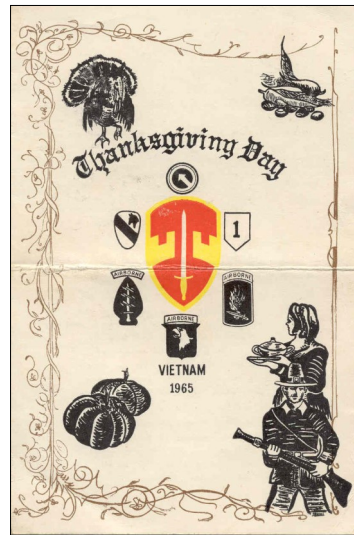
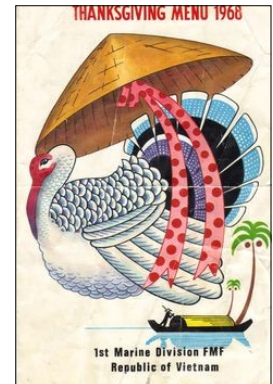
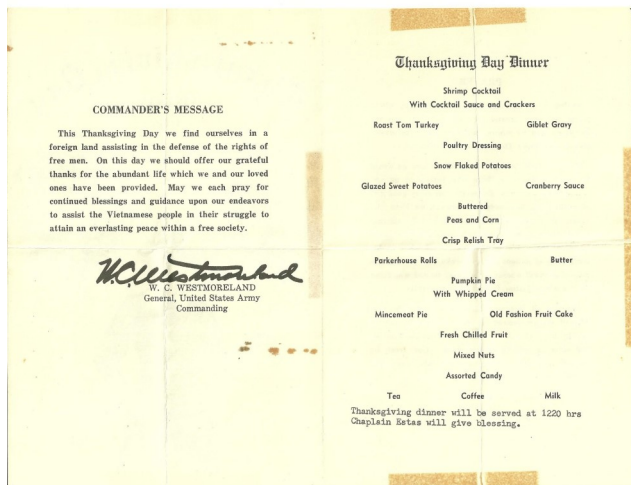
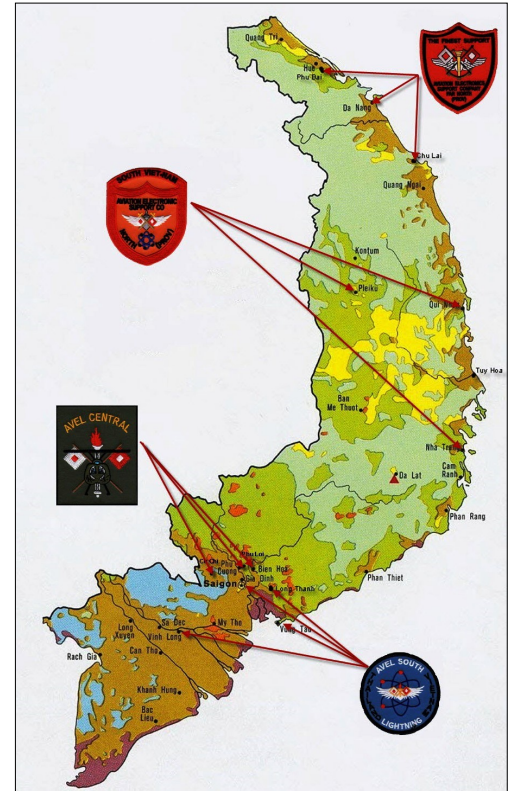
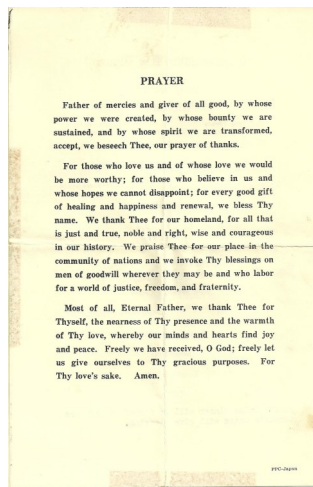
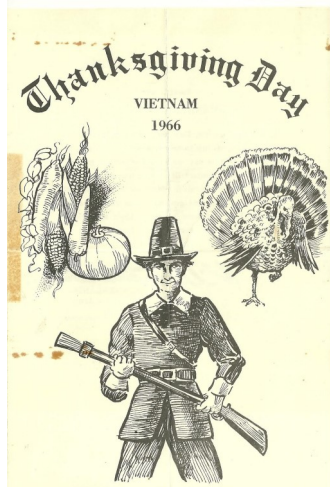


AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - November 2019

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! I hope you can enjoy this holiday with family and friends, surrounded by warmth, friendship and love. We all remember spending Thanksgivings far from home in Vietnam. It was a time filled with thoughts of home and reflection. Now, give thanks that we



1972, Approaching The End

At the start of 1972 there were 156,800 American troops serving in Vietnam. There were 49,514 men drafted that year.

1972 in the Vietnam War saw foreign involvement in South Vietnam slowly declining. Two allies, New Zealand and Thailand, which had contributed a small military contingent, left South Vietnam this year. The United States continued to participate in combat, primarily with air power to assist the South Vietnamese army, while negotiators in Paris tried to hammer out a peace agreement and withdrawal strategy for the United States.

Despite the draw down of troops it was a busy year.

20 January: The head of MACV in South Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams cabled Washington that "the enemy is preparing and positioning his forces for a major offensive.... There is no doubt this is to be a major campaign." Abrams requested additional authority to use U.S. American air power to mount an effective defense.

25 January: President Richard Nixon revealed that National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger had been meeting secretly with North Vietnam representatives for more than 2 years. He also revealed the U.S. peace plan that had been proposed to Hanoi. Nixon proposed that, within six months of an agreement, all U.S. military be withdrawn from South Vietnam, Prisoners of War exchanged, an internationally supervised cease fire implemented, and a presidential election held in South Vietnam. Nixon did not demand the withdrawal of North Vietnamese military forces from South Vietnam.

4 February: President Nixon approved additional authority to General Abrams to use American power to counter the anticipated North Vietnamese offensive. Specifically, the President acknowledged the growing threat from North Vietnamese surface-to-air missiles and authorized the United States Air Force to strike against SAM sites in the southern part of North Vietnam and neighboring Laos.

5 February: President Nixon ordered the draw down of U.S. Air Force assets halted and the reassignment (Operation Bullet Shot) of 150 B-52 heavy bombers to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam and U-Tapao Airfield in Thailand. This was in preparation for the anticipated Communist offensive in South Vietnam.

15 February: The Tet holiday in Vietnam. The anticipated Tet offensive by the North Vietnamese army and the Viet Cong did not occur

21 February: U.S. President Richard Nixon arrived in Beijing, China and met with Mao Zedong in the first direct face to face meeting between a Chinese Communist leader and an American President. North Vietnam feared that the Americans and Chinese would come up with a deal disadvantageous to North Vietnam. With the relationship of the United States improving with both the Soviet Union and China the Vietnam War "began to seem an irrelevant, troublesome historical leftover that might endanger the new relationships."

30 March: The long anticipated offensive by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong began. Called the Nguyễn Huệ Offensive or Chiến dịch Xuân hè 1972 in Vietnamese and the Easter Offensive in English, three NVA army divisions (30,000–40,000 men) with support from tanks and artillery crossed the DMZ or came from Laos to the west to attack one division of the South Vietnamese army. Although a North Vietnamese offensive had been expected, the invasion across the DMZ was a surprise and the South Vietnamese army was ill-prepared. Several small firebases were overrun within hours.

North Vietnam's military objectives in launching what would be a three-pronged offensive were the capture of the cities of Quang Tri in the northern part of South Vietnam, Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc in the south.

4 April: Nixon authorized increased bombing of NVA troops in South Vietnam and B-52 strikes against North Vietnam. He said, "These bastards have never been bombed like they're going to be bombed this time." The North Vietnamese attacked South Vietnamese positions in northern Binh Dinh province from their stronghold in the An Lao Valley. U.S. and South Vietnamese forces had contested the An Lao valley with the 3rd (Yellow Star) NVA division since Operation Masher in January 1966. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces overran many ARVN positions.

Continued on Page 3

4–7 April: The second prong of the North Vietnamese Easter offensive was the movement across the border from Cambodia of an NVA division (about 10,000 men) and an attack on 4,000 ARVN defenders at the Battle of Loc Ninh. Lộc Ninh was a small district town in Binh Long Province, approximately 75 miles north of Saigon. Nearly all of the ARVN defenders were killed or surrendered.

7 April: Proceeding southward from the Battle of Loc Ninh, North Vietnamese soldiers succeeded in surrounding the city of An Loc, the capital of Bin Long province and the objective of the southern prong of the NVA's Easter offensive. The defenders of An Loc would henceforth be supplied and reinforced by air.

10 April: For the first time since November 1967, U.S. B-52s bombed North Vietnam. Their priority targets were Surface to air missile sites. The U.S. called the SAM sites "the most sophisticated air defenses in the history of air warfare.

13 April – July 20: After several days of artillery strikes, the NVA attacked the city of An Loc with tanks and infantry. They were halted at the city outskirts by South Vietnamese defenders and heavy air attacks by the United States. The Battle of An Lộc became a siege that lasted for 66 days and culminated in a victory for South Vietnam. North Vietnam devoted 35,000 soldiers to the battle and siege. The victory at An Loc halted the North Vietnamese advance towards Saigon.

15–17 April: The U.S. carried out heavy B-52 and fighter bomber strikes against Hanoi and Haiphong in Operation Freedom Porch. Nixon said, "we really left them our calling card this weekend."

15–20 April: Anti-war demonstrators protested the bombing of North Vietnam throughout the United States. Hundreds of protesters were arrested.

19 April: Several North Vietnamese MiG-17F fighter-bombers attacked United States Navy warships in the Battle of Đồng Hới. This was the first air attack on U.S. warships of the Vietnam War. One US destroyer was damaged. The U.S. navy sunk several motor torpedo boats and shot down several North Vietnamese war planes and also engaged shore batteries in North Vietnam.

20 April: President Nixon announced that American troops would be reduced in numbers in South Vietnam from 69,000 on this date to 49,000 by 1 July. Many of those being withdrawn from South Vietnam went to Thailand to prosecute the air war from there. Air force strength in Thailand increased from 32,000 to 45,000. In addition, four additional aircraft carriers were stationed off the coast of Vietnam and the number of B-52s stationed in Thailand and Guam was increased from 50 to 200.

22 April: 100,000 people in various cities around the United States protest increased bombing by the US in Vietnam.

23–24 April: After preliminary encounters, the third prong of the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive began in the Central Highlands region. More than a division of the NVA attacked a division of ARVN soldiers at Tân Cảnh Base Camp. By nightfall on 24 April, the North Vietnamese had overrun Tan Canh and nearby Dak To II Base Camp and the South Vietnamese division had disintegrated.

1 May: The city of Quang Tri was captured by the communist forces, the only provincial capital to fall to them during the Easter Offensive. The preceding week saw South Vietnamese casualties, especially near Quang Tri, reach their highest level of the entire Vietnam War. Two combat divisions of South Vietnam collapsed and fled the fighting.

14 May – 9 June: In one of the largest and most intense battles of the Easter Offensive, North Vietnamese forces assaulted the city of Kontum and the nearby South Vietnamese base in the Battle of Kontum. Intensive U.S. airstrikes helped the South Vietnamese defenders fend off the North Vietnamese and secure control of the city and nearby area although fighting in the area would continue.

28 June – 16 September: The Second Battle of Quảng Trị began on June 28 and lasted 81 days until September 16, 1972, when the Army of the Republic of Vietnam defeated the North Vietnamese at the ancient citadel of Quảng Trị and recaptured most of the province.

5–11 August: Task Force Gimlet, Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry undertook the last patrol by American troops in the Vietnam War to seek out communist forces shooting rockets at the city of Da Nang. Two U.S. soldiers were wounded by booby traps. The unit was relieved by ARVN soldiers. Task Force Gimlet departed Vietnam on 11 August.

13 September: South Vietnamese marines recaptured Quang Tri city from North Vietnamese forces. Quang Tri had been the only provincial capital to fall to the North Vietnamese in the Easter offensive.

12 October: Kissinger met with Nixon in Washington to explain the draft peace agreement with North Vietnam. Nixon approved the agreement subject to the agreement of President Thieu of South Vietnam.

22 October: After meeting with Henry Kissinger and despite a letter of support from President Nixon, President Thieu of South Vietnam said he would never sign the draft peace agreement with North Vietnam. He demanded that all North Vietnamese soldiers be required to leave South Vietnam. Kissinger in Saigon cabled Nixon in Washington, "While we have a moral case for bombing North Vietnam when it does not accept our proposals, it seems to be really stretching the point to bomb North Vietnam when it has accepted our proposals and South Vietnam has not."

14 November: In an attempt to overcome President Thieu's objection to the draft peace agreement, President Nixon wrote him that "You have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement, it is my intention to take swift and severe retaliatory action."

18 December: Operation Linebacker II began. Better known as the "Christmas bombings", 129 B-52s and smaller tactical aircraft struck at targets in North Vietnam, including around the city of Hanoi. North Vietnam shot down three B-52s.

26 December: After a Christmas truce, the U.S. conducted the largest B-52 raid of the war utilizing 120 B-52s. The U.S. lost 2 airplanes. 215 civilians were killed by bombs dropped on a heavily populated area of Hanoi. North Vietnam proposed a resumption of peace talks on January 8.

The war went on.

Top Hits From 1972

Troop strengths in 1970 shrunk to 24,200 by years end. In 1972 there were 759 deaths.

Check out the Top Ten songs of 1970!

- #1 Roberta Flack "First Time Ever I Saw Your Face"
- #2 Gilber O'Sullivan "Alone Again (Naturally)"
- #3 Don McLean "American Pie"
- #4 Harry Nilsson "Without You"
- #5 Sammy Davis Jr. "Candy Man"
- #6 Joe Tex "I Gotcha"
- #7 Bill Withers "Lean On Me"
- #8 Mac Davis "Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me"
- #9 Melanie "Brand New Key"
- #10 Wayne Newton "Daddy Don't You Walk So Fast"

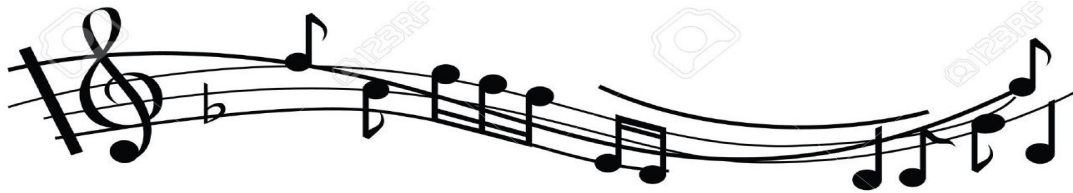


What songs do you immediately associate with Vietnam? Send them to me so I can put them in the next newsletter. Email me at jmccabe51@gmail.com

John Deschane sent in his memory: You asked about a favorite song from my time in Vietnam and I would submit the song "Letter" by the Box Tops. While I was in Vietnam I too received a letter from "my baby" who agreed to marry me (we have been wed 49 years next week) by mail while I was stationed in Qui Nhon! It brings good memories.

Top Ten Albums of 1972

- #1 Rolling Stones "Exile on Main St."
- #2 David Bowie "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars"
- #3 Neil Young "Harvest"
- #4 Steely Dan "Can't Buy a Thrill"
- #5 Tod Rundgren "Something/Anything?"
- #6 Paul Simon "Paul Simon"
- #7 Elton John "Honky Chateau"
- #8 Black Sabbath "Vol. 4"
- #9 Randy Newman "Sail Away"
- #10 Dr. John "Dr. John's Gumbo"



Mike Royko on Veterans Day

In 1993, the late, great Chicago columnist Mike Royko wrote what may be the best column on Veterans Day ever. It's reprinted below. Royko was a Korean War veteran.

I just phoned six friends and asked them what they will be doing on Monday.

They all said the same thing: working.

Me, too.

There is something else we share. We are all military veterans.

And there is a third thing we have in common. We are not employees of the federal government, state government, county government, municipal government, the Postal Service, the courts, banks, or S & Ls, and we don't teach school.

If we did, we would be among the many millions of people who will spend Monday goofing off.

Which is why it is about time Congress revised the ridiculous terms of Veterans Day as a national holiday.

The purpose of Veterans Day is to honor all veterans.

So how does this country honor them?...

...By letting the veterans, the majority of whom work in the private sector, spend the day at their jobs so they can pay taxes that permit millions of non-veterans to get paid for doing nothing.

As my friend Harry put it:

"First I went through basic training. Then infantry school. Then I got on a crowded, stinking troop ship that took 23 days to get from San Francisco to Japan. We went through a storm that had 90 percent of the guys on the ship throwing up for a week.

"Then I rode a beat-up transport plane from Japan to Korea, and it almost went down in the drink. I think the pilot was drunk.

"When I got to Korea, I was lucky. The war ended seven months after I got there, and I didn't kill anybody and nobody killed me.



Continued on Page 6

“But it was still a miserable experience. Then when my tour was over, I got on another troop ship and it took 21 stinking days to cross the Pacific.

“When I got home on leave, one of the older guys at the neighborhood bar — he was a World War II vet — told me I was a ----head because we didn’t win, we only got a tie.

“So now on Veterans Day I get up in the morning and go down to the office and work.

“You know what my nephew does? He sleeps in. That’s because he works for the state.

“And do you know what he did during the Vietnam War? He ducked the draft by getting a job teaching at an inner-city school.

“Now, is that a raw deal or what?”

Of course that’s a raw deal. So I propose that the members of Congress revise Veterans Day to provide the following:

- All veterans — and only veterans — should have the day off from work. It doesn’t matter if they were combat heroes or stateside clerk-typists.

Anybody who went through basic training and was awakened before dawn by a red-neck drill sergeant who bellowed: “Drop your whatsis and grab your socks and fall out on the road,” is entitled.

- Those veterans who wish to march in parades, make speeches or listen to speeches can do so. But for those who don’t, all local gambling laws should be suspended for the day to permit vets to gather in taverns, pull a couple of tables together and spend the day playing poker, blackjack, craps, drinking and telling lewd lies about lewd experiences with lewd women. All bar prices should be rolled back to enlisted men’s club prices, Officers can pay the going rate, the stiff.

- All anti-smoking laws will be suspended for Veterans Day. The same hold for all misdemeanor laws pertaining to disorderly conduct, non-felonious brawling, leering, gawking and any other gross and disgusting public behavior that does not harm another individual.

- It will be a treasonable offense for any spouse or live-in girlfriend (or boyfriend, if it applies) to utter the dreaded words: “What time will you be home tonight?”

- Anyone caught posing as a veteran will be required to eat a triple portion of chipped beef on toast, with Spam on the side, and spend the day watching a chaplain present a color-slide presentation on the horrors of VD.

- Regardless of how high his office, no politician who had the opportunity to serve in the military, but didn’t, will be allowed to make a patriotic speech, appear on TV, or poke his nose out of his office for the entire day.

Any politician who defies this ban will be required to spend 12 hours wearing headphones and listening to tapes of President Clinton explaining his deferments.

Now, deal the cards and pass the tequila.



Millions of Veterans to Be Memorialized Online in VA Legacy Project

The Department of Veterans Affairs earlier this month launched the Veterans Legacy Memorial project, aimed at memorializing online forever the more than 3.7 million veterans interred at the 136 national cemeteries run by the VA's National Cemetery Administration.

The project will begin with the basics on each veteran's memorial page -- name, dates of birth and death, dates of service and other information usually included on a headstone, according to a VA news release Monday.

No final decisions have been made, but the future capabilities of the memorial project may include the opportunity for families, survivors and other veterans to add photos and share memories of the deceased veteran on the memorial page.

In the future, veterans buried in private cemeteries with headstones provided by the VA may also be added to the online memorial, officials said in the release.

"Veterans Legacy Memorial ensures 'no Veteran ever dies' by honoring the legacy of our nation's Veterans, not just in our cemeteries, but in a new and innovative digital setting," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said in a statement. "It enhances the onsite national cemetery experience and extends the experience to those who otherwise are unable to physically visit the cemetery."

The National Cemetery Administration, working with the VA's Office of Information and Technology, built the architecture for the site, starting with the information contained on every veteran's headstone.

The initial phase of the memorial project will allow the public to search the site for veterans, find out where they are buried and read the basic details of their lives and service, the VA said.

The Veterans Legacy Memorial will cover only the 136 cemeteries administered by the National Cemetery Administration and does not include national cemeteries run by the military, such as Arlington National Cemetery, which is administered by the Army, or overseas cemeteries managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

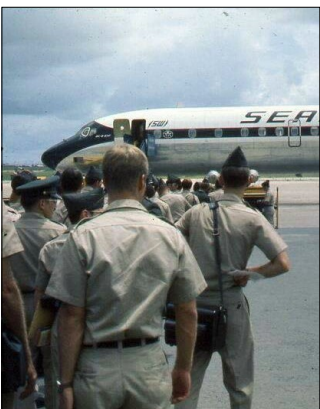
Burial Rites For Donut Dollies

Pete Poirier has been leading a campaign for our wonderful Donut Dollies to be allowed to be buried in National Cemeteries next to the men and women they served with. He has been working tirelessly to this end. Pete has been writing to members of congress working diligently towards this end.

This is his latest letter:

I am a veteran of two tours in Vietnam. My Veterans' Day wish is that Congress would authorize the Veterans Administration to amend the criteria for eligibility for burial in veterans' cemeteries to include Red Cross volunteers who served in combat zones, women we knew as "Donut Dollies". They have earned the right to be buried in the same ground as the soldiers with whom they served if that is their or their families' wish. America should honor their service and contributions. They endured the same risks of PTSD, exposure to Agent Orange and enemy fire as military personnel in Vietnam. They served at the request of the President of the United States and the name of fairness, equity and justice they should be recognized.

Good job Pete and lest us know how we can help.



THE SOLITARY WORLD OF A VET

It is important for those who have never served to take a moment to understand the solitary world of Veterans.

Millions of Veterans are and have been successful in all endeavors. They are doctors, lawyers, business people, and a thousand other professions. Not all have PTSD; not all are the troubled, brooding, street corner homeless guy, although they exist and need help desperately.

No matter how successful Veterans might be, more often than not, Veterans are often alone, mentally and spiritually each day and for the rest of their lives.

Continued on Page 8

Veterans stories are all different, but some elements of the common experience exist.

They also lived a daily camaraderie that cannot be repeated in the civilian world. In fact, many veterans spend the rest of their lives seeking the same esprit de corps that simply is absent from their civilian lives and jobs.

They long to spend just 15 minutes back with the best friends they ever had, friends that are scattered to every corner of the earth, and some to the afterlife itself.

All Veterans have these thoughts nearly every day. Some may experience them for fractions of a second, or for minutes at a time. They replay over and over again like an endless 24-hour war movie.

Part of the solitary world of the veterans is being able to enjoy complete bliss doing absolutely nothing.

This is a trait grating to civilians who must constantly search for endless stimuli. Unbeknownst to them, the greatest thrill of all is just being alive.

A lot of veterans have an Obi-wan Kenobi calmness. After what they went through, how bad can anything really be?

So many, if not all Veterans are haunted by visions of horror and death, by the guilt of somehow surviving and living the good life, when some they knew are gone. They sometimes, strangely wish that they were back in those dreadful circumstances, not to experience the dirt and horror and terror and noise and violence again, but to be with the only people a Vet really knows, other Veterans. As a result, they walk around each day lost in their own special story.

Most civilians are oblivious to the solitary life of the Veteran. But, it's there. It's the same eternal and universal philosophy, whether you fought in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq or Afghanistan. The experiences may have been different, but the emotions are the same.

A problem with the solitary world of the vet is that the Veterans have a hard time explaining what he or she did to those who didn't serve. Some vets want to talk, but they have no outlet. Maybe their only outlet is watching a war movie or reading a book about the conflict they were in.

How often do people say, "Grandpa never talks about Korea." That's because Grandpa knows no one can understand except other vets. That's because Grandpa knows most people don't care.

Civilians must understand that for Veterans nothing is ever the same again. Their senses can be suddenly illuminated by the slightest sound or smell or sights of death all around, a living version of Dante's Inferno; sounds so loud that they can only be described as Saving Private Ryan in surround sound on steroids; smells vast and horrific; rotting death, burning fuel and equipment, rubber, animals and...people.

Part of this taciturn mentality is that vets speak another language, a strange and archaic language of their past.

How do you talk to civilians about "fire for effect" or "grid 7310" or "shake and bake" or "frag orders" or "10 days and a wake up" or a thousand and one other terms that are mystifying to the real world?

You can't.

All of this adds to the solitary world of the vet. Some are better at handling life afterward than others. Some don't seem affected at all, but they are. They just hide it. Some never return to normal. But, what is normal to a vet anymore?



Christmas in Vietnam

We all remember those hot Christmas days across the pond. Please share your memories with the group.

Email me your stories for next months newsletter.

jmccabe51@gmail.com



NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

Medina, Ambrocio J. (SP/4)
10303 FM 775
Floresville, TX 78114
830-391-6321

AVEL Central, Phu Loi: 1968-1969

medinal3691@yahoo.com

MOS: 35K

Other units assigned in Vietnam: F Trp 3/7 Cav

TAPS

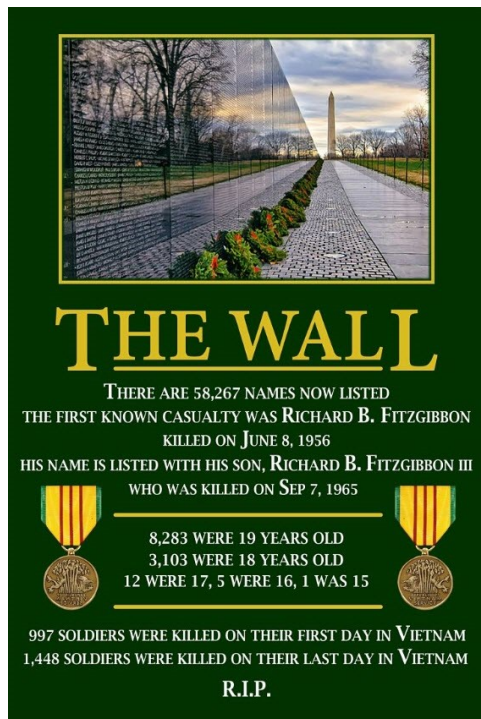
None Submitted

PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

Richard Fletcher (Avel Central) has a new address: 376 11th Square SW, Vero Beach, FL 32962-3443



THE WALL

THERE ARE 58,267 NAMES NOW LISTED
THE FIRST KNOWN CASUALTY WAS RICHARD B. FITZGIBBON
KILLED ON JUNE 8, 1956
HIS NAME IS LISTED WITH HIS SON, RICHARD B. FITZGIBBON III
WHO WAS KILLED ON SEP 7, 1965

8,283 WERE 19 YEARS OLD
3,103 WERE 18 YEARS OLD
12 WERE 17, 5 WERE 16, 1 WAS 15

997 SOLDIERS WERE KILLED ON THEIR FIRST DAY IN VIETNAM
1,448 SOLDIERS WERE KILLED ON THEIR LAST DAY IN VIETNAM
R.I.P.

IN-COUNTRY



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES...



AVEL VIETNAM

November 2019 Newsletter

