

# SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



Spring 2014 Newsletter



HCOR Mullen presenting Mrs. Prillaman with a black scarf from the Ramrods.

## WJ MULLEN, BG USA, RETIRED HONORARY COLONEL, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT

The purpose of Memorial Day is for Americans to commemorate countrymen and countrywomen who died in service of the Nation. Unfortunately, the Day has become more of a celebration of the beginning of summer, the end of a long weekend, and an opportunity to take advantage of sales. At best, the purpose of Memorial Day seems to have morphed from its purpose into a combination of enjoying a summer holiday along with paying their respects to all veterans, alive and dead. .... On Memorial Day, some Americans and Armed Forces veterans honor America's war dead in a general way ... but, every day, combat veterans remember their fallen comrades.

There have been significant events since the Association's last Newsletter:

- ◆ On March 18, the President awarded the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Candalario "Cid" Garcia, Jr, for his actions near Lai Khe, RVN, on 8 December, 1968. Sergeant Garcia distinguished himself during a B Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry Regiment reconnaissance in force. He attacked and destroyed two machine gun positions in an attempt to aid casualties who were in the open and under fire. He later rejoined B Company for an assault on the remaining VC positions. Sergeant Garcia died 10 January, 2013. He is the Regiment's third recipient of the Medal of Honor; the other two are First Sergeant Daniel W. Burke, B Company, 2d Infantry Regiment, Civil War; and, Staff Sergeant James Bondsteel, A Company, 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry Regiment, RVN.
- ◆ 2 – 2 Infantry distinguished itself during its deployment to and operations in Afghanistan. It returned to Fort Knox, Kentucky, with every Soldier. The Battalion's mission accomplishment was recognized by award of the Meritorious Unit Commendation on 5 May 2014 (DA Permanent Orders 125 – 10). 2 – 2 INF was commended for exceptionally meritorious service during the period 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2014 during operations in Zabul Province. The Soldiers showed unwavering commitment in the face of constant enemy danger while conducting Security Force Assistance Advisory Team operations and training elements of the Afghan National Security Force in defense of their country.
- ◆ 2 – 2 Infantry was inactivated in a first-rate ceremony on 21 May, 2014, at Fort Knox as part of the inactivation of The 1st Infantry Division's 3d Brigade. LTC Eric Lopez; CSM John Morales; and the current Ramrodders went out of their ways to include former Ramrod soldiers in three events commemorating the Regiment and the inactivation. Following the Inactivation Ceremony, we Second Infantry veterans of Viet Nam, Iraq, and Afghanistan veterans



CSM Tagalicud, "FO" Douglass, HCOR Mullen, LTC Lopez

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with soldiers currently serving with the battalion were honored at a Ramrod lunch, a ceremony focused on the Regiment and the 2-2 INF's current history, and a no-host social gathering. The day reinforced the ties between members of the Regiment – no matter when or where they served.

- ◆ Veterans' reunions are remarkable. They provide an opportunity to renew friendships and to interact with others who are part of the brotherhood of war, who understand what it means to be a veteran. We 2d Infantry Regiment veterans are fortunate to have two annual reunions:
  - ◇ Pigeon Forge, TN. The just conducted gathering was a great success. Veterans present represented 72 years of the history of our Regiment - from the Regiment's deployment to Iceland at the beginning of World War II followed by the campaigns from France to Czechoslovakia; Viet Nam; and Afghanistan. The arrangements made by Team Tamés were superb and resulted in an event enjoyed by everyone there. We are all looking forward to returning to Pigeon Forge for next year's Reunion which will be organized by Team Mundahl.
  - ◇ The Second Infantry Regimental Association reunion which is conducted during the Society of the First Infantry Division's annual reunion. This year it will be held in Orange County, CA.

2 – 2 INF has written the latest chapter in our Regiment's long history. This most recent chapter is one of impressive accomplishments first, in forming and training the battalion at Fort Knox; then, meeting all the challenges thrown at them at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, LA; followed by brilliantly accomplishing a difficult mission in Afghanistan; and finally, inactivating. LTC Lopez, CSM Morales, and all soldiers leave with our appreciation for their service, as well as, congratulations on a job done well and our best wishes for success in whatever lies ahead of each of them. I hope that some day, some of them will join with other Ramrodders at our reunions.

Inactivation and the casing of a unit's colors are not unusual. This is the second time I have watched the inactivation of the Big Red One's 3d Brigade. The ceremony on 21 May was the fourth time I can remember a battalion of the Regiment coming off the Army's troop list. .... The just written chapter of skill, discipline, confidence, and dedication to excellence is the basis of the Regiment's current reputation and, insures that the next Ramrod battalion to activate will begin its chapter from a high place.

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

BY RICH MALING, CHAPLAIN, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



Revelation 22:1-5

### *The River of Life*

*The River of Life Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*

*through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.*

*They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

*And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*



## BOB "FO" DOUGLASS

PRESIDENT, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

My Fellow Ramrods and Associate Members:

First of all I hope that everyone enjoyed their Memorial Day of remembrance. Mine was very good, we always have a special service at the Veterans Memorial here in my County.

Well the last two weeks have been very busy for the Regiment. First we had the annual reunion at Pigeon Forge and then the Casing ceremony at Fort Knox.

The Annual Reunion was a great success, a very special and heartfelt thanks goes out to Israel Tames and his entire family they did a great job once again. In attendance was 3 WWII Veterans, Vietnam Veterans as well as some of today's active troops.

And just this past week they cased the colors of 2-2 at Fort Knox. It was a very nice but sad ceremony. They uncased them back in 2007, and since then they have done 3 tours down range all in Afghanistan. And have taken care of the business. They have truly carried on the tradition of excellence and kicking ass that the 2nd Infantry has always done.

Since 2007 I have had the pleasure of meeting the greatest soldiers that our Army has ever seen. They have had some of the best leaders that anyone could ask for. Officers such as Col. Steven Miska who commanded 1-2 in Germany and down range. Col. Daniel Hurlbut, Col Alan Streeter and LTC Eric Lopez all who commanded 2-2 stateside and down range, CSM Salinas, CSM Walter Tagalicud and CSM John Morales. Besides this great leadership I have met so many great officers, NCO's and soldiers. Believe me folks they are the best of the best.

There is a possibility that they will again be reactivated at Fort Polk, Louisiana, under the 4th Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division. But presently there is no positive orders. We will just have to wait and see.

As many of us already know we will be losing our fantastic Secretary Kathy Grzywinski. She is having medical issues and needs to take care of herself. Me being the selfish type does not want her to leave but her health needs to be priority. I know everyone else feels like me, we love her and will miss the fantastic job that she has done for the Association. She will still be around with us for many years.

This year in California we will have our election of officers for the years of 2014-2016.

I have now served as your President for the last 6 years. They were six very busy and trying years. Especially with the soldiers that were wounded or KIA.

We have the best members that anyone could ask for. Not one time when ask to go to a funeral or to visit a injured soldier in the hospital did anyone say no. They were always there.

After some very serious thinking I have decided that I will not be seeking re-election. It has been a great honor serving as your President. This is the best Regiment in the entire Army past, present and forever.

So as I close just remember to always keep your head down and your powder dry.





### Note from LTC Eric Lopez

When General Odierno assumed the mantle of leading the Army as the 38<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff he introduced the following:

*The Strength of our Nation is our Army.*

*The Strength of our Army is our Soldiers.*

*The Strength of our Soldiers is our Families.*

*This is what makes us Army Strong.*

General Odierno highlights three relationships. America needs her Army and the Army needs America. The Army is built on Soldiers and Soldiers succeed in the Army. Finally, Soldiers are as strong as their familial bonds and Families depend on the Soldiers who serve. The Ramrod Ball celebrates each of these relationships and, in my perspective, exemplifies General Odierno's words.

The battalion's relationship with the community is phenomenal. Whether it was a radio interview with Bobby Jack on WLKX Big Cat 105.5 or Jess and Diaz on WQNU 103.1, an editorial in the Louisville Courier-Journal or the Fort Knox Gold Standard, an event with the University of Louisville, or Jamie Tate agreeing to sing for us, we shared our story with America and America responded with overwhelming support. Thank you America.

The relationship between Ramrod Soldiers and the Army is the foundation of the greatest Army in history, and the fuel that powers our successes. Each day of my command I humbly watched the Ramrods achieve the impossible. The unrelenting drive provided me with a new cause to embrace the warrior ethos and renew my pledge to defend America. The Army excels because of Soldiers like those in the Ramrod Battalion, Soldiers in the Ramrod battalion exemplify the professionalism, tenacity, and teamwork that is our Army's standard. Thank you Ramrods.

The final and most important relationship is the bond between Soldier and Family. Families give us the strength we need to sacrifice and endure hardship for our Nation. Families overcome great difficulties so that we can project military force on behalf of the U.S.A. Without our Families, the professional Army that answers to the Nation's calls would not be possible. Thank you Families.

Tonight we celebrate the bonds General Odierno describes each time he speaks. Tonight we honor our fallen comrades, recognize our achievements, and applaud the sacrifices of our Families. I am grateful to be an American. I am humbled to have an opportunity to lead in America's Army. I appreciate the bond I have with America's finest sons and daughters. Yet I recognize, my life, my profession, and my comrades all hinge on the support and love I receive from my family. We all are tied together in the greatest society on earth and the community bonds we have will never fade as long as we remember the importance of each.

**Army Strong! Ramrods! Duke! Duty First!**



### RAMROD BALL

By MAJ TIMOTHY P. MEADORS, US ARMY MDW, 2-2 INFANTRY BATTALION

On March 13, 2014 Ramrods of old joined with today's Ramrods to celebrate their recent return from a successful deployment to Afghanistan. The event was attended by about 650 current members of the battalion, their friends and families, and members of the Second Regimental Association such as Rich Maling and Don "Top" Olmstead. The ball celebrated the battalion's achievements during their 9-month deployment, honored the lives of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country, and commemorated the unit's return to Fort Knox. The event was particularly touching because of the decision to case the battalion's colors.

Rich Maling provided the key note address and offered excellent advice to both soldiers and their loved ones. His perspective was a fitting tribute to the sacrifices and service of those who have served, are serving, and will serve in the future. Additionally, Jamie Tate, a nationally known country music recording artist, sang her tribute, I'll Give My All, during the evening. As expected, the Grogg Bowl, with contributions from each of the military campaigns included in the battalion's history, enhanced the festive evening. From the battalion's inception to the current era of the Global War on Terrorism, soldiers dressed in uniforms representing each era added choice ingredients.

The current battalion commander, LTC Eric Lopez, presided over the evening and expressed his appreciation and admiration for both the lineage of the unit and the privilege of serving with today's Ramrods. Those who attended now have a lifetime memory of the camaraderie, achievements, and pride that has characterized the battalion from its birth.



# 2ND INFANTRY REGIMENT VETERANS REUNION 2014 PIGEON FORGE, TENN.



A special "Thank You" to ISRAEL and RAMONA TAMÉS along with your entire family for all you have done to make this reunion a huge success! ♥



## FINANCE REPORT

BY DOUG TABB, TREASURER, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Association member dues and General Gallagher’s major contribution during the period increased the treasury significantly. This contribution will allow the association to support its activities for years to come based on past income and expense allowances. We all at Second Infantry Regiment Association wish to thank General Gallagher for his support in remembering us in his will. We still encourage members to pay annual dues and encourage new members to join our veterans organization.

The activities since our last report were as follows:



Doug Tabb, Quan Loi, 1967

### SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION FINANCE REPORT - APRIL, 2014

Balance	10/30/2013		\$ 11,283.90
Members Contributions (Dues & Donations)		360.00	\$ 360.00
	General Gallagher Trust Fund	47,000.00	\$ 47,000.00
Expenses For Period	Bank Fees	(75.00)	(\$ 75.00)
	Officers Reunion	(250.00)	(\$ 250.00)
	Pigeon Forge Reunion	(750.00)	(\$ 750.00)
	<b>Bank Balance</b>	<b>4/30/2014</b>	
	Wounded Warrior Fund	-	\$ 2,696.00
	Second Infantry Fund	-	\$ 54,872.90



#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

General Membership:  
\$10. per year -or- \$100. Lifetime Membership

Active Duty Soldier:  
\$ 5. per year -or- \$25. Lifetime Membership

Please make checks payable to:  
“2ND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION”

Mail to: DOUGLAS TABB, Treasurer  
1700 Hobbits Glen Dr.  
Germantown, TN 38138

Email: [DTabb3926@gmail.com](mailto:DTabb3926@gmail.com)

Forms:  
[http://www.secinfreg.org/admin/2nd\\_Inf\\_Member\\_form.pdf](http://www.secinfreg.org/admin/2nd_Inf_Member_form.pdf)

# RAMROD COLORS CASING CEREMONY

## 21 MAY 2014



## SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT TRIVIA

BY LARRY GRZYWINSKI, HISTORIAN, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

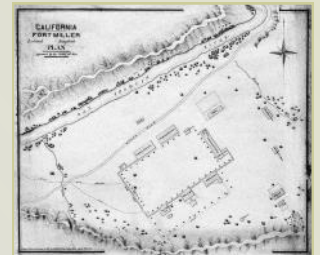
### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment in California

In September 1848 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment was ordered to California to aid in quelling the conflicts between the Indians and settlers. The regiment sailed from New York harbor in November 1848 and arrived in San Francisco Bay, California between April and July 1849. The regiment sailed on three transports traveling around the Horn of South America stopping at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Santiago, Chile. The regiment became part of the Pacific Command with Brevet General Bennet Riley in command. Between 1849 and 1853 in regiment occupied stations and patrolled from Goose Lake, Oregon on the north to Yuma in the south and between the Pacific coast and the eastern sloped of the Sierra's.

In May 1850 after the killing of two miners and an Army captain by Pomo Indians, 1<sup>st</sup> LT (Bvt Capt.) Nathaniel Lyon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, led an expedition to Clear Lake California where the Indians have taken refuge on an island. The expedition consists of Companies E, 1<sup>st</sup> LT Nelson Davis commanding, and Company G, LT Lyon commanding, with 4 soldiers from Company A attached, also Company C of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, LT John Wynn Davison in command and a detachment of Company M, 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery. Crossing by boat Lyons troops, supported by local volunteers, drive the Indians into the Tule studded swamps. In Lyon's report, he said 60 to perhaps twice that number were killed. Many drowned fleeing, so they could not get a good count. They then march to the Russian River and proceed down stream where more Indians are encountered. They surround them and more Indians are killed. One soldier is wound by the Indians on 19 May. From the Clear Lake-Russian River area the expedition proceeds north and encamps at Camp Far West. They then continue north to the Pitt River and on 5 July engage with the Indians and one soldier from Company E is wounded and dies on 7 July. August thru September 1850 Companies E and G head up the Pitt River to its head waters at Goose Lake. On 2 August Company E starts back down river and reached Camp Far West of 5 August. Company G proceeds up the Pitt River on 3 August in search of the remains of the late corporal Werner and arrive at the head water on 30 August. Company G marches from the area on the 31th and arrive at Benicia on 25 September thus ending the expedition.

When fighting between the Indians and whites erupt along the Colorado River at Yuma Crossing in November 1850 Captain Samuel Henitzelman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, along with 3 companies of Infantry are dispatched from San Diego to the Colorado River Valley where Yuma Crossing is located and there they establish Camp Independence (FORT YUMA) Arizona.

In May 1851 FORT MILLER, California is established by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Tredwell Moore and Company K, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry to control Indian aggressions against the prospectors, the post is named after Major Albert S. Miller, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry who was brevetted a major in 1846 for gallant and meritorious conduct at Monterey, Mexico while serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment. The fort was located in the Sierra foothills near the head of the San Joaquin River. The site is now under Millerton Lake formed by the Friant Dam in 1944.



In May 1852 CAMP READING was established, this adobe built, two-company post was located on the west side of Cow Creek, about two and a half miles from its confluence with the Sacramento River at the present town of Redding in Shasta County. The camp was established by 1st Lieutenant Nelson H. Davis and Company E, 2nd Infantry, by order of Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock, 2nd Infantry.

In November 1853 the regiment was ordered to return to New York with headquarters, staff, band and 8 companies leaving the same month. The remaining companies left California piece meal with the last company arriving back in New York in September 1854. In returning to New York some units sailed around the Horn while other crossed the Isthmus of Panama, During its time in California the regiment had two soldiers killed and 3 wounded in conflicts with the Indians and had numerous loses from disease and desertion

In January 1956 the regiment along with the entire 5th Infantry Division is transferred from Germany to Fort Ord California as part of operation "GYROSCOPE". The regiment is a training regiment from that time until June 1957 when the last class graduated. On 15 February 1957 at the time of the Pentomic reorganization the 2nd Battalion is reorganized and re-designated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battle Group, 2nd Infantry and assigned to the 1st Infantry Division. On 1st Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry are released from assignment with 5th Infantry Division; the 2nd Battalion is assigned as an organic element of the 1st Infantry Division. The 1st Battalion is inactivated and concurrently designated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battle Group, 2nd Infantry. The 3rd Battalion is also inactivated; with the last graduating class (Company M) date of 29 June 1957. This basically heralds the end of the Regimental system of organization. On 5 June 1957 the 2nd Battle Group, 2nd Infantry receives the colors of the 2nd Infantry Regiment when that unit is inactivated at Fort Ord California, Col. Robert H. Pell is in command. (Col. Pell served as a 1st Lieutenant with Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry in WW II) The unit is made up from troops of the 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry.



## A VETERANS JOURNEY BACK TO VIETNAM PART 2

BY TOM COPELAND, HHC, 2/2, LAI KHE, VIETNAM 67-68  
LIFETIME MEMBER, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2013 - SAIGON TO DA LAT

This morning we flew from Saigon to Da Lat, located in the Southern part of the Central Highlands. Da Lat is a beautiful mountain resort, originally built by the French in the 1920's because it is much cooler than any other place in Vietnam. Our first stop was a Buddhist Temple called Truc Lam Da Lat. This was an absolutely beautiful place with manicured gardens and well maintained buildings.



Tom as "King for a day",  
with my Queen for a minute

We then went to the Palace of the last King of Vietnam. In 1946 the King moved to France and was replaced by a President who continued to use the Palace as a Summer resort.

During the evening at the hotel I heard drums and other instruments playing. Vietnam was approaching the Mid-Autumn festival, also known as the Full Moon Festival. Young men dressed in a lion costume dance around the street to the drum music. They go from house to house and business to business. The owners give them money to drive out the bad spirits and leave behind good spirits.

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2013

We left Da Lat and drove to the top of the pass and then down the long twisting road to the West side of the mountain range that separates Da Lat from the Ocean. The largest industry in Da Lat is the flower business. We saw thousands of greenhouses used to grow flowers to be exported all over the world. We were told that during the "American War" there were no American troops stationed in, or operating around Da Lat.

We continued over the mountain range to Cham Ranh Bay, the home for the 22nd Replacement Battalion, 14th Aerial Port, and the 6th Convalescent Hospital. There is little left of those facilities except concrete slabs and a few crumbling buildings. We did locate one American barracks building in the area of the 22nd Replacement Battalion. It won't be long before that is gone to make way for a seaside resort. There were two new high rise buildings under construction in the area. The 14th Aerial Port is still being used as a commercial airport.

During our visit we were paid a visit by four Vietnamese soldiers who were checking us out. One of them was a Captain who would not allow his photo to be taken until Dave offered to give him \$10.00 to buy beer for him and his buddies.

This is the area that about 80% of the Army replacement troops were processed into and out of Vietnam, so it was of some significance to several of the guys on the tour.



Entrance to Buddhist Temple



Buddhist Temple



Fountain: This granite ball is about 4' in diameter and is floating on water being pumped from underneath.



Kings Palace



Green houses around Da Lat

After much time was spent roaming around and taking photos of the few remaining remnants of the American base, we boarded the bus for the ride to Nha Trang. What a beautiful ride! Up and down mountains along the coast line. We arrived in Nha Trang around 5:30pm and had two hours before we met for dinner at a local "Smoked Beef" restaurant. We had two small charcoal grills on our table and trays of small pieces of marinated beef to cook at the table. Of course there was rice and vegetables to go with it along with a bowl of soup.

QQ Nha Trang Dinner, "Smoked Beef" restaurant in Nha Trang

The hotel in Nha Trang was fantastic. Best so far! We all wanted to stay for a couple of days but the next morning it was back on the bus for more adventures in Vietnam.

### WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 18, 2013 - NHA TRANG TO QUI NHON

After breakfast, we drove north to Qui Nhon. Along the way, we passed Tuy Hoa Airbase. This was one of the largest American air fields in Vietnam during the war. We couldn't go on the base so we stopped on a road running alongside the base for a look, and to take photos. We could see the US revetments with Vietnamese Air Force jets sitting in them.

Across the street there were farmers working to turn rice straw. We were traveling through this area during the major rice harvest so we saw how the rice was cut and separated. Some of it was done by machines but much of it was still being harvested by hand. There were machines that drove through the rice patties cutting and bundling the rice and another machine that took those bundles and separated the rice grains from the straw.

If it was being done manually, the farmers were using a sickle to cut the stalks, then it was carried up the bank to the road and someone else was pounding it against the pavement to get the rice kernels off the stalks.

The rice is then spread on the road, and the stalks are spread alongside the road for drying. The rice is spread in thin layers with rakes or by foot and allowed to dry in the sun. Sometimes they get the rice a little too far out into center of the road and trucks, bikes, and motor cycles run over it. No one seems to get upset they just rake it and go about their business.

Once we had traveled back down to the coast we began to go through fishing villages. There are boats of all sizes in the bay, including the small round boats. They are 4' diameter baskets woven from reeds with tar covering the bottom. There is one paddle in the boat. I have no idea how they make it go where they want it to go but the guide told us they were very stable in the ocean and rode over the waves with no problem.



Cham Ranh Bay



American building foundation



Last American Building standing at Cham Ranh Bay



Tuy Hoa Airbase



Rice Harvest

We had lunch at another roadside cafe. When I went to the WC (toilet) there were chickens roaming all around the back of the cafe. When you order something with chicken in it at this place it is really fresh. Like all the places we ate in Vietnam the meat and produce was very fresh. If you had something for lunch or dinner with beef in it, you could be sure that cow was walking around the field that morning. Then it was back into the mountains and on to Qui Nhon for the evening.

At the hotel that night we had a wonderful meal that was fixed, sort of, Italian style, with a Vietnamese flair. You had to be there!

#### THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

This morning we visited two sites of Cham ruins. The Cham people ruled what is today's Vietnam from the 3rd to the 15th Centuries. The buildings were built of locally made brick and put together without using any mortar. The cement between the bricks was made of coconut oil and grass. To this day they have not been able to duplicate that formula. The first Temple we visited was located in the city of Qui Nhon. Although the grounds were well maintained, nothing has been done to the temple. The detail found on these building is amazing. We then went to the "Bang It" Temple in the Village of Ba Di. This ruin has three buildings located on top of a hill with a steep climb. What the hell, I am only going to see this place once so I made the climb to the first building and took photos from there. BIG MISTAKE! My knees were really talking to me by the time I made it back down.

I did meet a 25 year old Vietnamese man at the first temple who was peddling his bike from Saigon to Hanoi. He was taking a month off work to make this trip. He would travel for a day and then spend the next day exploring the area he had stopped in. He planned to repeat that routine until he reached Hanoi. He had been on the road for 10 days when I talked to him.

Then it was back on the bus and headed West on Highway 19 towards An Khe. We drove up the long winding hill, through the An Khe Pass and over the An Khe Summit. A little after noon we arrived in An Khe to pick up an additional Montagnard guide, Mr. Cham, and have lunch. The lunch was in a large hall that was also used for wedding receptions and parties.

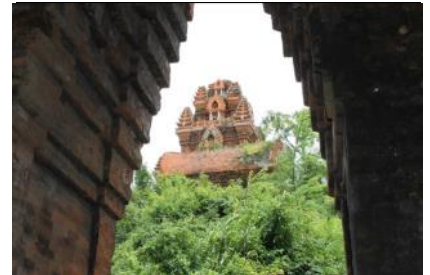
There was a group of Vietnamese men there and when I walked by them after lunch one of them got up to shake my hand. As he was shaking my hand and talking to me in Vietnamese, large tears were rolling down his face. Neither of our guides were around so I had no idea what he was saying. I found out later that he was a Veteran of the American War. A second man got up to shake my hand and started talking to me. Just then Mr. Cham came over and interpreted what he was saying. It turns out that he was a Colonel in the North Vietnamese Army when Saigon fell in 1974. As he was shaking my hand and looking me in the eyes, he said, "We were enemies once, but now we can be friends." He is so right. Yet another load off my shoulders. I experienced the feeling of peace, and for me the war was finally over. This is the first group of men who were actually smiling and willing to talk to us Americans. The remaining members of the group stood and shook my



Along the coast



Fishing boat fleet



Cham Ruins



Young man who was riding his bike from Saigon to Hanoi

An Khe was the headquarters for the 1st Cavalry Division. We managed to find the base camp for the headquarters and found some of the American barracks still standing and in relatively good shape.

Now a little history about our new guide, Mr. Cham, a member of the Montagnard tribe:

His Dad was a military man and served with the ARVN Army. When Mr. Cham was 17 years old he moved to Ann Arbor, MI to attend the University of Michigan. He came back to Vietnam in 1974 just before the fall of Saigon. In 1975 he was arrested because he had a college education from the US, and spent 8 months in "reeducation camp" in Saigon. He was kept in a conex container with a former ARVN pilot. There were a couple of holes cut in the container for ventilation. During his time in the container the pilot died and was left in there with for several weeks. At one point Mr. Cham was put in solitary confinement in a hole in the ground with no light coming in. He said when he finally got out he couldn't stand to open his eyes for several days because there was too much light. When he was released from the Saigon prison he was given a certificate and told to move to Pleiku and take that certificate to the local police station. When he did that, he was arrested and sent to prison for another 7 months with no reason given. Amazingly, he holds no animosity against the Vietnamese Government. As he said, "That is all behind us now."

After lunch we left town across the An Khe bridge and continued West through the Mang Yang Pass. This is where the French "Mobile Group 100" was ambushed and annihilated on June 24, 1954. We stopped at the memorial and listened to explanations by Mr. Cham.

We spent the next two nights in Pleiku.

#### FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 20, 2013

This morning we traveled north on Highway 14 to Kontum. Kontum was one of the major objectives of the 3-prong 1972 Easter Offensive attacks by the NVA (DMZ in I-Corps; Kontum in II-Corps; and An Loc in III-Corps). The road was under construction for the majority of the trip so the going was slow and rough.

In Kontum we visited the Kontum Wooden church and the Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage. The Catholic Church was unique because very few churches, or for that matter any type of building, in Vietnam are built of wood. Since the late 80's most are constructed with cement and/or bricks due to the use of Agent Orange and heave deforestation by the Chinese following the war.

We toured the church and the grounds then went to the orphanage located behind the church. The church alone was certainly not worth the trip to Kontum, but the orphanage was wonderful. There were 197 kids in the orphanage on the day we visited and as we strolled around we had a chance to interact with many of them. We were taken to the dining hall where we were served hot green tea and the head Nun, Sister Mar Tha, and Mr. Cham told us about the operation of the orphanage, including a breakdown of the number of kids by age, sex, and disability. After that we went



Mr. Cham



Memorial at Mang Yang Pass



Wooden Church

into the nursery section of the orphanage during lunch time. About a dozen kids were lined up, sitting on the floor (as is the tradition in Vietnam) having a bowl of some form of corn chowder. These kids were in the 18 to 24 month range. Most of them were very friendly and curious about all these tall (and wide) people they were looking at. One little boy in particular was very forward and toddled over to Dave Macedonia and put his arms up. Dave picked him up and they were having a ball making faces at each other. Another one came over to me and wanted to be picked up so I obliged him. For a little kid he was heavy. I might add here that the kids we met were very well cared for, including clothes and food. They all appeared to be happy and healthy. Many of the peasant kids in the farming communities were very slim, unlike these orphans.

We left the little tykes and went to a room with 8 to 10 kids in the 2 to 4 year old range. They had been fed, were ready to play, and attacked our group with screams and laughter. One little boy wanted me to pick him up so he could get to the toys hanging on clothes lines above our heads. There were stuffed animals hanging everywhere. When I put him down to leave he didn't want to let me go. As I started down the stairs to leave there were 3 or 4 kids pulling at my shirt and pants. I was delighted to see how well they were taken care of but it pulled at my heart strings to have to leave them. This made the long bumpy trip worth the time, and I decided that I will put the orphanage on my Christmas list.

We drove to a Montagnard community center, on stilts, and made of wood and grass. Mr. Cham told us a lot interesting facts about the Montagnard tribe.

Some of us climbed the steps to see the inside of the Communal Center.

Absolutely nothing was up there except bees. Dave Macedonia got about a dozen stings on his back and arms, Dean Graham got one on his hand, and Mr. Phouc got one on his top lip. The next morning his lip huge.

We had lunch at another small cafe that only served noodle soup. I wanted fried rice with shaved beef so Mr. Phouc went next door to a different cafe and ordered it for me. They brought it over and it was very good. That will be the day when you see a waitress from Chili's delivering a meal to a customer in Applebee's. LOL

We drove the long bumpy road back to Pleiku and had an afternoon of rest and relaxation.

Dave mentioned pretzels as we were getting off the bus and that just stuck in my mind. I went to the lobby to see if I could find some in the bar or restaurant. The closest they could come was to offer to make me some French fries. The manager at the hotel then sent me to a shop across the street because he knew they would have them. No one in the shop spoke English but lots of customers were curious about this tall American in the shop. I tried to communicate but nothing was working so I just looked around to see what I could find. I found lots of cookies but no salty snacks. The shop owner pulled something off the top shelf that turned out to be a supplement of some kind. Then she brought me some Ensure. I gave up and went back to the hotel, propped my legs up and took a nap.



Pictures of Orphanage



Montagnard Communal Center

Dinner was at a local cafe where we had a semi-private dining room, meaning only one cat was roaming around. It also served as the place where the dirty dishes were stacked in bins. I ordered fried noodles with shrimp and vegetables and it was very good. I decided it was time to give the chop sticks a try and ended up eating the entire meal with chop sticks, except for the soup.

**SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 21, 2013 - PLEIKU TO SAIGON**

We took a mid-morning flight to Saigon. While we were sitting in the waiting area at the gate a young Vietnamese woman walked over to me, motioned for me to take her baby and pointed at the WC. I took the kid and she headed for the bathroom. You would never find that in the US unless the woman is trying to dump her kid.

Pleiku airport is the sight of one of the first attacks on American forces in Vietnam. Several American aircraft were destroyed. The old American runways are still in use and several of the old buildings are still visible. There is a hill nearby that has buildings and guard towers that was most likely the site of an American radar and communications installation.

We got back to Saigon around 3pm. I took a walk to the large shopping mall and bought some camera accessories then back to the hotel for a nap and shower before our farewell dinner.

Dinner was very good and most people told stories about their experiences in Vietnam. Another opportunity for healing.

**SUNDAY - SEPTEMBER 22, 2013—SAIGON TO TAIPEI TO LOS ANGELES**

We headed to the airport at 10:30 to start our journey home. The flight from Saigon to Taipei was up eventful. We managed to miss the typhoon that came across Southern Taiwan and into Hong Kong. We had a short layover in Taipei and boarded the flight to Los Angeles. I can't say enough good about EVA airlines. All four flights were customer focused and very comfortable. EVA is a Taiwan based airline.

On the way from Taipei we gained a day by crossing the International Dateline so we all got a little younger on that flight. We arrived in Los Angeles around 3:30pm and made our way through US Customs. What an ordeal! We went through four different lines before we made it outside and onto the bus to the hotel.

Five people took flights home and the rest of us stayed the night and flew out on Monday. Sunday night several of us went to dinner at a Mexican restaurant and discussed the trip. Everyone agreed that they had a great time and it was a worthwhile trip.



Mother and son



The little boy I was given to watch



The Tour Group at our Farewell Dinner

**TOM COPELAND: [TTCB47@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TTCB47@GMAIL.COM)**

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**SOCIETY OF THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION**

<http://www.1stid.org/reunion.php>

**2014 Reunion**

Hyatt Regency  
Orange County, Calif.  
June 25-29



**2015 Reunion**

Westin Lombard  
Lombard, Ill.  
June 17-21

**Ramrods Reunion**

**14 - 17 May 2015**



The reunion is open to all who are currently serving or had served in the Battalions of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, their families and guests.

Please check the website in the future for information and to download the registration forms:

<http://www.secinfreg.org/events/events.htm>

Call Sign Dracula provides an outstanding, valuable and worthy in-depth look into the life of a US Army Infantry soldier serving with the famed 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (The Big Red One) in Vietnam. It is a genuine, firsthand account of a one-year tour that shows how a soldier grew and matured from an awkward, bewildered, inexperienced, eighteen year-old country "bumpkin" from Kentucky, to a tough, battle hardened, fighting soldier.



You will laugh, cry and stand in awe at the true life experiences shared in this memoir. The awfulness of battle, fear beyond description, the sorrow and anguish of losing friends, extreme weariness, the dealing with the scalding sun, torrential rain, cold, heat, humidity, insects and the daily effort just to maintain sanity were struggles faced virtually every day. And yet, there were the good times. There was the coming together to laugh, joke, and share stories from home. There was the warmth and compassion shown by men to each other in such an unreal environment. You will see where color, race or where you were from had no bearing on the tight-knit group of young men that was formed from the necessity to survive. What a "bunch" they were!

.....then the return to home and all the adjustments and struggles to once again fit into a world that was now strange and uncomfortable.

Call Sign Dracula is an excellent and genuine memoir of an infantry soldier in the Vietnam War.

*I feel this book is the best way I can personally recognize and honor all the great guys I served with in Vietnam, especially the eighteen who were killed in action- Joe Fair (A 1/2)*

<http://www.callsigndracula.com/>



**2012 - 2014  
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# SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM

If renewing, fill out name, address, and any other information you wish updated.

Type of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_NEW \_\_\_\_\_RENEWAL

General Membership: Annual dues \$ 10.00 Lifetime membership \$ 100.00  
Active Duty Soldiers: Annual dues \$ 5.00 Lifetime membership \$ 25.00

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Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(It is more economical for the Association to communicate electronically. If you don't have email or if you prefer, all correspondence can be mailed to you.)

I prefer to receive correspondence via: \_\_\_ Email \_\_\_ US mail

Dates of service with the regiment: \_\_\_\_\_

(If you know the month and year please enter YRMO IE: August 1968 = 6808)

Area(s) of operation i.e. State Side, Normandy, Rhineland, WWII, Vietnam, Germany, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Battalion \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ Other

Company \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ HHC

Other unit \_\_\_\_\_

Any information you feel appropriate, such as rank held, medals awarded, or duties performed during service:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your form, along with your check made out to: 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Association

Douglas Tabb, Treasurer  
2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Association  
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