



Vietnam 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry



Support Units

In memory of the men from other units who provided direct support
for the Second Battalion, 12th Cavalry and
who gave their lives for their country during the Vietnam War

We honor them by remembering them

May they rest in peace

Rank	Name	Date	Unit	Details
1LT	Dwyer, Robert K.	July 11, 1967	Company B, 227th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C, Maj Kingsbury
WO1	Coronis, Martin J.	July 11, 1967	Company B, 227th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C, Maj Kingsbury
CPL	Larson, Jeffrey	January 2, 1968	Company C, 8th Engineer Battalion	Engineer attached to Company C, 2/12th Cav
CPL	Robinson, Clarence	January 3, 1968	G Battery, 29th Artillery Regiment	Searchlight team at LZ Leslie
MSG	Robison, Edward	January 3, 1968	B Battery, 1/21st Artillery	LZ Ross
WO	Bahl, Robert F. Jr.	January 7, 1968	3rd Brigade	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C LTC Gregory
WO	Ford, Marshall H	January 7, 1968	3rd Brigade	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C LTC Gregory
CPL	Knake, Lloyd E.	January 7, 1968	3rd Brigade	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C LTC Gregory
SP5	Lauderdale, Arthur L.	January 7, 1968	3rd Brigade	Air crash, 2/12 Cav C&C LTC Gregory
CPT	Barovetto, John L.	January 7, 1968	Company B, 1 Sqd/1 Cav	Commander of Cav unit, LZ Ross
CPL	Blankenship, Larry J	February 5, 1968	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	FO RTO with Company B, 2/12 Cav
CPT	Peters, David L.	April 4, 1968	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	2/12 Liaison Officer, air crash
PFC	De Cora, Elliott L.	August 16, 1968	Company A, 14th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SSG	Payne, Jeppie J.	August 16, 1968	Company A, 14th Engineers	LZ Nancy
PFC	Ribeiro, Joseph F.	August 16, 1968	Company A, 14th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SP4	Cravens, Robert M.	August 16, 1968	Company B, 8th Engineers	LZ Nancy
PFC	Cook, John P.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SP4	Huff, Paul L.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SGT	Kortermaki, Patrick L.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
PFC	Mericantante, Thomas L.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SP4	Reynolds, Robert M.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SP4	Zimmerman, Terry R.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
PFC	Began, John L.	August 16, 1968	630th Engineer Co, 70th Engineers	LZ Nancy
SP4	Greer, Frank M	January 21, 1969	HQ Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant, jeep hit land mine
SGT	Reyes, Antonio	January 21, 1969	HHC, 8th Engineers	LZ Grant, jeep hit land mine

CPL	Sweat, Herbert H.	February 21, 1969	25th Inf Plat - Scout Dog	Dog Handler with C 2/12 Cav
CPL	Montez, Jesse B.	February 23, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
SP4	Roach, Thomas J. Jr.	March 8, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Stair, Glenn R.	March 8, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Wimmer, Roy D.	March 8, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
SP4	Denny, Rodger E.	March 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Ferguson, Whitney T. III	March 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Gruenwald, Michael J.	March 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
SGT	Jackson, John R.	March 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Robinson, Tommy L.	March 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
2LT	Chenoweth, Irving S. III	April 13, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	FO with Company D, 2/12 Cav
CPL	Hartman, Darrell	May 11, 1969	A Battery, 1/30th Artillery	LZ Grant
CPL	Atkins, Don L.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
SSG	Barbieri, Charles L.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Donavan, Timothy C.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Drane, John W.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
PFC	Jordan, James S.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
CPL	Krell, Robert G.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
SP4	Park, Marvin E.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
CPL	Weidner, David E.	May 12, 1969	C Battery, 1/77th Artillery	LZ Grant
WO	Clime, Ralph J.	June 19, 1969	Company C, 229th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav, Maj O'Keefe
SGT	Mathews, Henry D.	June 19, 1969	Company C, 229th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav, Maj O'Keefe
WO	Pearlstein, Jerrold S.	June 19, 1969	Company C, 229th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav, Maj O'Keefe
SGT	Voss, Raymond A.	June 19, 1969	Company C, 229th Aviation	Air crash, 2/12 Cav, Maj O'Keefe
SP4	Dismukes, Raymond KL.	November 25, 1969	C Battery, 1/77 Artillery	LZ Don
SSG	Kiger, Dennis Delmar	May 7, 1970	Company B, 8th Engineers	Rock Island East
WO1	Anteau, Karl	July 29, 1970	Company A, 227th Aviation	LZ Mo Huey crash, Golombeski/Bancroft
SP5	Dillion, Jack	July 29, 1970	Company A, 227th Aviation	LZ Mo Huey crash, Golombeski/Bancroft
SP4	Hills, Ricky	July 29, 1970	Company A, 227th Aviation	LZ Mo Huey crash, Golombeski/Bancroft

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THE VIRTUAL WALL

A Lasting Legacy

January 29, 1995 [By Tom Bowman (BALTIMORE SUN)]

IN A CORNER OF THIS DUSTY VIETNAMESE cemetery a few miles south of the Cambodian border, a white marble memorial rises among a patchwork of low concrete graves.

A massive green urn squats at its center, carved with dragons and bristling with old joss sticks, the slender incense reserved for the dead.

Ninety-five North Vietnamese soldiers lie here, killed on March 8, 1969, as they attacked American troops in the middle of Tay Ninh province, about a half-hour to the south.

Army Cpl. Jim Kapucinski turned his M-79 grenade launcher on the enemy that steamy March night, and later joined other American soldiers as they tossed the bodies into a shallow, unmarked grave.

They remained in grim formation for a quarter century, long after Americans troops departed, the North Vietnamese rose to power and nature reclaimed the battlefield, replacing it with a tangle of brush and trees.

When the bodies were finally located last summer and reburied in the fall in this place of honor, it was the former enemy who made it possible.

Nearly a year ago Mr. Kapucinski provided Vietnamese veterans with a faded aerial photograph of the battle site, marked with an "X" and the notation: "approximate site of mass grave."

"I thought, 'They have families. I have three daughters, too,' " he said from his Ohio home. "If I did that [turned over the photo] some family members are going to know where their sons were, and mourn them in the proper way."

The 46-year-old Ohio barber is one of hundreds of Vietnam veterans who are putting their bitterness aside and helping a former enemy locate its war dead. Through the Veterans Initiative, started last year by the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Americans are returning helmets, ID cards, photos and canteens they took from North Vietnamese and Viet Cong casualties. Along with personal testimonies, personal photo and maps from U.S. veterans, the items are being offered to help the Vietnamese find 300,000 of their countrymen who are still missing.

At the same time, the Americans are hoping the cooperation will spur Vietnam to provide more information on the whereabouts of the 2,213 Americans unaccounted for.

"This might provide answers to those who are still missing," said Jim Brazee, president of Vietnam Veterans of America, a 45,000-member organization based in Washington, D.C. It is

the first time in history, he says, that a veterans' organization is helping an old foe account for its losses.

So far, Mr. Kapucinski's photo is the only item that has helped locate casualties, although information from another veteran has spurred excavation at a site in neighboring Song Be province, where 600 Vietnamese are said to lie in a mass grave, killed during the siege of An Loc in 1972.

For their part, Vietnamese veterans last spring turned over an ID card from an American soldier, James Louis Asher, who was killed 25 years ago and is buried in the small farming community of Elmwood, Wis. VVA officials returned the card to his family in a summer ceremony attended by hundreds of townspeople, and marked by a rifle salute and taps.

The Veterans Initiative is given partial credit for Vietnam's improved record in helping locate American servicemen still unaccounted for. "We see the cooperation steadily increasing throughout the country. Some of that is because of what the Vietnam veterans have started to do," said Army Lt. Col. David Fredrikson, a spokesman for the Joint Task Force Full Accounting, the 2-year-old U.S. government effort to find soldiers unaccounted for during the Vietnam War. "That serves as sort of an icebreaker when the Vietnamese realize the American veterans are helping the Vietnamese."

In 1994, the Vietnamese government turned over about 60 remains, which the Army will try and identify at its Hawaii-based laboratory, said Colonel Fredrikson.

Mr. Brazee and a delegation of veterans will make their third trip to Hanoi on Feb. 8, carrying the faded souvenirs of war and the recollections of servicemen. They hope that this time, during their eight-day stay, their Vietnamese counterparts will provide specifics on missing American servicemen.

Among the veterans in the group will be Mr. Kapucinski, making his first trip to Vietnam since the fighting stopped. But he is nagged by doubt. It was only five years ago that he could talk of his combat experiences and not be plagued by nightmares. Do I really want to do this? he asks himself. Are the Vietnamese people going to hold a grudge against me? "It's going to be hard," he says.

BY THE SPRING OF 1969, the war had entered a brutal phase: American troop numbers rose to a peak of 543,000. President Nixon, just entering office, expanded the fighting into Laos and Cambodia and the North Vietnamese mounted a counteroffensive.

Corporal Kapucinski had a strange feeling the night of March 8, 1969. He was gearing up for guard duty at LZ Grant, an American military outpost near the somber silhouette of Black Virgin Mountain.

At the ammunition dump, he requested additional grenades. "What are you expecting, World War III?" asked a sergeant.

"I got a premonition," he replied.

As the sun began to set, Corporal Kapucinski took a position behind a 4-foot earthen berm topped with sandbags. There were two things soldiers learned quickly in Vietnam: They were bait in these landing zones and the night belonged to the enemy.

He gazed through the rings of concertina wire into the darkening woods. And waited.

On one side of him was a soldier from Louisiana. On the other was an infantryman who struck a match and lit a cigarette. Corporal Kapucinski ordered him to snuff it out and then turned back.

Suddenly in the woods he saw a bizarre sight about 50 yards out: beams of light. An enemy famed for its stealth was heading toward him with -- flashlights!

The thought was swept away by thunderous explosions. Torpedoes and mortars ripped through the concertina wire. A regiment of the First North Vietnamese Army surged forward.

The soldier who lit the cigarette turned and ran, while the Louisiana man was stunned by a mortar round, his face grimy with dirt. Corporal Kapucinski fired at the darting enemy, illuminated by flares and mortars.

One mortar round smashed into the command post just behind him, killing several officers. Corporal Kapucinski was stung in the hand by shrapnel but kept shooting his M-79.

Just before dawn U.S. jets roared overhead and dropped napalm. The first load landed squarely on the enemy. The second on the Americans. It was difficult for Corporal Kapucinski to tell if the running figures bathed in flames were his comrades or the North Vietnamese.

The sun rose through the haze and smoke. Dead and dying littered LZ Grant. The wounded stumbled about, numb with shock. A U.S. soldier emerged from the woods, smiling at his luck in surviving the battle at a lookout post in the trees. But the man was mistaken for the enemy; his own troops cut him down with machine-gun fire.

Ponchos were draped over the 17 American dead. Corporal Kapucinski noticed a pair of black, horn-rimmed glasses in the dirt next to one covered corpse. He thought of the officer who once wore them.

Soldiers began to load the enemy dead on a small trailer hitched to a Jeep. But they didn't bury them right away. They left them in a row outside the wire, as a warning to the enemy.

Soon the members of 95 C Regiment of the First North Vietnamese Army were assembled in a shallow grave.

Corporal Kapucinski spent a year in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division, returning home to Bay Village, Ohio, with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

That wasn't all. He carried a raging bitterness toward the U.S. government, convinced it had treated him and his friends as "cannon fodder." And deep inside was an overwhelming guilt for the lives he took.

He quietly spoke of his troubles to a Catholic priest and later a counselor. Other than that, he was not one to tell war stories.

Mr. Kapucinski got a job at the Bay Barber Shop, married, joined several veterans' organizations and settled in for life in his small Midwestern town, set by the shore of Lake Erie.

Then early in 1994 he got a letter from the Vietnam Veterans of America, asking for help in something called the Veterans Initiative. He remembered something in one of his scrapbooks, a photo he had taken from a helicopter as it hovered several hundred feet above LZ Grant.

IT WAS A VIETNAMESE colonel who convinced Jim Brazee that American veterans must offer their help. This turning point took place in May 1993.

Mr. Brazee and other VVA officials talked about such an initiative as early as 1989. But the timing didn't seem right. The wounds of war were still too fresh.

Four years later, however, things were different. Seated around a dining table during a Memorial Day meeting in Vietnam were Communist officials, graying veterans from both sides of the war, U.S. senators and their aides. The gathering was a U.S. government-sponsored effort to learn more about Americans missing in action.

Mr. Brazee listened through a translator as the colonel spoke of the effort to locate American prisoners of war and MIAs. Then the colonel drifted to a new subject.

"He started talking about how he would go home and his wife would criticize him. 'How can you help the Americans when you can't account for your own brother-in-law?' " recalled Mr. Brazee. "He became quite emotional."

Mr. Brazee, who served briefly as an Army lawyer in Nha Trang during the war, knew that it was time to help, to move beyond the government-to-government meetings and deal with just the veterans.

He arrived home and started passing the word to VVA officials at the state council level. At first there was only a trickle of information from veterans. But in February 1994, when the Clinton administration lifted the 20-year-old trade embargo, VVA saw an opportunity to move forward.

The group aggressively got the word out and scheduled its first Veterans Initiative trip to Vietnam in May.

Vietnam and the American families are suffering the same," said Vu Xuan Hong, secretary general of the Vietnam-USA Society, a group that promotes people-to-people exchanges and is assisting in the Veterans Initiative.

With so many Vietnamese soldiers lost and few records or lab facilities to identify the dead, help from former U.S. soldiers is vital, he said. "It is difficult to find who was where," said Mr. Hong. "[American soldiers] can show the concrete location where our soldiers died and were buried by the American side."

Senior Lt. Gen. Tran Van Quang, president of the Vietnam Veterans Association, added, "We are very grateful to the VVA for their giving us information about our MIAs. We are carrying on. We hope we can find more."

During the war, General Tran commanded troops in Quang Tri province, scene of some of the bloodiest fighting with American forces. Some of the objects returned by U.S. veterans relate to his own troops, although excavations have yet to produce any remains.

Mr. Brazee acknowledged there has been grumbling from some in his organization, men who are angry and wonder: Why are we dealing with the enemy?

But most veterans and their families are supportive, he said. On a TV call-in show in Louisiana, a woman who said her only son died in Vietnam offered Mr. Brazee her tearful support. "She thought we were doing the right thing," he said.

There was also a letter from a former American POW, asking to be considered for one of the VVA delegation's trips to Vietnam.

Mr. Brazee said he is amazed by the near photographic memory of the veterans, at least 20 years after they trudged through the rice paddies and jungles. "The information we have is extremely detailed, very accurate," he said. "These were certainly moments in an individual's life that were defining."

What is most striking about the initiative, he said, is not how it is aiding the Vietnamese, but how it is helping American veterans put the war behind them. "It was something we didn't realize at first. This transcends the POW-MIA issue," he said.

One of the first packages the VVA received was a photo album from a Bakersfield, Calif., veteran who kept it tucked away in a trunk in his garage. He gave it to his counselor, also a Vietnam veteran, to turn over to the Veterans Initiative, saying, "I can move on with my life."

Mr. Kapucinski felt the same way, too. He's glad that the Vietnamese can now see the American veterans as something other than warriors or invaders, as human beings and parents of children, just regular people who really do care.

"It's a relief for me that I can put an end to it," he said.

Still, the former corporal at LZ Grant acknowledges that he almost didn't send in the photo. He wrestled with the request for weeks, worried about the reaction of other local veterans, who attend the meetings at the American Legion Post in nearby Westlake or gather to sip beers at Max and Erma's, a local bar. Many are still bitter about their experiences and the friends they lost.

Finally the opinions of his fellow veterans were outweighed by his feelings as a parent: In thinking about his three daughters, ages 19, 15 and 12, he tried to identify with Vietnamese families; imagine having a son leave home and vanish, and to have no word about his fate for decades, no end to the heartbreak and no chance of peace .

"It would be like having your kid on a milk carton for 20 years," he said. "Life's too short to hold these grudges."

When he finally mailed a copy of the photo with the markings and his scribbled writing to Washington, D.C., he thought little about it. Maybe it would help, maybe it wouldn't.

His apprehension about the trip is tempered by the hope the delegation can return home with solid leads on some missing Americans. "If we come back with one, a family here in the U.S. can heal. He'll be on the Wall [the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington], mission accomplished," said Mr. Kapucinski.

While in Vietnam, the former Army corporal expects to visit the cemetery in Tan Bien, with its green urn decorated with dragons.

The Vietnamese are expected to make one change to the monument: They will add a bronze plaque saying those who lie here were found with the help of American veterans.

5) TOM BOWMAN is a reporter for The Sun.

How to become a part of the Veterans Initiative

Check among your Vietnam-related belongings for such materials as identity papers and photos taken from Vietnamese dead or captives, or original or sketch maps of gravesites with actual or approximate dates. Also, write down any stories you remember that might lead to an accounting of missing and dead Vietnamese veterans. Veterans in Vietnam are being asking to make the same efforts regarding American POWs/MIAs.

Send original material or clear copies to Veterans Initiative, Vietnam Veterans of America, 1224 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-5183.

You may send the items anonymously if you wish. Family members of veterans are also invited to make donations. Collected material will be exchanged with Vietnamese veterans organizations.

Call the Vietnam Veterans of America at (202) 628-2700 for more information about helpful documents or with any questions you may have about the Veterans Initiative.