

1/92



Field Artillery

# NEWSLETTER

Fall-Winter  
2017

Happy  Holidays



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<b>REMINDER</b> Annual dues: \$15	
Make check out to David Powell	
Mail to: David Powell	
130 Stanley Court	
Vacaville, CA 95682-6425	



2017 San Antonio, TX Reunion

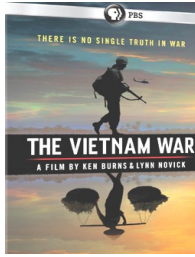


This year's reunion had 54 attendees of which 24 were wives. Scheduled events were held at the El Tropicana Hotel and VFW Post 76. Four presentations were made: Texas Tech Vietnam Archives, Battle of Phu Nhon, BOP and its effect on artillery crews, and a film about the escape from Firebase Kate. An open discussion was also held on the future well being of the 1/92 FA Association. Members also participated in the Veterans Day Parade. Invited guests were Ray Ambrozak, Phu Nhon District Advisor 1971 and Ron Milam, Ph.D., Texas Tech University. Check [bravecannons.org](http://bravecannons.org) for reunion photos. A big thank you to Alex and Dolly Morales for hosting this year's gettogether. Those present at the reunion are listed below-name, battery, year(s):

- |                              |                         |                            |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mathias Aquino SVC/67-68     | Clyde Jonas C/70-71     | Bruce Peterson C/67        |
| Steve Benthine C/70-71       | Daniel Kane B/68-69     | Weldon Plympton C/67       |
| William Campbell HHB/67-69   | Allen Keller C/67       | Bo Prehar HHB&A/68-69      |
| William Davis SVC/69-70      | Raymond Ledet B/69-70   | EJ Pruitt C/71             |
| Charles Elias A/C 71         | Ivan Lee SVC/68-69      | Robert Stonehill C/69-71   |
| Daniel Farley A/68-69        | Dennis McGuire A/70-71  | Michael Swasta HHB/68-70   |
| Charles Gall HHB/68-70       | Tom Meyer SVC/69        | Stanley Sykes, Jr. A/70-71 |
| Roger Hargrove C/70-71       | Mark Mittleman C/70-71  | Greg Turner A/70-71        |
| Christopher Haydon HHB/68-69 | Alex Morales C/7071     | Kenneth Wells A/70-71      |
| Bob Humphrey C/7071          | Dennis Moss HHB&A/70-71 | Jerry Winfrey A/70-71      |

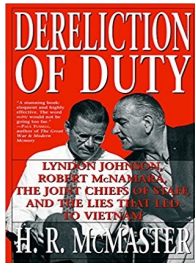
**VIETNAM WAR DOCUMENTARY**

The much awaited PBS Vietnam War documentary debuted October 2017 to mixed reviews. It presents a good account of how we became involved in the war but then it unravels focusing on those who opposed the war and the NVA/VC. The producers state “First and foremost, we want to honor the heroism and sacrifices of those who served and died.” The documentary fails to do that. What the producers did not grasp is that the nation turned on those it sent to fight in Vietnam and that it has carried this guilt for the past 50 years. This phenomenon is what needs to be researched, explained, and documented.



**BOOK REVIEW: DERELICTION OF DUTY**

*Dereliction of Duty* written by H.G. McMaster focuses on the early years of the Vietnam War and the mistakes made in dealing with it. McMaster, the national security advisor to President Trump, shows the strife between President Johnson, his cabinet and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Robert McNamara as the Secretary of Defense is seen as a key culprit. His obsession with numbers, know-it-all attitude, and his access to the President resulted in abuse of power that ultimately led the country astray.

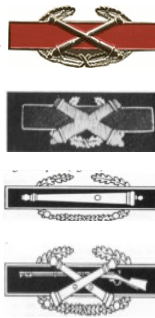


The “body count” metric used to gauge progress in the war evolved from McNamara. At the artillery level, observed fire missions required damage assessments. Those on the ground often could not see or go into the target area. Thus body counts became an estimate and inflated as they made their way up the chain of command.

Let us hope that McMaster has learned his lesson well and that the mistakes of the past are not being repeated.

**ARTILLERY COMBAT BADGE**

The push to have an artillery combat badge began in 1950 according to the *Combat Forces Journal*. This publication was a combined infantry and artillery magazine at the time, and the subject drew a lot of interest. Over the years, several designs have been proposed with none being approved by DOD. Today’s Combat Action Badge has quelled the debate somewhat, but there are still those that would like to see a branch combat badge.



**US MILITARY STRENGTH**

The Heritage Foundation has released its 2017 Index of US Military Strength. It is a sobering report that states our military strength is marginal but moving towards being weak. Budget cuts and policy decisions have decimated the US military in terms of manpower, equipment, and readiness. Only three of the Army’s 58 Combat Brigades are ready to fight now against a key threat. Artillery lags behind that of major powers in numbers, caliber, range, and lethality.

**U.S. Military Power**

	VERY WEAK	WEAK	MARGINAL	STRONG	VERY STRONG
Army		✓			
Navy			✓		
Air Force			✓		
Marine Corps			✓		
Nuclear			✓		
<b>OVERALL</b>			✓		

**Threats to U.S. Vital Interests**

	SEVERE	HIGH	ELEVATED	GUARDED	LOW
Russia		✓			
Iran		✓			
Middle East Terrorism		✓			
Af-Pak Terrorism		✓			
China		✓			
North Korea		✓			
<b>OVERALL</b>		✓			

<http://index.heritage.org/military/2017/assessments/>

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/07/us-army-95-percent-brigade-comb..>

**FIELD ARTILLERY MODERNIZATION**

Artillery efforts at modernization are focused on extending range and precision. Artillery units in Afghanistan are using screw-on-fuse kits that convert standard 155mm rounds into precision guided munitions. Researchers at Picatinny Arsenal are working on extending the towed 155mm howitzer tube by six feet. This will double its range. A Humvee mounted 105mm howitzer is also being explored. It is called the Hawkeye and can be emplaced in about 30 seconds. It has 70% less recoil than the M119 and weighs 2539lbs.



**BRAVE CANNONS BOOK**

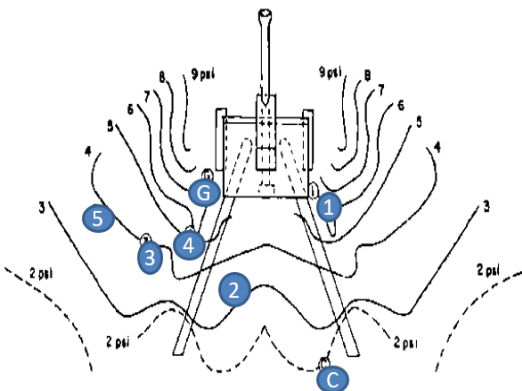
The book has sold out. It is a private publication intended for our members. It is no longer in print. World Wide Books on Amazon.com has it listed for sale at \$500. Hang on to it!

## BLAST OVERPRESSURE (BOP) UPDATE

Blackbox Biometrics, the maker of the blast gauges used by the Army, is stating that the majority of the brain traumas are occurring in a training environment and not on the battlefield. This is happening as the result of firing heavy weapon systems that subject crews to repetitive, low level blast effects. Blackbox concludes that this causes trauma to the head that may result in long term cumulative brain damage, reduced cognitive performance, and finally, deterioration and disease. The Army stopped using the blast gauges last year but it is investigating the low-level blast effects on weapon crews.



The weapon systems referred to are mortars, recoilless rifles, and artillery. Below is a diagram of a 105mm towed artillery howitzer showing blast wave patterns, PSI, and crew positions. The blast wave patterns will vary with the charge, elevation, and surrounding structures. The PSI danger to crews is as follows: 3 psi-temporary hearing loss, 5 psi-ear drums can be ruptured, 20 psi-internal organs can be damaged, 50+ psi-death can occur. If you served in an



artillery unit, you probably suffered brain trauma according to these new findings.

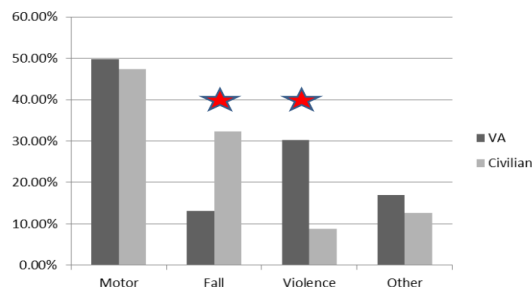
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhimsK9hN-I>

<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tc/fulltext/u2/293292.pdf>

## BRAIN HEALTH

Brain injuries are a major health concern in the US according to the Center for Disease Control. Research released by Onemind.org shows that Post Traumatic Stress affects 7.7 million adults and that 5.3 million veterans are affected by Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Those who have been diagnosed with brain related injuries will experience greater risk of mental deterioration as they age. The chart below shows the leading causes of TBI for veterans and civilians.

Veterans experience more violence because injuries incurred on active duty carryover when they separate.



<https://www.onemind.org/The-Crisis>

## VETERAN SUICIDE

The VA released an updated report on veteran suicide in September 2017. It is the largest and most extensive report of its kind. It reveals that 20 veterans a day are committing suicide, and of those, 14 are not in the VA health care system. Compared to the general population, veteran suicides are 22% higher. The report also shows that 65% of the veterans who commit suicide are 50 years or older. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US with approximately 43,000 deaths each year. The VA has a new initiative called REACH VET that identifies high risk veterans. Each veteran is called by mental health professionals to see if assistance is needed. Access to the VA Crisis Hotline, 800-273-8255, has improved as well. It can be the first step in finding help.

<http://WWW.MOAA.ORG/Content/Publications-and-Media/News-Articles/2017-News-Article...>

## NEW VETERAN ID CARD

All honorably discharged veterans can apply online to receive a new VA ID card effective November 2017. The card proves a veteran's military service. It eliminates having to show a DD214. Go to Vets.gov to register.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE SCAMS

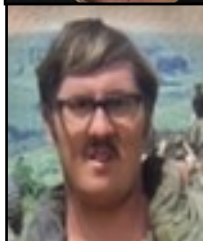
This year has been filled with natural disasters from coast to coast. Scam artists are quick to take advantage of this by asking for donations. Charitynavigator.org or guidestar.org are good resources to check the legitimacy of an organization the callers say they represent.

## AGENT ORANGE UPDATE

Several new presumptive illnesses have been approved by the VA secretary. They must pass Congress before being made public. Bladder cancer, strokes, hypertension, and Parkinson's disease are likely candidates.

## FALLEN BROTHERS

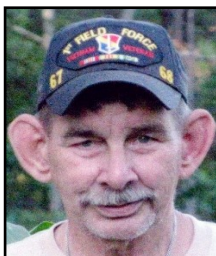
**Barry D. Baird** Barry died August 11, 2017 after a long struggle with cancer. He was 67 years old. Barry served as a cannoneer in Charlie Battery from 1970 to 1971. He took part in the Battle of Phu Nhon for which the battery was awarded the Valorous Unit Citation. As a regular at our reunions, he will be remembered for his warm smile, caring attitude, and how proud he was to have served his country. He is buried in Brush Creek Cemetery, Irwin, PA.



**Billy F. Walden Sr.** Billy passed away March 26, 2016 at the age of 68. He was assigned to Bravo Battery from 1970 to 1971. After leaving the Army, he worked in construction until his retirement in 1988. He was laid to rest at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Bloomington, IL.



**Hugh G. Morrison** Hugh, 68, was taken away May 8, 2017. A member of Bravo Battery, 1967-1968, he took part in the 1967 Battle of Dak To for which he received the Purple Heart. Bravo battery received the Presidential Unit Citation for its part in providing fire support to the 4th ID and the 173rd. Airborne Brigade. Hugh loved the outdoors and was a fishing guide for 25 years. Hugh is interred at Evergreen Memorial Park, Athens, GA.



**George T. Barton Jr.** George died April 14, 2005 at the young age of 59 after a long illness. He was assigned to Service Battery from 1969 -1970. Upon leaving the Army, he and his brother started a contracting company of which he was president for 30 years. George was active in his community and is remembered for humor, big heart, and generosity. He loved to golf and made many friends on the links. His remains are located at Gloucester County Veterans Cemetery, Williamstown, NJ.

## MEMBER PROFILES

**Dennis McGuire** Dennis served in Alpha Battery from 1970 -1971. Although a 13B, he did not receive artillery training at Ft. Sill. Instead, he was utilized as a handyman because of his civilian carpentry skills. When he arrived at the 1/92, he was not sent to the field but used in the rear to work on bunkers and barracks, deliver supplies and ammo to units, lay commo wire, and even help out in the arms room.

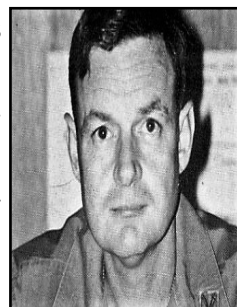


Dennis says, "I did all kinds of work at Artillery Hill but that did not keep me from going to the firebases. I saw trucks get hit with RPGs, but the thing that affected me most was the death of two of my closest friends. They were sent to Firebase Six to help operate a targeting device. They were killed within days of arrival. That could have been me."



When Dennis left the Army, he started a floor laying business. "It was very successful as I traveled the country installing floors in big box stores like K-Mart and Wall Mart. The experience at the 1/92 made me the man I am today."

**Harry Warren** Harry was assigned as the battalion executive officer from 1970 to 1971. He had a prior tour in Vietnam from 1966-1967 with the 1/83rd FA as a liaison officer and battery commander.



"My time with the 1/92 was a busy one. Vietnamization was in full swing and most of our fire support was mainly to combat support units participating in community development like engineers improving road networks. The last part of my tour included the Battle of Phu Nhon and the fall of Firebase Six. During my tour, there were three battalion command changes. This was hard on the staff. Discipline was a growing problem due to constant personnel turbulence and downtime as a result of demobilization."

Harry retired from the Army after 28 1/2 years of service and then worked another 26 years for the Defense Intelligence Agency. He served his country well for over half a century.