravo Brothers,

I hope this finds all of you well, or at least hanging in there with me. To begin, I would like to make two corrections to past articles.

In our September, 2015 issue, I ran an article about the guards on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. John Kapor (3rd Platoon—Basic Only) sent in another version with additional as well as conflicting information. I'm printing only the information that is new or corrected. Thank you, John, for your input. Details are on the Bulletin Board.

In our December, 2015 issue, I ran an article regarding statistics for Vietnam veterans. I received corrected information from R. J. Del Vecchio and have posted it on our Bulletin Board, along with some information about him. He also provided me with a copy of his booklet, which I'll quote from in the future as space allows. Thank you Del for your input.

I recently corresponded with Nick Carey, Correspondent—Thomson Reuters. He said he is planning to attend our 2016 reunion in Naples, to give all our vets another chance to be interviewed for the book project. Becoming involved has been a very worthwhile experience for me and I hope all of you give it a try.

Thank you, Walt Shugart (C.O.—1/67-4/67) for submitting a newspaper article about a mini-reunion involving some of our members. I apologize for the small print, but it was too good to cut. It can be viewed full size online at www.thebreesejournal.com/talk-of-the-town/4534-clinton-county-band-of-brothers.

Thank you, John Kapor (3rd Platoon—Basic Only) for providing information on two extensive internet data bases involving the Vietnam War. By simply following links, there is more information there than you can read in a lifetime. They can be accessed at www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html and www.vietnamwar.net/.

Thank you, Lane Sterling (Co. RTO/2nd Platoon—4/68-6/69) for submitting an interesting article from the Stars and Stripes about the economic penalty Vietnam vets paid for our service. The article is too long to print but can be viewed at www.stripes.com/study-the-economic-penalty-vietnam-veterans-and-their-kids-pay-1388852.

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Our next issue will be out in June. We will be accepting input through the end of May. 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 John Kapor (3rd Platoon—Basic Only)

How long does the Sentinel hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time, and if not, why not? He does not execute an about face. He stops on the 21st step, then turns and faces the Tomb for 21 seconds. Then he turns to face back down the mat, changes his weapon to the outside shoulder, counts 21 seconds, then steps off for another 21 step walk down the mat. He faces the Tomb at each end of the 21 step walk for 21 seconds. The Sentinel then repeats this over and over until he is relieved at the Guard Change. How often are the guards changed? The Guard is changed every thirty minutes during the summer (April 1 to Sept 30) and every hour during the winter (Oct 1 to Mar 31). During the hours the cemetery is closed, the guard is changed every 2 hours. The Tomb is guarded, and has been guarded, every minute of every day since 1937. Is it true they must commit 2 years of life to guard the Tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. No, this is a false rumor. The average tour at the Tomb is about a year. There is NO set time for service there. The Sentinels live either in a barracks on Ft. Myer (the Army post located adjacent to the cemetery) or off base if they like. They do have living quarters under the steps of the amphitheater where they stay during their 24 hour shifts, but when they are off, they are off. And if they are of legal age, they may drink anything they like, except while on duty. Is it true they cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives? Again, another false rumor. Is it true after two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as Guard of the Tomb, that there are only 400 presently worn, and that the Guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin? The Tomb Guard Identification Badge is awarded after the Sentinel passes a series of tests. The Badge is permanently awarded after a Sentinel has served 9 months as a Sentinel at the Tomb. Over 500 have been awarded since its creation in the late 1950's. And while the Badge can be revoked, the offense must be such that it discredits the Tomb. Revocation is at the Regimental Commander's discretion. But you can drink a beer and even swear and still keep the Badge. The Badge is a full size award, worn on the right pocket of the uniform jacket, not a lapel pin. Are the shoes specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet? The shoes are standard issue military dress shoes. They are built up so the sole and heel are equal in height. This allows the Sentinel to stand so that his back is straight and perpendicular to the ground. A side effect of this is that the Sentinel can "roll" on the outside of the build up as he walks down the mat. This allows him to move in a fluid fashion. If he does this correctly, his hat and bayonet will appear to not "bob" up and down with each step. It gives him a more formal and smooth look to his walk, rather than a "marching" appearance. The soles have a steel tip on the toe and a "horseshoe" steel plate on the heel. This prevents wear on the sole and allows the Sentinel to move smoothly during his movements when he turns to face the Tomb and then back down the mat. Then there is the "clicker". It is a shank of steel attached to the inside of the face of the heel build-up on each shoe. It allows the Sentinel to click his heels during certain movements. If a guard change is really hot, it is called a "smoker" because all the heel clicks fall together and sound like one click. In fact, the guard change is occasionally done in the "silent" mode (as a sign of devotion to the Unknowns). No voice commands—everything is done in relation to the heel clicks and on specific counts. How many times will a Soldier be on duty during the shift? Each Relief (team) has a rotation during the 24 hour work day. This rotation is dependent on the number of Soldier-Sentinels who are proficient enough to guard the Tomb. The standard is 3-4 qualified Sentinels, 1-2 Relief Commander/Assistant Relief Commander, and 1-2 Sentinels in training. Generally, the Sentinel will be on guard duty for an hour and have two tours off in between—then go out for another tour. However, in extreme cases, Sentinels have been known to go back-to-back for the entire 24 hour shift.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submitted by Bill Cooper (2nd Platoon Leader—1968)

My guests at the Naples' reunion will be the daughter, and her husband, of Gerald "Jerry" DePhilip, who joined Bravo in April '68 right after the Battle of Good Friday. Jerry passed away from AO lung cancer last year. I was Jerry's platoon leader when we got napalmed on May 18. Jerry's daughter, Danielle, is coming Saturday night in the hopes of meeting anyone who remembers her Dad. She would like to talk with any vets who remember Jerry, and to view any photos they might have.

Submitted by R. J. Del Vecchio (1stMarDiv, 1968) - Secretary, Vietnam Veterans for Factual History—www.vvfh.org—techconsultserv@juno.com

I happened to look up the Bravoregulars website on the recommendation of another vet (I was Marine in '68) and noted among the stuff published the following: **Of the 2,709,918 Americans who served in Vietnam, less than 850,000 are estimated to be alive today.** This is a comple BS statistic from a phony report put out by a phony vet in California. If it were true, it would mean that 2/3 of the men in your unit would all be dead now, and I'm sure you know that is not the case. Finally two years ago, it was the cover article on the VVA bulletin being revealed as nonsense. Currently something near 75% of Vietnam vets are still alive and kicking, although as the years mount up, the rate of loss from the group is naturally climbing. I thought you and your readers would like to be reassured that we are not all dying off at some huge rate every day.

I have been doing presentations at colleges and high schools about the war for almost 20 years now, and have been fortunate to have gotten to know a great number of vets, historians, former POWs, South Vietnamese survivors and others. Ten years ago, I helped start a charity for the crippled old ARVN vets who have been living under major discrimination and deliberately kept in dire poverty, as a "lesson" to everyone else in Vietnam that the Party is all powerful and any who ever oppose it will suffer, with their families, all their lives (see www.theyhf.org). I've been back four times to do the charity work, but cannot return any more because on my last trip I was "busted" by a very senior police official in Hue for the crime of giving money to people he doesn't like. As a help to high school and college teachers, I and another vet wrote a booklet to educate people about the war. It is Whitewash/Blackwash: Myths of the Viet Nam War. If you'd like to see a copy, let me know. I looked over your website from start to finish and find it really nicely done. I see a number of vet websites and yours is definitely one of the good ones.



Riders (left)
The Tree Line (right)
Paintings by
Norm Bergsma



BULLETIN BOARD

Submitted by Walt Shugart (C.O.—1/67-4/67) - Article from The Breese Journal

Fifty years ago, on Dec. 27, 1965, 36 young U.S. Army inductees from Clinton County—many of them still teenagers—boarded a train in Carlyle taking them to St. Louis and on to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Within nine months, many of them were on the front lines in Vietnam. Two of them lost their lives in the war, six others have passed away since their Army service and 20 gathered at the same train depot early Sunday morning to reunite and reminisce. Joining them Sunday morning was Nick Carey, a journalist from Chicago, who is writing a book about 14 of the men who served together in Vietnam and fought in the Battle of Suoi Tre, one of the most furious battles of the Vietnam War. It was a rainy morning after a busy Christmas holiday, but Carl Lammers set his alarm for 5:45 a.m. this past Sunday, Dec. 27. That's the exact time 50 years ago that he and 35 other young men from Clinton County were instructed to be at the train depot in Carlyle for their journey west to begin basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. It was 1965—a time when the United States was rapidly increasing its military forces in South Vietnam. Two of the 36 men, Norman Toennies of Damiansville and Marlin Eversgerd of Germantown, lost their lives in Vietnam and would never return to Clinton County. Six of the men have since passed away from various causes. Twenty of the remaining 28 observed the 50th anniversary of their induction into the Army by meeting at 7 a.m. Sunday morning at the same train depot in Carlyle. Lammers addressed the group while they talked later over breakfast at Old 50 Café in Carlyle. "Today is a day to reminisce about what happened 50 years ago," he said. While the memories of that fateful day are still vivid, so much has changed. "I stepped on a scale this morning and I weigh exactly 100 pounds more than I did that day," Lammers said. "I combed my hair, and it's a lot thinner. I had to put my hearing aids in and put my glasses on, so everything takes a little longer." Lammers, originally of Beaver Prairie, said 50 years ago his parents were running late and had to drive like crazy to get to the depot on time. Mike Nettekmeier of Breese, on the other hand, got dropped off early. "Mom and dad had to get back to the milking," he said. Much like this past Sunday morning, Dec. 27, 1965 was a dreary morning with drizzling rain. Following basic training, the men went in different directions for their advanced individual training. While many ended up in Vietnam, some also went on to support operations in France, Germany and South Korea. By New Year's Day 1966, 14 of the men were headed to Fort Lewis, Washington to train with Bravo Company's 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. They arrived in Vietnam in late September 1966. Their story will be a major part of a book on the Vietnam War being written by journalist Nick Carey of Chicago who joined them Sunday morning in Carlyle. "The book focuses on the experience of some 200 veterans, but central to my cast of characters is a group of men from Clinton County who were all drafted at the same time and all got on a train in Carlyle together on Dec. 27, 1965," Carey said. A native of Scotland, Carey has spent extensive time as a war reporter in places like Iraq and Libya through his job as a correspondent with Reuters news agency. "I was born after the Vietnam War ended," he said. "But my interest is born out of my own experiences." Carey had been talking with a Vietnam veteran about a particular battle when the idea for the book first surfaced. "I wanted to do a story about it, but I thought 'that's not a story, that's a book.'" His research on the Vietnam War began in January 2013, but it was during a 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry reunion in May 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah, that Carey first came in contact with the veterans from Clinton County. They reconnected at another reunion in March 2015 in Colorado Springs. "The book is going to start with this group of guys getting on the train in Carlyle," Carey said. "It will follow these kids to Vietnam and back home again." An epilogue is planned to explain how they dealt with life after the war. "Once this book got ahold of me, I was fascinated," Carey said. "I've attempted to write a book before but this is the first time that I found something that captured by attention. It's not a case of me finding the right subject matter, but it's the right subject matter finding me." In addition to the reunions, Carey has traveled across the globe doing research for the book—from one-on-one interviews at the homes of several of the 14 veterans from Clinton County to a recent week in Vietnam meeting with the Viet Cong veterans. During last Sunday morning's breakfast, Carey told the group of local veterans how thankful he was for them opening up their homes and welcoming him into their lives. "I'm very lucky to have found a group of veterans who were drafted together, trained together and served together in Vietnam," Carey said. "Most of the time the soldiers were scattered to the four winds and they went wherever a replacement was needed. I'm very grateful to find this group. It's a Clinton County band of brothers you might say." The men found out all too soon that serving side-by-side with your neighbors and longtime friends could be a "blessing and a curse." Just three months after arriving in Vietnam, on Dec. 21, 1966 while on an ambush mission patrol, Spec. Norman Toennies of Damiansville drowned in an accident in the Saigon River. Dennis Rolfingsmeier of Breese, who served as the Catholic chaplain's assistant, said he had talked with Toennies the night before. Paul Heimann, who was Toennies' next door neighbor growing up in Damiansville and was on R&R at the time of the accident, would later take over Toennies' job as a radio operator. Spec. Marlin Eversgerd of Germantown was killed in action on March 19, 1967, during a helicopter landing at Landing Zone (LZ) Gold (also known as Suoi Tre) when enemy soldiers detonated landmines under helicopters ferrying in men from Bravo Company's 3rd/22nd. (A year later, on August 18, 1968, the war also claimed the life of Marlin's brother, Norman.) There was no time for mourning. On the morning of March 21, 1967, two U.S. infantry companies encircled a U.S. Artillery battalion at Suoi Tre. The 12 Clinton County soldiers were among the group of defenders who stood against an attacking enemy force five times their strength, over 2,500 men of the 272nd Viet Cong Main Force Regiment. The 272nd VC was one of the best organized and equipped enemy units, and their mission that day was the total destruction of the American units. For three hours, the Americans, who were forced back to secondary positions, withstood the attack. Support from the Air Force, Army attack helicopters and other artillery units slowed the VC onslaught until the defenders—with 16 cannons destroyed and literally a handful of small arms ammunition remaining—were relieved. Over 800 VC bodies were recovered and buried on the battlefield. The American units were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Mike Detmer and Don Schulte shared a foxhole in that battle. "Don was the machine gunner and I was his assistant," Detmer said. Carey said the Battle of Suoi Tre was the greatest single day victory for U.S. forces in Vietnam though it's barely recognized in literature about the war. "It's an amazing story," Carey said. "Bravo Company took the brunt of the attack at Suoi Tre. These guys are lucky to be alive." Since connecting with the Clinton County veterans, Carey has had the opportunity to meet with nearly all of them. He's also talked with members of the Toennies and Eversgerd families. "A lot of times, all you have are the letters written home by a soldier, but in Norman's case, all of his belongings were packed up and sent home. His family had all the letters that were sent to him as well." Carey was also able to listen to an audiotape which Toennies recorded just seven days before he died. "You can tell Norman was a bit of a jokester, he jokes around on the tape and says he won't be home this year for Christmas but this is the last time he'll miss a Christmas." The family received the tape shortly after Norman's body came home. As Carey talked with the veterans at Old 50 Café in Carlyle on Sunday, he jotted down notes and took phone numbers. While the research continues, he's hoping to finish the book within the next two years, depending on the demands of his regular job. Carey said some of the local veterans have rarely talked about their experiences in Vietnam, and some have simply chosen to forget. For others, he said, having someone to listen is the only thing they need. "Some guys really don't want to talk and with some guys, once they start talking, they can't stop," he said. "One veteran said, 'I wish someone would have asked me these questions 45 years ago.'"



Reunion Update

Richard 'Crazy' Ward
2016 Reunion Host
Dorene Clark
Event Coordinator
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We were able to negotiate a rate at the Best Western for just \$89.99/night. They have just undergone a complete renovation, so everything is new and appears to be quite lovely. Also, they have 250 rooms, so they can definitely accommodate all of you at one place. If you are interested in staying there, you can call them at 239-643-6655.

We received word from the Hilton Naples that, as of today, they have no reservations for the room block for Bravo Regulars. Rooms must be booked by Monday, March 7, 2016. You can call 1-800-HILTONS and request the Bravo Regulars group rate. After March 7, they release the block in hopes of reselling the rooms.

Those traveling by RV can make reservations as indicated below:

Crystal Lake RV Resort

Off-lake site	\$50.00/day	\$275.00/week
Lakeside site	\$60.00/day	\$300.00/week

This includes electric, water, sewer and cable. In addition, you must add 10% for tax, 2% administration fee and \$10 for a bar-code for the entry gate. They should have no trouble accommodating renters for the timeframe as it is the beginning of our off-season. Make reservations by calling Ellen Fisher & Kathy Ferguson, Crystal Lake RV Resort & Rental, 14960 Collier Blvd., Naples, FL 34119—239-348-0017, ext. #2.

Please let us know by email at bravoreunion2016@gmail.com if you are interested in attending the tour of Naples Bay aboard the Naples Princess. They require a final headcount no later than two weeks prior to the event. We are getting ready to place our order for shirts, so you need to get your sizes to us ASAP, otherwise I cannot guarantee I will have enough.

Unfortunately, we lost the Everglades air boat tour as the owner/captain had a stroke and can no longer accommodate us.

We will have information on area attractions and discounts available for you at your hotel.

We look forward to seeing you in April.

Richard and Dorene

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, April 6		Event	Details
All Day		Check In	Register at Entrance
9-11am		Continental Breakfast	Assorted danish, bagels, coffee
12 noon-2pm		Buffet Lunch	Catered lunch served at NAIC
3-5pm		Happy Hour	Complimentary beer & soda, cash bar
4:00pm		Welcome Speech	Your host, Richard Ward welcomes you to Naples
6-8pm		Buffet Dinner	Classic Italian dinner buffet, salad & dinner rolls
7-9pm		Easy listening music	Socialize with music & cash bar
Thursday, April 7		Event	Details
9-12		Check In	Register at Entrance
9-11am		Continental Breakfast	Assorted danish, bagels, coffee
11am		Travel to Main Excursion	Transportation provided - depart Naples Italian American Club
11:30-2		Naples Princess	Buffet lunch provided, cash bar
12 noon-2pm		Buffet Lunch	Catered lunch served at NAIC
3-5pm		Happy Hour	complimentary beer & soda, cash bar
6-8pm		Buffet Dinner	BBQ dinner buffet, salad & dinner rolls
7-9pm		Easy listening music	Socialize with music & cash bar
Friday, April 8		Event	Details
9-11am		Continental Breakfast	Assorted danish, bagels, coffee
12 noon - 2:30pm		Free Time	Enjoy Free Time & See Naples
12 noon-2pm		Buffet Lunch	Catered lunch served at NAIC
1:30-2pm		Guest Speaker Bob Chapin	Welcome Bob Chapin, author of the Vietnam Wall poem
3-5pm		Happy Hour	complimentary beer & soda, cash bar
6-8pm		Buffet Dinner	Latin dinner buffet, salad & dinner rolls
7-9pm		Entertainment Provided	Music, Dancing & Socialize with cash bar
Saturday, April 9		Event	Details
9-11am		Continental Breakfast	Assorted danish, bagels, coffee
10-12pm		Free Time	Enjoy Free Time & area beaches, etc.
12 noon-2pm		Buffet Lunch	Assorted cocktail croissant lite lunch catered
2-3pm		Memorial Service	Chaplain Presides
3pm		Group Photo	Bravo Regulars annual photo
3:30pm		Board Meeting	Election of new president, official business
3-5pm		Happy Hour with Raffle	complimentary beer & soda, cash bar
6-8pm		Sit Down Dinner	3 course dinner served table side
7-9pm		Entertainment Provided	Music, Dancing & Socialize with cash bar
Sunday, April 10			
Travel Day			

