



1st Signal Brigade Association Newsletter



September 1, 2012

www.1stSigBdeAssn.org

Volume 3, Issue 9

REUNION UPDATE

The Association's Reunion in Colorado Springs is still on for September 6 - 9, 2012. The fires around Colorado Springs this summer were north of the Crowne Plaza Hotel and the places where we are visiting in the Optional Tours, except for Optional Tour #1 (see below),

REGISTER NOW FOR THE REUNION!

It is very important to register for the Reunion as soon as 'possible and not wait until you show up in Colorado Springs. This includes registration for the Optional Tours and the banquet dinner on Saturday, September 8, 2012. Please go to the Association's Web site to register (www.1stsigbdeassn.org).

The deadline to register is Friday, August 24, 2012.

HOTEL GUEST ROOM RESERVATIONS

Please make your guest room reservations at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Colorado Springs by Tuesday, August 7, 2012 to enjoy the discounted room rates. There are two ways to reserve a room:

- Call 1-888-233-9527, and mention the "1st Signal Brigade Association Reunion".
- On-line: A dedicated Crowne Plaza Hotel guest room reservation website has been established for the Association's 2012 Reunion where members are able to make, modify and cancel their hotel room reservations online, as well as take advantage of any room upgrades, amenities or other services offered by the hotel. To make your reservations on-line, go to the following link:

https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=6331428

If you wish to have the hotel bus pick you up at the Colorado Springs Airport, please call the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 1-719-576-5900 upon your arrival and request that the bus be dispatched to the airport for a pickup. It is a short drive (< 5 miles) from the hotel to the airport.

CHANGES TO OPTIONAL TOUR #1 (Thursday, September 6, 2012)

Due to the recent fires around Colorado Springs, we will be going to the "M Lazy C Ranch" instead of the Flying W Ranch for dinner on Thursday, September 6, 2012. At the Ranch, we will have hayrides, a chuck wagon dinner and a western show.

Please note that the buses will depart from the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 1445 instead of 1545 for Optional Tour #1 (Garden of the Gods and the M Lazy C Ranch).

ASSOCIATION'S BUSINESS MEETING (Friday, September 7, 2012)

On Friday, September 7, 2012, our Association members will have dinner and a business meeting at the Edelweiss Restaurant. See Optional Tour #3 for details and hotel departure times. This is an important meeting where the Association's current and future matters will be discussed. We encourage all of the Reunion attendees to be at this dinner meeting by signing up for Optional Tour #3.

DRESS CODE FOR BANQUET DINNER (Saturday, September 8, 2012)

The dress code for the banquet dinner on Saturday, September 8, 2012 is business casual. Coat and tie dress is optional. Please, no tee shirts to be worn for the dinner.



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SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

While the hotel provides free transportation from / to the Colorado Springs Airport, its buses are not equipped with lifts to accommodate persons riding scooters or wheelchairs.

Attendees having special transportation needs while in Colorado Springs should contact Yellow Cab to arrange for a special vehicle equipped with a wheelchair / scooter lift. Phone: #719-777-7777 (Dispatcher) at least 3 days prior to the required pickup to reserve the special equipped vehicle. Please give your receipt for the special taxi to the Reunion reception folks in the Hospitality Suite for reimbursement, or contact Larry Schumann (757-345-1610).

During the Reunion period, all buses supporting the Optional Tours will have wheelchair / scooter lift capability.

PERSONAL STORIES FROM FELLOW

SIGNAL CORP VETERANS . . .

My Experience 1st. Signal Brigade VN

Dave Smith
593rd Signal Company
1965-1966

April 15, I was drafted and sent to Ft. Knox for basic training. After basic I was sent to 202nd Signal Co., Ft. Meade, MD for "OJT" (On the Job Training). No AIT or MOS School. The company was alerted to pack up all equipment and convoy across country to the San Diego, California and then to a destination somewhere in the Pacific. I had to stay behind because I had no training with just three months in the Army. I was given a 36C20 Wireman MOS. I sat in a half empty barracks for four months with short timers rotating out of the Army. I spent

most of my time in the day room or at the USO Club on base. After four months with no training. I received orders to report to the Oakland Army Terminal for deployment to the Pacific Theater. I thought I was going to Korea but was sent to Vietnam. I was from a quiet Suburban town in Illinois. Vietnam was not a major issue with me because I didn't follow the news very closely at the age of 19. The war in Vietnam had not escalated yet. The big push did not happen until after I arrived there. I received a MATS / Continental ticket to Vietnam. I turned in all of my winter gear. I boarded the plane and we made stops in, Hawaii, Guam, Tokyo and Tans Son Nhut.



As we approached the Vietnam coastline from the air, I could see the skies lighting up from mortar and artillery fire everywhere. I was not expecting this at all. We deplaned in the darkness of night. The plane door was opened and instantly became soaked due to the intense heat & humidity. The skies were lighting up. The walkway was lined with armed troops in full battle gear. We loaded onto buses with bars on the doors and windows. I asked the GI driver what the bars were for. He said it prevented VC from tossing grenades & bombs into the bus. At this point I was just short of panic. I did not expect this from what I thought was a police action. This was a full scale war. Fear had set in on the trip to the 90th Replacement Depot. I was assigned a bunk in a tent. It was extremely hot humid & smelly. Chow was on metal trays, with chalky milk, and the typical Army food not as good as stateside food.

My orders came down, I was to report to the 39th Signal Bn. and assigned to the 593rd Sig. Co. working for the Army Switchboard Com Center as a Lineman / Installer / Trouble Shooter Repairman.



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Soon the 39th was replaced by the 69th just after Thanksgiving 1965. The 593rd was quartered in a French Villa in Gia Dinh outside of Tan Son Nhut, A.B. I shared quarters with Mere Oak, John Bularo, Mike Burgess and John Mentz, my squad. Our duties were Support of MACV Headquarters at Tan Son Nhut using the Army, Tiger & Lynx Switchboards. My squad supplied early land base communications for the advanced party of the 1st Infantry Division in Bien Hoa. Bien Hoa was a thriving jungle and what seemed like overnight was turned into a dust bowl with Agent Orange. The Division located their command units G1, G2, Medical, Supply on raised ground. We supplied cable and provided communications to MACV Headquarters. Hostile fire at Bien Hoa was minimal during the day but at night fall all Hell would break loose. The compound would be mortared nightly fire fights were common and the mortars were intense. We commuted daily from our 593rd base to Bien Hoa which I think was about 40 km's. We chose not to stay overnight and took our chances on the road.



Other duties were answering calls to the War Room at MACV Headquarters. Hot Line Phone down. We were always on call to repair the communications at the War Room. The funny thing was, I was able to enter the War Room and never had a Top Secret Clearance. There were high ranking officers waiting in line to be cleared by the MPs. I went to the MP desk told them "telephone

repair" and entered. We also supplied communications to all MACV General Officers, Westmoreland, Provost Marshal, G1, G2, and Red Cross Headquarters etc. Repairing telephone cable was constant due to shrapnel damage.

By this time troop strength was growing at a rapid pace in Vietnam. MACV was building permanent buildings and expanding their operations. My group with the assistance of Air Force Installers provided the land based communications to the new buildings. Each floor level of these new headquarters buildings contained 30 or so desks. Each desk needed a phone. Each desk was occupied by an officer what seemed to be a Major or higher in rank. We were at the G3 building taking a break at the Red Cross donut truck having plain donuts and Coke. A Major came up and was asking where we were from and was joking and being friendly. He said that if we should find a White Desk Phone he would like to have it. All of the Western Electric desk phones were black. We had a few hundred black phones. Lo and behold as we unboxed the phones we found one white phone. I gave it to the Major and told him to lock it in his desk every night or else it would disappear. With 30 black phones on desks, the white one really stood out like a sore thumb. This was one of my good memories. The Major offered free flights any location in South Vietnam. There weren't many pleasure trips in Vietnam.

Assignment areas for me were about a 50 mile radius of Saigon. We ran trouble calls to Bien Hoa & Cu Chi. In Jan 1966 Brigadier General Lotz (As seen in the Grissom Photos Brigade web site) did a whirlwind inspection of the Army switchboard and its operations. I was present and conversed with the General briefly. We were proud of the operation. All of the switchboard operators and SP/ 4 Pompier in the picture were friends of mine.



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All were Army switchboard operators I had daily contact with.

In Jan 1966 at our 593rd Gia Dinh Villa, Sgt. Gaylor was killed by an exploding claymore left on a bicycle on an exterior wall next to Sgt. Gaylor's bunk. He was killed instantly. When this happened my feeling of returning home alive diminished. At this point I felt that I would die in Vietnam. I believe Sgt. Gaylor was a short timer and soon to return home to his wife and small kids. My whole attitude changed at this point.

Shortly after the VC Compromised the Tan Son Nhut Air Base and penetrated the perimeter with ground assault and heavy mortar fire. Many soldiers and airmen were killed. Helicopters and fixed wing craft were hit and destroyed. A fuel storage tank was hit and burned for many days. Many of the troops killed were asleep in their bunks. I spent the night in a bunker waiting for a ground attack that usually follows the mortar. We had an ammo bunker filled with heavy weapons. I grabbed a 30 cal. machine gun during this attack. For some reason I thought this attack was going to be worse than the others.

39th Signal Battalion Crest



Thanksgiving 1965 the 39th Signal Battalion provided a wonderful Thanksgiving Day Meal. Roast Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy with all the trimmings, a very memorable meal. In late 1965 Bob Hope and his entertainers provided a wonderful Holiday show at Tan Son Nhut A.B. I got a front row seat. I saw that security was increased and rumor was that Bob Hope had a bounty on his head.

Being in the field on a regular basis and having contact with the locals I felt that Papa San was friendly and working for us during the day and a VC at night. That was my observation. During the heavy building construction I observed Papa San clubbing at Rat the size of a large cat to death. After killing the Rat he wrapped it in a Stars & Stripes newspaper I asked him what he was going to do with it. He said it was "Number One Chop Chop," most likely his dinner for the night.

When I was assigned to the 593rd I had no knowledge or training in installing communications. With the help of the Air Force Techs who followed ATT & Bell installation procedures, I was trained and learned my skills from them. In a very short time I was able to install, run cable & troubleshoot in a short time. I learned fast. The Army methods were rough using field phones and field wire. I sent home for proper tools wire cutters, tool belt etc. One advantage I had was being able to call home whenever I wanted. We had link to Camp Smith Hawaii Pacific Fleet telephone operators who connected us to the San Francisco Bell operator. We told the operator that we are soldiers in Vietnam trying to call home and they would connect us.

As I mentioned I was drafted and went to serve my country. I gave it my best and survived. The feeling in America was that we should not be in Vietnam. After my tour in Vietnam I put my uniform away



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and never wore it again. I did not discuss Vietnam openly. I wrote my experience off and thankful that I survived. Time has healed many wounds much of the bitterness has worn off. I married and have 4 wonderful children and 4 grandchildren. I am employed as a Sales Manager for a worldwide Transport Refrigeration Manufacturer soon to retire. I am a Veterans Hospital volunteer and I joined the Association last year.

Company. Endless hours of perimeter guard duty and some pissing contests.

I am 100% P&T from prostate cancer. Damn Agent Orange. I really don't feel like traveling.

43rd Signal BN Crest



43rd Signal BN on Tropo Hill, Pleiku as viewed from Artillery Hill ... 1968



LOST FILM ... FOUND

Dated: Honolulu, August 14, 1945

JUST THINK HOW THE YOUNG LADY FELT WHEN SHE DISCOVERED THE VIDEO HER FATHER SHOT.

This is a great video of a Spontaneous Victory Parade in Honolulu in 1945. Take a look at this video-absolutely fabulous! Notice the cars, jeeps, and youth. The guys in khaki or gray shirts and black ties are Navy officers or chiefs. The rest are Army or Marine. How young they all were to do what they did. This guy really captured a moment in history! You can listen to Jimmy Durante singing "I'll be Seeing You" in the background, too. This is a super video of a time gone by. We need to remember and be THANKFUL. Check out the color fidelity. It's not bad for 1945. Nothing will ever compare with Kodachrome film.

See the picture and Link below:

<http://vimeo.com/5645171>

Dan Broaddus

HHQ 1st Sig Bde
1968 – 1969

I am going to be unable to attend the reunion. I wanted to attend one of the Black Horse reunions because I was with Black Horse back in early '68 for a few months. I made some friends plus the fact I had two high school classmates with the 11th ARC. My second tour, I was stationed at Long Bien with HHQ 2nd Sig Gp. I have done several searches for some of my former comrades with no luck. When I was with the Black Horse I was with the 36th Signal



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VJ Day in Hawaii, 1945...



Ray Fisher

213th Signal Detachment

I was assigned to the 213th Signal Detachment at Nha Trang, in 1965-66. We were the first unit to have IWCS (Tropo) at Nha Trang.

I believe the 213th was part of the 442nd Signal Bn. On my second tour in Vietnam; I was assigned to the 723rd Maint Bn at Chu Lai, which was part of the 23rd Infantry Div. (Americal), from Oct 1967 to Oct '68. On my Form 20, list of assignments, on the outside margin is a notation: "Project Pace" Could you post this on your site. I would like to find out if anyone has the same on their records and does anyone know what "Project Pace" was?

List of my Assignments were:

Udon, Thailand, May 1964-65-Det 1 US Army
Stratcom-Fac

Nha Trang-1965-66, 213th Signal Detachment
(Tropo)

Chu Lai, 1967-68, 723rd Maint. BN (Americal
Division)

Kanchanaburi, Thailand, Dec 1968 to July 69 the
558th Maint BN

Sattahip, Thailand, July 69 to Nov 1970, at the
379th Signal BN. STRATCOM

Tom Fiola

43rd Sig Bn, Company A

I don't know if I mentioned where I was stationed in Vietnam.... I was at 43rd Signal Battalion HHD, A Company, on Tropo Hill near the II Corp HQ. I worked at the ELM shop. My barracks were next to the RCA/Air Force site where the billboard and tropo scatter antennas were located. My time was sometimes split between their equipment and the old ELM shop. We later remodeled an old enlisted man's club (I can't remember the name) by the motor pool into a very nice ELM shop. I got there Jan. 3, '68 (SP4) and left Aug. 21, '69 (SP5), I could have had E-6 or W-1 if I'd extended again, my OIC, a Japanese CW-4 really wanted me to stay; I spent time on monthly convoy duty or POW work groups as well as trips to Kontum, DakTo, Phu Bui, An Kai, Cam Ranh Bay, Long Bien, Saigon and exploring Pleiku when I had time (my spelling on these cities is not as good as it used to be), when the chopper pad was built behind my barracks area, I was out and about much more.

A 21st Signal Group Huey at the "new" LZ at
43rd Signal / Company A compound on Tropo Hill.
This pic by Avery Puckett, taken in August 1969...



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For the most part, I enjoyed my time there ... but I lost a lot of friends there. Some men that were in Vietnam were with me in grade school and high school. My brother spent 6 years there, and just died 3 weeks ago ... from side effects of Agent Orange. And I am well on my way ... I sometimes wonder if the VA isn't just waiting for me to die. I am fully retired, early, as my medical problems prevent me from working. I presently have an 80% disability rating and they are only paying me for 70% ????. I have monthly blood tests and the usual meds shuffle afterwards. The only one that seems to really talk to me is my shrink ... lol. It looks like every time we talk ... she stirs the pot again, and my regular doc gets active again.

When I got home, I pursued degrees in electronics engineering, chemistry and the related mechanical engineering. I was also a part-time 70's era paramedic. I got married during this time, had 2 great kids, the ex-wife wanted a divorce after 32 years (10 years ago), I am now living in Phoenix, fully retired ... with serious mobility and breathing issues.

Merv Norton

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Membership Status



We have been very gratified by your response to our new Web site, which was activated on 1 March 2010. On that date, we had **125** members. Our

membership peaked in June at **488** current membership is at **482**.

Continual renewal of membership is vital to the life of the Association.

Come help us grow. Go to www.1stSigBdeAssn.org/Application.aspx to join the Association. If possible, use our new on-line credit card system for payment.

Merchandise Sale Status



Merchandise sales have been very slow during the past year. Due to logistic problems we were not able to have items for sale at the Tucson 2010 Reunion. This will be rectified for the Colorado Springs Reunion 2012. Go to the Sales Items in the Members Section of our Web page for a detailed display of our merchandise as well as on-line and mail purchasing forms. We have Vietnam, Korea and Association Ball Caps, Polo Shirts, Bumper Stickers and Writing Pens.

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September 2013 trip to Korea and Vietnam

The Association is planning a trip to Vietnam in September 2013 with a two day stop over at the 1st Signal Brigade in Korea. Please contact Dan Jett, danjett@csc CPA.com, phone 562-754-8183.

The Association's Web site that has the complete trip program, in-country Vietnam travel itinerary and information on how to sign up for the trip.