

NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER #3 --- SPECIAL STORY ISSUE ---

**2018 NDQSA 36th
ANNUAL REUNION
GETTYSBURGH, PA
June 5th – 10th**

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Dear Brothers and Sisters

It's time for me to write a little something. December 17th and thinking about the holidays.

Wishing everyone very merry times for you and your families. I wish Christmas is a really special

time for troops that are away from loved ones. I think of them and remember how it was for us. Silent Night had a special meaning in Nam. Hope Santa is good to everyone! Enough of that. This is my next to last President's Message. I will be finishing my fourth and final year as President in Gettysburg and I hope that many of you can attend.

The reunion is coming together. Bob and Bruce have been working out the final details. Hotel reservations can be made. Gettysburg will be a great place to get together for our 2018 reunion. Have some fun and learn a little history about our great country. Looking forward to seeing everyone in June.

Forever yours

[John F. Huelsenbeck](#)
President NDQSA

FEATURED STORIES:

**Gettysburg Preview
Cold Case - 1971**

MEMBERS THAT HAVE PASSED

Robert Elftmann, C-1/44 '70-71 10Jun17 MN
William Mulligan, B-4/60 '67 27Feb17 NJ
Jason Crook, I-29th SLT, '68-70 10Aug16 NH
Richard Alley Jr, H-4/60 '71-72 18Apr17 VA
James Dowdy, 4/60 '69-70 22May17 KY

They will be missed and we give honor to their service, their lives and their families.

NEW MEMBERS/CONTACTS

James Stephen, B-4/60 '70-71
Robert Shelton, B-4/60 '71-72
Robert Harrington, B-4/60 '71
John 'Igor' Steele, B/4-60 '70-71
John Cooke (clerk) B-4/60 '70-71
[Dewey Broach, B-4/60 '70-71](#)
Andy Houchins, B-4/60 '69-71

If the name is blue and underlined, you can click on it and send a message to the new member. Maybe he knows someone you served with? Send him an email!!

DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

NOTE: For some reason I cannot email to anyone with an embarqmail.com account! Two pieces of contact information that frequently change are cell phone numbers and email addresses. Typically there are about a half dozen emails sent out each year to every member with a valid (current) email address on record with the Historian. **If you (or a spouse) have an email address and you have not**

received any emails from the Historian, it is time for you to record your email address with him. Simply [click here](#) and identify yourself clearly (full name). You might as well confirm your telephone numbers in the same email. When an email is sent to a bad email address, the Historian tries to contact the member by phone to determine their status. This is a time consuming effort, but it does give him a chance to talk to members.

CELL PHONE NUMBER UPDATES

We have a lot of families that routinely change cell phones or move away from land-line phone to only cell phones. Also many inactive members have not had any contact with the historian in many years, and we do not know if your addresses and phone numbers are correct. Soooo...please take a moment and email the historian with your current contact info. If you do not have a computer, use the multipurpose form and just fill out the personal info side of the form and mail it in. PLEASE!!!

2018 Membership Rosters

The 2018 membership rosters will be printed and mailed out in late February after we get a good number of 2018 dues payments in, so please update you contact information. Especially phone numbers and email addresses as they change. When you get your roster there will also be your 2018 membership card and 2018 Ballot.

BRICKMANIA NEWS

The Special NDQSA M42A1 Lego kit offer from **Brickmania** was a great success and the 25+ members got their kits in time for Christmas.



Dennis Ruth reports on his construction of the kit:

My grandson & I successfully assembled the Duster this afternoon. Took about 2-1/2 hours.

My observations on assembly:

- my grandson is an experienced Lego assembler. He observed that some of the diagrams weren't drawn the way most Lego diagrams are. He explained the differences to me on a couple and I was grateful for his experience. Could have been a much longer task.
- from his experience we emptied the three bags of parts into a shallow plastic book (the base in the accompanying photos).
- if available, put down a thin cloth to work on.
- younger & more nimble fingers can handle some of the pieces much easier than my arthric fingers. This was learned after the 3rd attempt & drop of small parts that fit into tight places.

We had a few spares of small pieces, e.g., some treads, the bi-pod for the M60 MG & ammo clips. The space where the driver would sit is an excellent place to store these with the model. –Dennis Ruth

Searchlight JEEP

M151 "MUTT" 1/4 Ton Utility Vehicle with AN-GSS Air-Defense Searchlight
An original custom LEGO® kit designed by Daniel Siskind

SKILL LEVEL:
 ★★☆☆☆
Intermediate





3 AA batteries not included

1012

Contains 148 LEGO®, BrickArms®, Brickstuff elements + printed instructions



Note: I still have a few of the Xenon Searchlight Jeep kits available for \$150 each. Proceeds go to our Searchlight Jeep restoration project funds. Contact Paul if you want one.

NEW OFFER for Quad.50 guys!!

M35A2 Gun Truck Vietnam War-Era Convoy Escort

An original custom LEGO® kit
designed by Daniel Siskind

SKILL LEVEL:
☆☆☆☆☆
Intermediate



1003

Contains 326 genuine LEGO and BrickArms elements plus printed instructions.



David Siskind, the owner of Brickmania and a good friend to NDQSA has just committed to making a special issue M55 Quad .50 Gun Truck Lego kit for NDQSA members. It will be based on their 2012 kit of the M35A2 truck and M55 gun mount that had a very limited run of 50 kits. David is not sure if it will be on a 5-ton truck or the original M-35. David has gotten much better over the years so this update will likely be incredible. He will include a decal for the gun shield with the artwork for "The Widow Maker" a common theme among all the four Quad 50 batteries.

So if you want to pre-order a quad.50 kit send me a email ASAP or leave me a message on my cell phone with your complete contact information. The price is not set but I can assure you that it will be more than fair. IF we get 50 orders he says that he will try to have them in time for the Gettysburg Reunion. This is David's way of honoring the men that served on these unit in Vietnam.

- Paul Kopsick → [pre-order now email](#) link

STILL LOOKING FOR BUDDIES?

All the new contacts this newsletter were located with the help of long time member Bill Sturgeon. He has generously offered to help to try and locate buddies that you served with. But you have to have something to go by. I gave him some

names and information from some orders I had and he was able to give me some numbers to call.

He had done professional searches as part of his career and has access to online resources unavailable to the Historian. He can be reached at (858) 663-4199 (cell/text) Please provide your full contact info and as much of the info you have of the person you are looking for: Name; Hometown; Nickname and birth date or at least how old you think he is.

Thanks Bill, I hope we locate a bunch of guys.

AMERICAN WARTIME MUSEUM

THE TANK FARM OPEN HOUSE 2017

"Tank Farm" sees biggest turnout to date at Open House

In September, the museum held its annual Open House at the "Tank Farm" in Nokesville, and it was an enormous success.

The two-day event is a good example of the kinds of experiences and exhibits that one can expect at the planned Americans in Wartime Museum.

It's important for the community and our donors to get a better understanding of what the museum is going to be about. And this year, the event drew the highest event attendance, ever. Last year a little over 5,000 people were there. This year, well over 7,000 attended a dramatic increase in participation.

The Open House included veteran roundtable discussions, kid's events, a dynamic firepower demonstration by the U.S.M.C. Historical Company, nearly 200 living history re-enactors from 15 living history units, and 80 vehicles on the field of which 18 were demonstrated to the enthusiastic crowds.

We had the support of lots and lots of people, including the Boy Scouts of America and the Young Marines organization who managed the automobile traffic and parking.

The museum will provide an important educational experience for the generations of today and, most importantly, for the generations to come.

To describe our ultimate goal, we use the words -honor, educate, and inspire:

Honor the men and women who have served, in an effort to educate the public, particularly the coming generations, about those who have served our country and the values they demonstrated (dedication, commitment, loyalty, duty, honor, courage and sacrifice) in the hope that it will inspire our visitors to incorporate some of those values into their own lives.

Unfortunately I (Paul Kopsick / Historian) was not able to attend the open house at the Tank Farm and showcase the two M42A1 dusters in their collection.

My backup, 'Buster' Wise was also unable to cover for me as the Florida hurricanes created a hardship for him to make the trip. Still I am told it was a great weekend for the museum and the general public.



I visited with Marc Sehring, the director at the farm recently (December) and was told that there was a great turnout and the weather was perfect (for a change). They got their aerial drone out and took some video of the setup this year. The Dusters was right up front as usual and was looking good.



There is a very nice video from the aerial drone of the display field at the Tan Farm at the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/234954091>

You can also check out their Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/AmericanWartimeMuseum/>

Work is ongoing at the 70-acre future site of the Americans in Wartime Museum in Prince William County.

Development of the land, which is being generously given to our organization by the Hylton Foundation, is the key part of the \$30 million Phase One of the project, and that gift includes clearing and grading the land.

Major dirt work has been going on for about the last year-and-a-half on 12 acres of the western part of the site. Work on the eastern most part of the property is expected to begin, soon.

When the master plan is completed the museum is going to be a unique facility and that will provide an extraordinary educational experience for our visitors.

The site work will take at least a few more years to complete. Phase 2 will require \$25 million to build several of the unique Landscapes of War, the demonstration field and track, the maintenance and restoration facilities and the initial reception/orientation center. Phase Three will include construction of the main orientation center, museum, learning center, theater and restaurant.

An interesting Vietnam Quad-50 diorama had been produced by a British company called [Armorpax](#) it is at 1/6th scale meaning it is very large and basically designed for museums. They sell the parts to construct it, but it has to be very expensive. I saw the quad mount is no longer offered, so you'll just have to watch the YouTube video. It is remarkably lifelike.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqeougMfllc>

The name on the quad is "Push Button Birth Control". If you had this on your quad, please let me know.

The DMZ 1966 to 1968 TET Offensive
Celebration

PLEASE JOIN ME IN THE CELEBRATION
OF: FIFTY YEARS OF BROTHERHOOD!!

Brothers,

On January 23rd and 24th, 2018, we will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the 1968 TET Offensive.

I invite all veterans; Army and Marines, who fought alongside Twin 40mm Dusters, Quad 50 Machineguns and Searchlight units along the DMZ from Dong Ha to Gio Linh, Con Thein, Camp J.J. Carroll, Khe Gio Bridge, Rock Pile, Delta-5, LZ Stud, Khe Sanh, Quang Tri and as far south as Hue City to participate in this historic event.

The constant fighting along the DMZ area, from 1966 to the 1968 Tet Offensive played an important role in winning! Therefore, I have decided to offer you a chance to come together, talk about each fight, remember our brothers who were lost, and celebrate the victories that we achieved.

I am holding this event in State College, PA on Tuesday January 23 and Wednesday January 24, 2018. There are a few advantages to this date/location: Hotel rooms and fees are very reasonable. State College is easy to drive to (I-80, I-99 and US 322 all join close to the town). Our University Park Airport is serviced several times a day by UNITED, DELTA and AMERICAN Airlines. There is also MEGABUS service from NYC and Pittsburgh.

Please pass this along to other veterans!
Cost per person: \$50.00 – Includes Dinner, Soft Drinks, Refreshments & Entertainment

Hotel cost is \$70.53 per night for room and hot breakfast.

For reservations and a head count for this historic event, please contact me: Col. (Ret.) Vincent Tedesco

vintedesco@me.com or call me at 571-292-4498



1/44th ADA Dusters



Basic Event Schedule:

January 23rd – Around 16:00 to 17:00 - Our group will meet at Penn State College with their ROTC. Group Topics for discussion will be “Lessons Learned” and “What makes a great Lieutenant”

January 24th - We will start at 0945 with a welcome. Joe Belardo will be the moderator for discussions about the fights along the DMZ and Route 9 from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh. We will break for lunch at noon. At 1300, Bob Lauver will be the moderator for discussions about the Battle of Hue City and other fights during TET. At 1500, Bruce Geiger will be the moderator for discussions about the siege of Khe Sanh, the Hill Fights and Operation Pegasus the Relief of Khe Sanh. Power point videos will be shown to help with these programs and bring back memories.

We will break for dinner from 1700 until 1830. We will have a short memorial ceremony to honor those that were KIA and other brothers that passed in the last 50 years. This will be supported by the Army ROTC. We will end the evening with a “PARTY” and entertainment by the famous female guitarist KJ Smile.

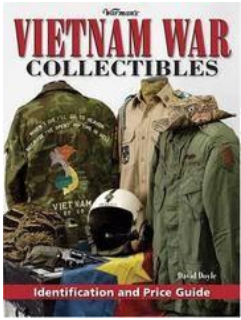
The idea of this reunion is to celebrate the combined military victories that 1st/44th Dusters & G-65 Quad 50's and Marines played in winning the battles from the DMZ to Hue City.

Yours in Patriotism,

Col. (Ret.) Vincent Tedesco

Joseph Belardo
josephbelardo@yahoo.com

\$ WHAT'S IT WORTH \$

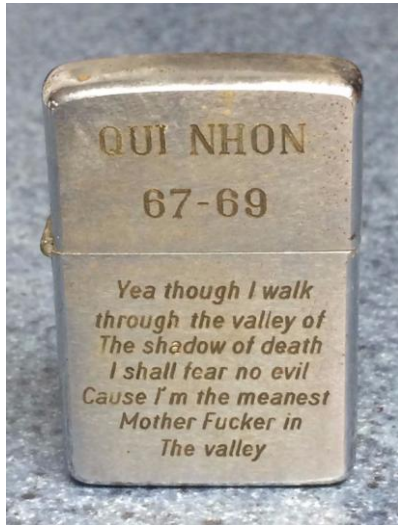


In case you did not know, there is a big market for Vietnam related items on the internet. You may have something in your dresser or attic that other people want.

Certainly if there are historic items related to your service, please discuss them with the Historian as

there are military museums that should preserve them for the public and future generations.

Still there are non-historical items that are often very collectable. Since NDQSA members served in-country over many years and in different parts of the country, there are many different types of collectables. Some are very common, like **Zippo lighters** and some are very rare, like certain **bladed weapons** (Randall, Gerber). Certain dates and models of camouflage shirts and pants (**tiger stripe**) can command big money depending upon condition and provenance, unit or ownership.



Remember that souvenir jacket you had made from a **poncho liner**? They often go for several hundreds of

dollars. Other items related to individual units are items like in-country made **patches** and **unit crests** (tin cans) ~\$20-100.



Even the items made by the Montagnards like crossbows, arrows, pipes and knives are sought after. Items like bracelets, bandanas, and other trinkets too.



And finally there are the helmets with graffiti on the liners, and boots:



If you have any items that you would like to have evaluated for either donation or valuated for sale, take some good photos of the items and email them to the historian. dqshistorian@cox.net and I will try to help.

Warman's Vietnam War Collectibles –D. Doyle

36th Annual Reunion
“Operation Gettysburg”
 June 5th – June 10th, 2018
 (Tentative Schedule & Prices)

Tuesday 5 June 2018

1:00pm - ? Registration opens in Hospitality Room
You are on your own to explore area attractions.

Evening - Hospitality Room Activities at the Hotel
 Hospitality Room closes at ~ 12:00 Midnight

Wednesday 6 June 2018

Registration in the Hospitality Room
Eisenhower Home & Farm Bus Tour (approx. 2 hrs)

8:45 AM Gather in Lobby - Buses leave 9:00 AM

Bus Tour \$25pp

Open Afternoon Lunch & Sightseeing On Your Own

Evening - Hospitality Room Activities at the Hotel
 Hospitality Room closes at ~12:00 Midnight

Thursday 7 June 2018

Gettysburg Museum & Visitors Center Film
Battlefield Bus Tour

All Activities, Admissions & Lunch: \$50 pp

8:45 AM Gather in Lobby - Buses leave 9:00 AM

12:00 Noon Lunch

3:00 PM Buses Leave for the Hotel

Presidents Reception ‘60s Night – Compliments of NDQSA

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM Hotel Grounds

Hospitality Room closes at ~12:00 Midnight

Friday 8 June 2018

Army Heritage & Education Center (Army War College)
Museums (Indoor & Outdoor), Duster Dedication, Memorial Service
Carlisle, PA Bus Tour

All Activities, Admissions & Lunch: \$40 pp

8:30 AM Gather in Lobby - 8:45 AM Buses Leave

12:00 Noon Lunch

3:30 PM Buses Leave for the Hotel

Evening - Hospitality Room Activities at the Hotel
 Hospitality Room closes at ~12:00 Midnight

Saturday 9 June 2018

9:00 AM—11:00 AM Annual Business Meeting, Room TBD

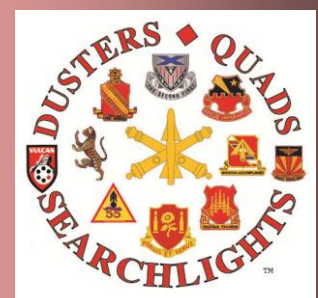
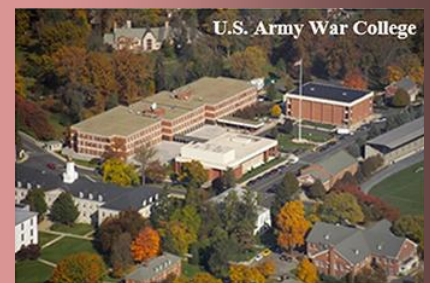
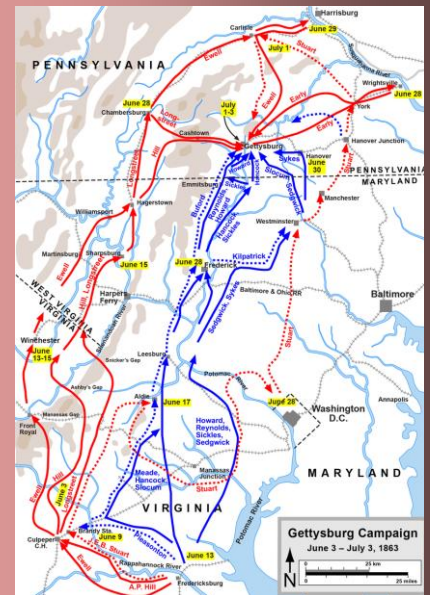
9:00 AM—11:00 AM Women’s Cont. Breakfast in the Hospitality Room

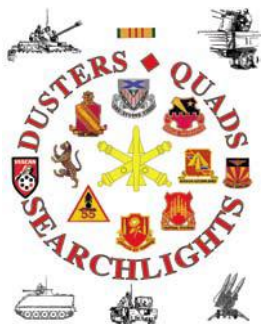
12:00 PM—3:30 PM NDQSA Luncheon Banquet, Guest Speakers and Awards: \$45 pp

Evening Auctions and Raffles—Don’t miss Event! Hospitality Room

Sunday 10 June 2018

9:00 AM **Chaplain’s Service in Hospitality Room** followed by cleanup and out by noon.



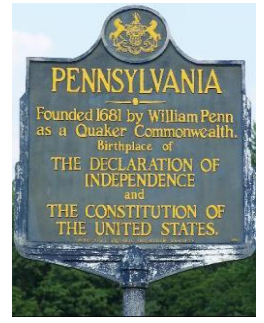


36th Annual NDQSA Reunion

“Operation Gettysburg”

Gettysburg, PA

June 5th - June 10th, 2018



NDQSA is pleased to announce that our 36th Annual Reunion will be in Gettysburg, PA. Bruce Geiger & Bob Lauver have negotiated a great deal at the

[Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel](#)

95 Presidential Circle
Gettysburg, PA 17325
1(717)339-0020



Direct Hotel Phone Reservations:
1(717)339-0020 “press 3”

>>[Online reservations link click here](#)<<

Use Group Code: NDQSA Reunion

Room Rate: \$119 + tax single/double

Room Rate includes: Free Parking, 10% discount

In hotel's 1863 Restaurant & Lounge

NDQSA Group Rate 2 days before & after

Nearest Airport is Harrisburg, PA 46 miles



D-
/ /18 # \$
Q- S- E- P6

Mailing Label ->

Cut out and tape
to envelope

NDQSA
PO Box 890130
Oklahoma City, OK 73189

2018 MEMBERSHIP INVOICE / ROSTER UPDATE / PRODUCT ORDER FORM

(Tear off this page and mail it in with your up to date contact information and unit history)
This version supersedes any previous forms as certain options are not available.

Roster Contact Information (Please Print)

Are you a new or existing contact?

(New) (Existing) circle one

First Name: _____

Middle Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email(s): _____

Home Phone: () -

Cell Phone: () -

Service Information (Vietnam) (fill out even if on file)

Dates of 1st tour (m/yr): ____/____ to ____/____

Addtn'l tour (m/yr): ____/____ to ____/____

Primary MOS: _____

Primary Battery/Unit: _____

Attached To: _____

Names of bases:

Names/hometowns of buddies you knew:

Rank (highest grade while in Vietnam)

Grade: Officer: _____ NCO: _____ EM: _____

Valor Awards

PH () DSC () SS () BS/V () ACM/V ()

If you want to get the newsletter only by email and forego
the paper mailed copy, please check this box. ()

If you want to switch back from email to paper mail, please
check this box. ()

DUES - DONATIONS – PRODUCT ORDERS

Make check/MO payable to NDQSA

Shipping is included in the price of all items.

Dues: circle payment(s) for (2017) (2018) (2019) (2020)

DUES ARE \$25 PER YEAR \$ _____

Donations: Quad 50 restoration \$ _____

Searchlight restoration \$ _____

Searchlight Print (\$60 min) \$ _____

Quad-50 Print Sold Out

Product: NDQSA Emb. Patch ____ @ \$5 = \$ _____

NDQSA Logo Decal ____ @ \$5 = \$ _____

Bumper Sticker ____ @ \$10 = \$ _____

Circle (Duster)(Quad)(SLT)(HAWK)(Vulcan)

Challenge Coin: ____ coin @ \$12 = \$ _____

***** Lucite Challenge Coin: ____ @ \$25 = \$ _____**

NDQSA Pin Set: ____ sets @ \$8 = \$ _____

.50-cal bottle opener ____ @ \$14 = \$ _____

NEW NDQSA HAT ____ @ \$15 = \$ _____

NDQSA T-shirt (black)(grey)

Size: ____ # ____ @ \$15 = \$ _____

NDQSA Polo Shirt (black)(tan)

Size: ____ # ____ @ \$30 = \$ _____

(regular) (tall)

NDQSA Lightweight Embroidered Jacket

Size: ____ # ____ @ \$145 = \$ _____ on hold

Circle (1 large Quad available)

(SLT) (XL) or (XXL) only

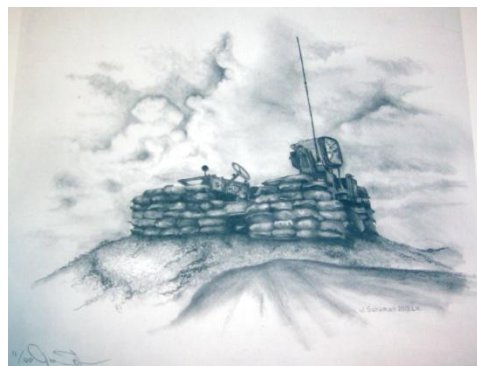
TOTAL \$ _____

If paying dues presents a hardship for you but you still
want to be an Active Member, check this box []. Some
members have made donations to assist you.

NDQSA PRODUCT ITEMS 2018

Duster, Quad, SLT, HAWK
Embroidered Jacket Artwork

New Jacket sales on hold!



Searchlight 50 Print (\$60 min)
Quad .50 print Sold Out



Logo Patch \$5



Logo Decal \$5



NDQSA Challenge Coin \$12 @
NDQSA Pin Set \$8 @



Lucite Coin \$25



50-cal bottle opener \$14



NEW NDQSA Cap \$15 Made in the USA



NDQSA BUMPER STICKERS
\$10 each

New Products Size Chart Subject to stock on hand

Give 1st & 2nd choice on color

T-shirt: Medium
Black Large
Gray XL
\$15 XXL (Tall)
XXXL (Tall)
XXXXL

Mens Polo: Small
Black Medium
Tan Large
\$30 XL
XXL (Tall)
XXXL (Tall)
XXXXL
XL Tall
XXL Tall

Embroidered Jacket:
Only a few Jackets remain!
1(Quad 50)
Large
\$145 2 (Searchlight)
XL
XXL

NDQSA is having a hard time finding a credible and reliable Jacket supplier. Orders are on hold until further notice.

NDQSA HISTORY BOOKS ARE SOLD OUT

Contact Paul Kopsick if you want one of the Lego Searchlights Kits



COLD CASE FILE VIETNAM 1971

B-5/2nd ADA

As the historian I have tried to rely on facts and documents to verify my research and stories. However, there are times when there just is not any paperwork (in my possession or to be found) to verify accounts. We know

that story line all too well from the VA when they tell claimants that there are no documents to verify their claims of injury or trauma and are denied consideration. Then again, I have also seen that some people's memories (myself included) are often not accurate when documents actually can be found. I am telling this episode in story form, and I am hoping that there are veteran's out there that know of the incidents and can provide clarification.

Bravo Battery 5th Battalion 2nd Artillery supported many firebases in IIFV (III CTZ) around Saigon and the Mekong Delta region. The region is essentially flat and crisscrossed by rivers, streams and rice patties. Firebases are served largely by a road and bridge network that is easily traversed by mobile units like the Duster. This means that the main way for the enemy to attack us were to mine the roads which are available to them in the cover of darkness. When we did return to the relative security of our firebases we were then subjected to ground assault and aerial bombardment (rockets and mortars).

On February 23rd 1971 FSB Blue was attacked and as was typical in such attacks, the four Duster positions were the prime targets of sappers and incoming fire. Four dustermen were killed at position #2 becoming one of the largest single squad loss of life in any Duster battalion's history. This was in Tay Ninh Province along the west boundary with Cambodia, within sight of "Black Virgin Mountain", Nui Ba Dinh.

This story actually starts immediately afterwards. It is from personal memories and are subject to better information coming forward. I am still not 100% sure of all the specifics with respect to the tracks and personnel involved, but here goes.

PROLOGUE

Danny Penton was a 17-year-old, living with his grandparents in Louisiana. Things were not going well for him and when he dropped out of high school, about all he had available to him was to going into the military. He wanted to train to be a medic, but as was typical of the times, his recruiter screwed him and he did not get his wish and wound up at Ft. Bliss training on the M42 and M55. There he met a buddy named George from Virginia and within by early February 1971 they were both newbies at 5/2nd ADA, specifically Bravo Battery. They were assigned as replacement crewmembers for B-141, who were killed at FSB Blue. They and others were tasked with putting B-141 back in working order, which they did. Danny became the gunner and George was a cannoneer. They got an experienced driver and E6 for their squad leader, both whom were close to DEROSing. They honed their skills and performed their missions well.

Around this time in March/April of 1971, the 5/2nd was preparing to close down and deactivate, consolidating forces and preparing to turn over their dusters to the ARVNs. The actual stand-down ceremony took place on April 13th at Phu Loi. End of story...hardly.

Danny's duster (B141: "Paris Persuaders") was still at FSB Blue at this time along with their sister track (B-142: "Everyday People" or "Evil Woman"). Note: Because this and subsequent actions took place while the Battalion was preparing to stand down, some of the documents might not have been developed or preserved. However, since this happened in 1971, there are hopefully a number of people in our organization with knowledge of the events. I still need to do a much deeper investigation of the FSB Blue attack, but this story takes place shortly before March 8th (date of the Ali/Frazier fight) a month before the Battalion formally 'deactivated', although assets were still being reassigned.

What I have pieced together from Danny's traumatic memories is that they were given orders to go to FSB Lanyard in the northwestern most portion of Tay Ninh Province. There is even confusion whether FSB Lanyard was actually in Cambodia (illegally) by a few hundred meters. By most records, it was not in Cambodia. The engineers were there building another base near it at the time and it was later named FSB Pace after an engineer LT who was killed there on March 30, 1971.

SIDEBAR: At this same time there was news coverage of soldiers refusing to go out on patrol from these outer firebases and into Cambodia as it was a violation of the Cooper-Church Amendment and International Law.

FSB Blue was not really that far mileage wise from Lanyard, maybe 60 miles. There was reportedly an emergency resupply convoy slated for that day, but because of mine clearing activities on Route 22, the Duster escorts did not even get to Tay Ninh city checkpoints until it was dark. Danny recalls that his E6 Squad Leader did not want to go out on the road at night, in the dark. However, the US Army Captain there (unit unknown) demanded that they go out and "threatened to court-martial us if we did not."

Danny's account follows: *We reluctantly left Tay Ninh camp at about 9:00 PM and headed north on Route 22 towards the Cambodian border under "RED" road conditions in blackout conditions, travelling at about 5 miles per hour. It was total darkness, but we were still loud as hell.*

At about 10:30 PM we were getting closer to FBS Pace, my squad leader was napping in my gunner's seat, George was on the rear M-60 and I was manning the front M-60 behind the steel gun shield. Since leaving FSB Blue earlier in the day for the camp in Tay Ninh, we were eating a lot of red dust from the lead track and the convoy. To get a break from all the thick red dust, I asked George to trade places with me. He agreed and we switched positions.

Within seconds of our changing places, I observed three large fireballs coming from the front and the sides of the dirt road with loud explosions. At the same instant, George made a loud sound and fell backwards against me, knocking me to the cramped floor of the turret. He was on my legs and I was trying to get him off me. George was not moving but was making a groaning noise and I could tell he was having hard time breathing. I could hear what sounded like small arms fire hitting the sides of the steel on the Duster. I also vaguely remember a flare being popped. My stunned squad leader was still hunkered down in my gunner's seat. Immediately a large cloud of tear gas engulfed our Duster. We were having hard time breathing and our eyes were tearing up.

Remember we are in total darkness except for the momentary flare. My squad leader started yelling and screaming, George was still laying on my legs and I was trying real hard to free myself. My squad leader then got out of the gunner's seat and actually crawled over me and

jumped off the Duster and ran off leaving me alone in the turret with George. The whole time after we were hit by the claymore mines, my driver was screaming like I had never heard before in my life. I was so afraid I did not know what to do. In my heart, I knew that George was dead. His breathing was so bad from the tear gas and he suddenly became very quiet. However, my driver was still screaming loudly as he was wounded in the face and eyes by the claymores. My only reaction was to get George off of me in that tight space between the main 40's and the turret wall. I finally was able to reach up to the front M-60 in an attempt to return fire. It fired one round and the gun jammed, I guess from all the dirt/dust from being on the road all day.

I wanted to take a look at George's wounds and get to the driver but I could still hear small arms fire pinging against the track. I got into my gunner's seat in an attempt to fire my twin 40's but I could not manually turn the guns. It was jammed. At this point I really freaked out not knowing what to do. My driver was still screaming, so I grabbed a dirty sandbag, crawled out of the turret and along the Duster to the driver's hatch which was still open. Through the darkness I felt what I thought was sticky blood around the hatch and I heard the low moans of my driver. I guess he was worn out from screaming for such a long time. I wrapped his head with the really dirty sand bag and the dirty green towel we wore to keep the dirt out of our faces. I had no idea if he was passed out or if he had died. I needed to get back to George and check to see if he was still alive. I had a red lens army flashlight near my driver's seat and checked over George's injuries. Blood was everywhere. I notice that the blood was concentrated on his chest and groin areas as well as his hands and arms. I undid his pants and there was a bullet hole in his groin. He had no t-shirt on at this time and his flak jacket was open and I saw he was shot in the chest area. It was a weird looking wound; it looked like a little mouth sucking in and out. I guess from my training I realized it was a sucking chest wound. He was totally unconscious so I rolled him onto his side, wound down. We carried duct tape to cover the ends of the barrels of the 40's to keep the dust out. So, I tore off a few pieces and put it over his chest wound. I could do nothing about the many wounds to his right arm so I left it alone since it was not bleeding really badly.

For some unknown reason I crawled back to my gun rack where my M-16 was located and fired a 20-round mag into the jungle until it was empty. I knew at this point I was going to die. Why I did what I did next I could never figure out. I

took off my helmet and threw it as far as I could into the blackness of the jungle. I then sat down and started crying.



Hours passed until I was startled by a soldier, possibly by this EM from our sister track B-142 with a Mexican name (possibly Joe A Ramone, TX), who came up to me and yelled asking if anyone else was alive? I guess I was in shock. He gave me a fifth of whisky and told me to take a drink. I had never had hard liquor before. It was still not daylight and I have

not seen or heard from my squad leader (alive or dead). To this day I do not know his name or what happened to him.

I recall climbing back into my turret with two other soldiers and wrapped George's lifeless body into a poncho and assisting my driver, who survived the night, into a chopper. That was the last I had seen my driver, the squad leader or George. No one ever asked and I was never told what happened to them. I was the only one left on my Duster still breathing and with no physical injuries, just traumatic memories which only I can verify.



My sister track, who was in the lead that day, had to tow my Duster into FSB Lanyard. Most of that same crew had been at FSB Blue during the sapper attack in February. I did not know any of the men on that track but I have a picture of three of them. One name might be SGT Bird or Byrd?

The main tubes of my track were totally damaged from the claymores and would have probably exploded if I was able to

fire them. My front M-60 was totally destroyed and my motor pack had to be replaced and was brought into Lanyard using a sky crane. Patches of paint showed the bullet marks and my headlights were all shot out. I am sure there was more damage but I do not recall fully.



This is a photo of B-141 showing some of the damage. Our battery clerk, Jimmy Hanes is standing in front of it. He was reassigned to another unit when we deactivated and I learned that he was accidentally shot and killed a few months later.

One morning, a Bird Colonel flew out in a Ranger chopper to talk with me in private at FSB Lanyard. I do not remember him actually interviewing me, he just sternly told me to never discuss what happened and that I could be criminally charged and jailed if I did. Being 18 and naively stupid (and still in shock) I agreed. I later learned that this same LTC spoke with other survivors and told them the same thing. I do not know (remember) who the LTC was or what unit he was with.

For all these years I wondered why this incident was handled this way. Was it because FSB Lanyard was actually inside Cambodia by few meters and that is why the engineers were building a new FSB 100-200 meters down Rt. 22, inside South Vietnam? And/or was the Bird Colonel covering for the Captain that ordered us to get to FSB Lanyard alone and at night? Any sane soldier knows you do not drive military vehicles down dirt roads INTO CAMBODIA at night in the dark. There was no emergency as far as I could tell!

Approximately two weeks later at about 0200 hrs while still at FSB Lanyard, we were hit by several mortars which were being walked directly towards my Duster. I was on guard duty. The mortars were so close to my Duster I knew the next

one would be a direct hit on my Duster. I jumped off my Duster just as the next mortar exploded 30 meters or so in front of me, knocking me silly and dazed! I hit my face on the hard-packed red dirt and broke my nose and my ears were leaking blood or fluids. I could not hear a thing and my ears were ringing so loud I could not think. In a daze, the new squad leader assigned to our sister track located just down the berm, came running and yelled at me to start firing counter mortar fire. I jumped on the front M-60 and started firing until my new crewmembers showed up and then I got into my gunner's seat and fired over 200 rounds.

During the mortar attack an ARVN Captain who was sleeping next to his US Army Jeep, which he was so proud of, took a direct hit from a mortar. He had a small artillery gun; I think he said it was a 102mm. It had wheels on it but I had never heard of it before. He let me fire it on several occasions and we became friends in a way. His was the first body that I have ever seen, totally blown to pieces. Many years later I was able to locate the medic who treated me at FSB Lanyard. His name was Mike Mason but unfortunately, he died at a VA Hospital in Houston TX in 25Jan12.

The battalion soon deactivated and by mid-May I was reassigned to A-6/27th Arty as a Forward Observer and Commo operator. Several of the guys from my sister track were assigned there as well (Mack Shepard, NC and Richard Mathias). I remember one formation when two of them were called out in formation and awarded Valor Medals. I never found out what they were given out for.

I DEROSed in December of 1971. I thought I was going back to Ft. Bliss to be a drill instructor but that fell thru and I worked with the MPs until I left service in 1975. I had a redeeming career as a special agent with the Inspector General's Office of the VA. I worked on many 'stolen valor' claims and prosecuted a lot of low-life's.



My investigational skills gave me the opportunity to make information searches and in 1999 I wanted to see if my buddy George's wife was properly receiving survivor's benefits. It turned out that she was not receiving survivor benefits because...George was still alive! I could not believe it. I was able to contact him and told him of the

events of the ambush and what happened to him. We kept in touch on and off for several years. Unfortunately, he was having a hard time medically and psychologically with all the severe injuries he sustained that night. On August 5th, 2015, George went for a medical appointment, this time without taking his wife Mary Lou with him. For whatever the real reason, he pulled off the side of the road and took his own life.

George had previously confided with me that he too had been 'interviewed' by a LTC who told him to never speak of this incident. According to his obituary, George did receive a Purple Heart but he never knew what really happened that night. George also related to me his recurring nightmare: where he is trapped in a wagon along with dead bodies. I have heard stories of some guys in graves registration performing a certain procedure to confirm a dead body. Since George is now passed we will never know that part of the story unless he told it to someone. George and Mary Lou did not have any children according to the obituary.

HISTORIAN'S EPILOGUE

So, what did happen the night of the ambush? Well, while I was trying to piece together any information on this event, I had to go back through my files on FSB Blue. I needed to know what the exact tracks were involved so I could search for related info. It is ironic that Danny's track was B-141, because that was the same number of the Duster lost in B-4/60^{th's} battle on March 15, 1971 in the Central Highlands. I am still trying to put names to the crewmembers of B-142, B111 and B112 who were at FSB Blue and later at Lanyard/Pace and on the nighttime convoy. If you know any of the participants, please contact me. Some of the names I have are: Joe Parrish PH (d.'16); Ralph Sears (PH): Sgt Carl Hutson; SP4 Steve Vandervliet; SGT Louis J. Mazza; and Sgt Robert E. Fussell.

During my early research on FSB Blue from back in 2005, I interviewed CPT Dennis Spiegel, who, it turns out, was the last Bravo Battery Commander (BCO) for 5/2nd. He gave me a lot of info on the Feb 23rd events at FSB Blue. When I went over my notes I found an amazing account that not only sheds light on Danny's story but corroborates it.

Transcribed from my actual 2005 notes:

Dennis Spiegel related two accounts, one of an incident when an Arty unit balked about going on a move to another

base/location and that they wanted the dusters to sabotage their tracks to prevent the move. The dusters did not comply but other units did and it was a big, big issue at the time.

“The second incident revolved around an ill-fated convoy resupply to a remote firebase with ammo that was suspected of coming under imminent attack. The emergency convoy could not get clearance until very late to travel the roadway. The road was in “RED” condition, which precludes any road traffic. The Duster convoy’s escorts were directed to coordinate with the South Vietnamese and their US Advisors to open a section of the road that passed through an ARVN strongpoint. Understanding that clearance was given, the convoy entered the ARVN position and was hit with claymore and small arms fire. The quick-thinking Duster senior NCO popped a flare and made the convoy (travelling under blackout conditions) visible to the South Vietnamese troops. The “friendly fire” quickly stopped, preventing further casualties. However, several crewmen were hit with claymore pellets and the driver of one duster lost an eye. The BCO was the one in the hospital that had to tell him that he lost an eye.”

This passage reads almost verbatim with Danny’s account of 2017. When I related my ‘rediscovery’ of this accounting to Danny on December 22nd 2017, he said that I brought a tear to his eye to finally know what really happened that night and why. Presumably George was never informed of the circumstances either or else he would have told Danny. Still there are many unanswered questions. Specifically, who was the Colonel and why was the accounting of the event suppressed? There were many friendly-fire incidents during the war (both ARVN and US troops). Why this event?

LATE BREAKING INFORMATION

I contacted the Dennis Spiegle again, Battery CO for Bravo Battery at the time and he related to me some additional information: He recalled;

Don’t know anything about a Captain threatening to court martial anyone for not going. Since we (B/5/2) were responsible for security of the convoy it was our call whether or not we continued on when roads were RED. Our Platoon Leader called me on radio & related the situation. I told him not to proceed forward unless the US Army Advisors with the ARVNs strongpoint on the road knew were coming and “opened the road”. He called me back and said the US Army Advisors said they informed the RVNs we were coming and

the road was open. With that info, I gave our LT (Platoon Leader) permission to proceed.

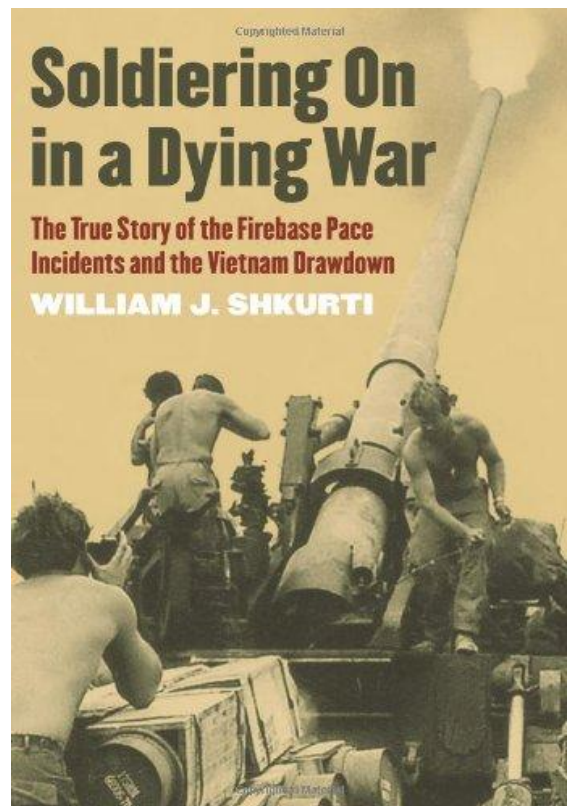
After the incident, the top brass in the region (BG Scott) got involved and wanted to court martial the responsible parties. They came after the Duster platoon leader but he was strongly supported by me and the Duster battalion commanded. A few days later the whole incident was suddenly ‘closed’. Possibly someone else was found to have failed to communicate the plans of the night and no one wanted to accept or point responsibility. It was very unfortunate that several men’s lives were forever changed but one man’s quest for an answer may now bring some closure to him and his family.

I am sure there is still more to come out as people remember these events. So, if you were in Bravo Battery 5/2nd during the early part of 1971 and have any knowledge of these events (FSB Blue and Lanyard/Pace) please contact me. If you have any orders, paperwork or award citations related to these events please send me a copy.

Case closed...somewhat at least.

-Paul Kopsick NDQSA Historian

There is a book about FBS Lanyard/Pace available for anyone else interested in this area and timeframe.



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