



PANTHER TRACKS



December 2015

HO! HO! HO!

From our humble abode to all of you, we wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Season's Greetings or Bah Humbug!!!! Whatever greeting is to your liking, just enjoy this festive season! Also wishes for a Healthy, Prosperous New Year!

This past September we held our very first mini get-together (Reunion). We met in Gas City, Indiana at the Best Western Plus Hotel. I believe all who attended were pleased with the accommodations. We visited LZ Kokomo where over 30,000 veterans were in attendance.



We were greeted with Huey's flying past our camp site on a frequent basis. It is a place every vet should visit at least once. We also had a second camp ground at the local fairgrounds, away from the hustle and bustle of LZ Kokomo. There we had a cook-out, sat in lawn chairs and had some quality time to talk and chow down. One negative was what I coined the "shuttle from hell". Some of our group took an extended tour trying to get to the fairgrounds. Trial and error is always part of an event held the first time, but I hope all who attended had a decent time.

Great news --- our association was honored at the mini get-together with three new members:

From Washington State ----- Roger (Top) Towers

Nevada ----- Everett Votaw

West Virginia ----- Dennis Carl and his wife Donna

Some of our members who attended the mini get-together



Thank you all for attending the Kokomo mini get-together. I am glad I had the chance to sit down and talk to all of you. A really good group of guys, I hope all of you get to meet them in the future.

Larry Gazvoda and Kathy Messer from Indianapolis joined us. Larry was a scout during the same time I was over the pond. We experienced some of the same action. It was fantastic to see Jim and Jane Brand at the get-together. We haven't seen them in a number of years. Jim let out a lot of feelings regarding his time over the pond. I was so glad to hear him express his feelings. Keeping things bottled up inside is not healthy. Richard (Hunter) Hunt and his wife Donella were also in attendance. Hunter carved some cool looking canes that were for purchase in the hospitality room. He told me he would carve me a termite infested wooden leg if I should ever be in need of one. I told Hunter, I would prefer a petrified wooden leg. He retorted saying how about a skate board on a broom stick.

Some members went shopping, played golf, swimming, sight-seeing and to a shooting range during our get together. A Cracker Barrel restaurant was in walking distance from the hotel so many of us dined there during our stay. We had a large hospitality room to accommodate everyone including our PX. Our treasurer, Bob (Zep) Zepernick ran the PX. He had deals for everyone except me. Everything I bought he charged me \$34.00 even if it was a \$1.00 item.

I would personally like to thank our association President, Ron Martin for bringing his grill and being the chef. Ron also brought the corn on the cob that we all enjoyed. Thanks to

our fine ladies, Donella Hunter, Donna Carl and my wife Maureen for prepping the corn and burgers at the cook out. Thanks to Eddie (Magnet Ass) Stewart for bringing tables and chairs along with screen tents. Thanks to Larry (Festus) Stephenson for bringing a canopy tent along with buying wood for the fire pits. Thank you to everyone who donated for the meat, side dishes and cake we all enjoyed at the cook out. Thanks to Rose Bowers and Linda Zepernick for all the help they gave at the hospitality room, etc. Thanks to everyone who took the time to go back to the two campsites and help dismantle and load the vehicles that were at the campsites. Thanks to everyone who helped with the emptying and loading of the hospitality room. And a Big Thank You to everyone who attended our very first mini get-together. If I missed thanking anyone, I apologize but let me know so I can add you to the next newsletter. Nobody goes unrecognized on my watch.

Zep, Larry (Festus) Stephenson and myself closed the hospitality bar the last night. I finally gave up after 2:00 a.m., they lasted another half hour. That 7 hour trip home was not one of my better times with only 3 hours of sleep.

An unscheduled business meeting was called to order by our Association President, Ron Martin, which turned out to be very beneficial since we covered a number of issues and voted on them.

- Our next main REUNION will be held in Traverse City, Michigan tentatively September 8, 2016 to September 11, 2016. All details pertaining to that reunion will be in the Spring newsletter edition coming your way in April 2016.
- Effective January 1, 2016, the annual membership dues will be \$35.00 per year and the Life membership one-time fee will be \$169.00.
- The association is looking at museums that will accept and display any and all artifacts any of us acquired over the pond. Some of us have items that we treasure, but like me, I do not want them showing up in a garage sale for a dime, sold by family members who have no clue what those items represent. Captain Stovall and Roger (Top) Towers know of places that may be willing to accept such items. If any of you know of such a place or museum, kindly send me the information.

- And finally, our very own Rose Bowers was voted as the first President to the newly founded - Judy Stovall Memorial Ladies Auxiliary. Rose has made the following request:

To the spouses and lady friends of the 69th Armor members - a ladies auxiliary has been formed by the Association to help with the minor details at the reunions - such as meals, decorations and other to be determined "stuff". I am honored to have been selected as the 1st President of the Judy Stovall Memorial Ladies Auxiliary. Now I am calling upon other ladies asking for your suggestions, help, ideas, etc with these details. My goal is to work together and have fun helping with the reunions. Please e-mail me or call me if you are interested in helping. My e-mail is: mbowers@roadrunner.com, My home phone 419-399-3936 or cell phone 419-769-1484. As the guys would say, many THANKS!

Congratulations Rose!!! I truly believe your position should be an indefinite post.

Other News:

- John Edwards - I received an e-mail from John on 10/22/15 advising that he had a couple of medications that put him in shock in the middle of the night on or about 9/12/15, he drove himself to the emergency room about 20 miles away (for which he did not remember anything). When he got to the ER he coded on the floor. The doctors worked frantically to save John's life. He was flown to a regional hospital where he spent 30 days in a coma and on a ventilator. He came out of the coma around 10/12/15. As of the date of the e-mail John was in intense rehab in Asheville, NC. Luckily there was no brain damage. We wish John a full and speedy recovery.
- On the mend - best wishes to our following association brothers who are battling:
 Larry "Cruit" Lingle - MS and has had two neurological trigeminal nerve surgeries
 David Cooke - Ulcerated colitis and diabetes.
 James Gingery - Prostate cancer and undergoing radiation therapy. The entire association want you men back on TRACK ASAP. I am pulling double guard duty waiting for Larry "Cruit" Lingle to get back.
- John Wear sent in the following:

In 1976 John took his first pottery class and produced his first pot at a high school continuing education course in a high school in Minneapolis. For the next almost-40 years, making pots was a great hobby.



He took more pottery classes and produced pots in Minnesota, Kansas City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC. He sold his first pot at a yard sale in Rockville,

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Maryland and after tasting the "financial success" of selling his work, he kept up the hobby with the aspiration of one day having pottery as a "real job." Being employed "full time" reality did not happen until he retired in 2009. He now makes pots in his own home studio and sells them at different local farmers markets. John says, "I am glad that I don't have to rely on my pottery sales to put food on the table because if I did, I would have starved to death twenty years ago! But I do enjoy creating nice things out of what I call "dirt and water."

John Wear's hobby looks pretty therapeutic to me.



- 1972 Chevrolet Mike Bowers' Nova:
- Carl Albrecht's toys a Camaro and Firebird:



- I would also like to take the opportunity to thank James Gingery for sending me two books of Purple Heart stamps. Your donation is very much appreciated.
- Thanks to everyone who has donated funds to our association's this year. Your generosity will help our association to provide better reunions for us all, which every member and our fine ladies so much deserve.
- Association Life Member, John Jamison, mailed me a copy of his thoughts on action by the 1/69th Armor Bn. in the Phan-Thiet area in 1968. Due to the lack of space, which would require much more postage, I decided to send this interesting recollection to any and all who would like to receive a copy by e-mail. It is a great read, I am sure all will enjoy. I will also have copies available in the hospitality room at the Traverse City, Michigan reunion. E-mail me for a requested copy at M48A3delta@aol.com.

- Once again, if anyone has something they want added to the next newsletter (I am also the volunteer complaint department) contact me by e-mail M48A3delta@aol.com or call me on the tele 636-933-0605 (if no answer leave a message and I will call you back)
- Lastly, if you want the newsletter sent via e-mail, please send me your request at M48A3delta@aol.com.

21 MAIN GUN SALUTE!

The worst part of writing the newsletter is informing all of you about the passing of our Tanker brothers and sisters of our association. Heroes everyone!!! Lest we forget!!!

Wayne Anderson (7/11/38 - 2/11/15) - Coral Springs, Florida, survived by wife Joyce and family.

Herbert Arviso - KIA 10/13/69 Panel 17W, Row 119 - the entire 69th Armor Association send their sincere belated condolences to his surviving aunt, Alberta Smith and his niece Shari Bowie.

Stanley (Pineapple) Fuller, Jr (8/22/48 - 5/26/15) - survived by wife Cathy and family and was a dear friend to our brother Jim Brand.

Paul (Preacher) Limerick (7/23/47 - 8/19/15) Broken Arrow, OK, survived by wife Connie. Paul was our association Chaplain for many years.

Benny Lucas (1948 - 9/14/15) Murfreesboro, TN, survived by wife Ronne and family.

1st Lt. David Nolan - KIA 8/15/67 - the entire 69th Armor Association send their sincere belated condolences to his wife Janet, sons Mike, Doug and daughter Alicia - daughter Patti (deceased).

David Schlieper (3/7/34 - 1/9/15) Topsham, ME, survived by his wife Nancy and family.

The entire 69th Armor Association send their sincere condolences to their families. May all the above family members have the gift of tranquility during these trying holidays.

If you have news of any of our brothers or supporting sisters who have moved on to the Big Tank Park in the sky, kindly send me the information so I can inform our association members.

Sound Off !!!!! 1, 2, 3, 4

Righted a wrong ---- association member, Richard (Hunter) Hunt, e-mailed me in early October asking if I could look into a request that seems to have been pending for years. Tanker brother, 1st Lt. David A. Nolan, KIA 8/15/67. Hunter informed me he has been lobbying for years to get Honorary status for our brother's surviving family. I sent out an e-mail to our association officers and asked for an expedited vote to install our tanker brother's surviving family members as Honorary members. I received the needed yea votes within 72 hours. I informed Hunter his request had been granted. He in turn informed the family of their Honorary status. Why did this take years to get done? I for one am ashamed that it took years to get Honorary status for our hero brother's family. This was an injustice and I personally apologize to the entire Nolan family.

If anyone knows of another injustice, regarding one of our brothers and their families, contact me so we get any and all wrongs righted. I salute Hunter for bringing this to my attention and I salute our association officers for expediting their yea votes to correct this injustice.

Letter to the Editor:

After years of searching, I had almost given up. I could not find the guys who guarded my 6 in Vietnam. Then my son found the 69th Armor Association and I called. Lt Col Jim Walker, rest in peace, answered, said he knew some of the guys I was looking for. I joined the Association and have enjoyed our reunions. How great it was to see the guys again, get to know their wives. And I gained new friends, people I never knew but we all had a shared past and a love of Armor. Visited several places, thanks to the reunions. Loved Washington and The Wall, The Tomb of the Unknown, Arlington. Hell of a reunion. Everyone who has served in the Military deserves to visit D.C., the history is over-whelming. Might say it was on my bucket list. That's the good. Now the bad. I fear for the future of the Association. It has been a shining light, a guiding light, helping soldiers find their way. Helped me. Not only Army, but Marines too. It's not that our present leaders haven't performed beautifully, they have.....and many THANKS to them. Now I look at the obits, the Association's founders and leaders, some have already passed, others are, like me, just thankful for another day. It's time. Time for our younger members to step forward and become leaders in the Association. As I understand it, several, if not all, positions will be up for election.....or open to volunteers at our next reunion in 2016. We need our young blood to keep the light shining as we still have soldiers looking for the way home. Maybe a swift kick to the shins (or another part of their anatomy) will get their attention. Make plans now, attend the reunion, vote. Be all you can be. Sound familiar? Sure, I know. I'm just a "member", but this bothers me. If I don't speak up, who will? The question is: Who will answer?

Carl Albrecht
Lavsniglet1@aol.com

(this is the view of one member and not of the newsletter editor. Any rebuttals should be directed to Carl Albrecht)

In Closing:

Tis' the season for giving. If you can find it within your means to donate a monetary gift, send all monetary donations to our treasurer, Bob (Zep) Zepernick. No donation is too small, all donations will help benefit our association by defraying some of the cost for hospitality room beverages and snacks, etc. They will also help offset the cost for Regimental dinner wines, decorations, etc. Thank you if you can help out!!!!

Finally, I never went on R & R over the pond ---- so I decided to take a much belated R & R. I will take 2 entire weeks of R & R, drinking R & R (Rock & Rye)

President, Ron Martin - Home phone - 231-843-1843, ronaldmartin49431@gmail.com
Vice President, Grover Bishop - Cell phone - 574-721-4967, grover.bishop@gmail.com
Secretary, Rose Bowers - Home phone - 419-399-3936, mbowers@roadrunner.com
Treasurer, Bob Zepernick - Home phone - 330-821-2731, ztank32@aol.com
Honorary Colonel, John Stovall , capstovallb169@aol.com
Regimental Chaplin, Will Savidge, Home phone - 419-396-7564, wfsav@aol.com
Newsletter Volunteer, Bob (Jr.) Donat - Home phone - 636-933-0605, M48A3delta@aol.com

Speed & Power

If you are not a Life Member, your dues are due. Please detach below and mail your dues to: Bob Zepernick, 1459 Fairview Place, Alliance, OH 44601-378, e-mail address: ztank32@aol.com, home phone 330-821-2731. **Makes checks payable to 69th Armor Association.** Thank you.

Name: _____

Annual Dues of \$35.00: _____

Life Membership one-time fee of \$169.00: _____

Donation: \$ _____