

# NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER # 1 – FEBRUARY 2019

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## 2019 NDQSA 37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REUNION MOBILE, ALABAMA Dates: May 14-19, 2019

### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters



We are again a few months away from another Reunion, This year in Mobile Alabama.

My thanks to our Reunion Committee for doing their usual great job for organizing this year's gathering.

I would encourage you all to make your reservations as early as possible.

There a number of activities planned for the reunion as well and a good time should be had by all. The hotel is beautiful and located within walking distance of a lot of what Mobile has to offer. Our organization has made great strides in the last 10 years and I am proud to be a part of it. There are 12 individuals running for 7 slots on our Board of Directors. This tells me that interest in the NDQSA is at a high point and a sign of better things to come. I am looking forward to sharing this reunion with you all and let's have a great time in Mobile.....

Robert "Bob" Cuce President NDQSA

### FEATURED STORIES:

#### "Sweetheart of the 1/44<sup>th</sup>" Allan Penwell C-5/2 Memories

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### NEW MEMBERS/CONTACTS

[Daniel A Dale](#), D-71 '70 TN

"I was a field mechanic for the trucks. I was the one who got shot in the motor pool. Some one forgot to clear their weapon. Always felt bad for that guy. I know he really felt bad about it and I didn't want him to. I survived. I was at the fsb saint barbara in the fall of 70 when they turned the black virgin mountain gray. They bombed that thing for 3 days and the ground at the fsb shook and rumbled . I have pics. Somewhere of the before an after. Green to gray!! "

If the name is blue or 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!!

### MEMBERS THAT HAVE PASSED

Gerald Avila, A-1/44 '68-69, 1Nov18, CO  
Gustav Dubbs, A-763 '42-45, 10My17, GA  
Robert Kilde, D-6/56 '66-67, 8Sep08, SD  
Robert Collins, A-1/44 '68'69, 6Mar18, PA  
John Stout, D-71 '70, 14Nov17, KS

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

### DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

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 dqshistorian@cox.net, 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.

**“Sweetheart of the 1/44<sup>th</sup>”  
Dr. Jim Vendeland (CPT, MD)**



I was battalion surgeon with 1/44th stationed at Dong Ha from June 1967 to May 1968. At that time we had a civic action program with Vietnamese living in one of the nearby villages and also in Dong Ha. On one of our trips to treat the civilian population we came upon this tragedy of a grandmother and granddaughter who had both lost their legs following a rocket attack. The battalion decided to do whatever we could to help this family who had sustained this horrible tragedy. Funds were raised through donations to help the mother, who had been widowed, to get her out of debt. And we were able to find a company in the U.S. which was able to donate wheel chairs for both

amputees. There was also the interest in finding a company in Da Nang which could fit the child with artificial legs. Unfortunately I left Nam in late May and never heard if Phuong did receive the prostheses.

I am attaching an article written by one of the men in the battalion (SP5 Axe) who was most helpful in getting financial assistance from the battalion and also from backers in the U.S. In addition I am including a photo taken of me with Phuong and her family taken in April or May 1968.

I would be interested in a follow-up if anyone should have any further information about Phuong. [Dr. Jim Vendeland](#)

***“Sweetheart of the 1/44<sup>th</sup>”  
24 Arp 68 SP5 Axe***

*Her name was Phuong. She is eight years old—too young to know what the war is really about. And yet for her the reality and misery of war will last long after we are all home.*

*On the morning of February 19, 1968, Phuong, her mother, grandmother and four-year old brother were praying in a church in the village of Dong Ha. The whine of incoming rockets broke the morning calmness, and when the smoke cleared Phuong was left with two hopelessly shattered legs. Both she and her grandmother were double amputees today. Her mother was uninjured, her brother escaped with a minor head wound.*

*Strangers as we are in a country far from home, even the name Phuong hits a strange note. It would be far easier to visualize a Mary or Cindy, Judy or Linda—pigtails, dimples, the whole bit,*

*full of little girl coyness and energy we would expect. Forget the strangeness of her name, Phuong is every bit as coy, cute and energetic as my pigtailed Mary or Cindy you've ever met.*

*Her future, however, is much more uncertain than that of our little sisters or daughters back home. A Vietnamese child with our legs has 2 ½ strikes against her is the last of the ninth inning. Only a very special kind of help from people who really care for many months to come—say, until the 1/44<sup>th</sup> leaves Dong Ha—will give Phuong a fighting chance to live a reasonably normal life.*

*So far we've thrown a Christmas-Tet party for Dong Ha orphans and refugees at Dau Nu. We've coughed up a few bucks to help the people get back on their feet after the Tet Offensive. If we care enough, we can leave Dong Ha knowing Phuong will someday walk again.*

*What's needed? First of all, to get Phuong's mother out of debt. Since the child's father, an ARVN soldier, was killed at Cam Lo three years ago, her mother has had to support the whole family. Working at the Vietnamese laundry near D-Med, she earns enough to break even on food, clothing and the \$30 month necessary for the full-time nurse for Phuong and her grandmother. But there's still a \$400 dept that she is not making much headway in getting paid off.*

*Next come wheelchairs. No sweat. 1LT Grace of G-65 already has them on the way. But now comes the clincher, artificial legs for Phuong—so she can walk again, go to school, play games again, be a fully coy, cute and energetic child again. There is a facility in Da Nang where Phuong could get the artificial legs and more*

*importantly, he therapy to learn how to use them. But the waiting list in Da Nang is endless. Now if we, the 1/44<sup>th</sup>, were to 'adopt' or more properly "sponsor" Phuong and word began to get around that the "Sweetheart of the 1'44<sup>th</sup>" needs help badly, well, who knows what could happen.*

*Maybe it's a dream too much to hope for but if it's possible to have Phuong walking by the time the battalion laves Dong Ha, we'll at least know we tried our best.*

*You'll hear more about Phuong. For the time being give your MPCs to get Phuong's mom out of debt to CPT Vendeland or 1LT Grace.*

If you know of this story or what might have happened to the family and can add to it please contact the historian.

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## **TANK FARM OPEN HOUSE SEPTEMBER 7-8, 2019**



Our good friends at the Virginia Museum of Military Vehicles and Allan Cors of the Americans in Wartime Museum ([NMAW](http://www.nmaw.org)) have announced that their 2019 "Open House" in Nokesville, VA near the Quantico Marine Base will be September 7-8. Make your plans.

# Ongoing construction at the ADA Museum at Fort Sill, OK

Also known as  
[Air Defense Artillery Training  
Support Facility](#)



We're looking south at the steel framework for administrative section of the building. The entrance will be from the south. The first floor houses the collections storage, staff offices and the lobby. The second floor has two classrooms and a research library.



Director Jon Bernstein is doing an incredible job of overseeing the construction of the facility as well as planning the layout on all the equipment, artifacts and dioramas being planned for display. Our Vietnam era ADA equipment will be on display chronologically in the “facility” (museum). There will be the M42 Duster, the M55 Quad-50 gun mount, a M151 “Mutt” Xenon searchlight jeep, a M163 Vulcan 20mm Gatling gun and HAWK missile components.

As the new building progresses, they have been busy developing the exhibits and plan to maximize its utility as a branch history and heritage training space. As such, they have identified many items and artifacts that will be going on exhibit and many more from throughout the Army Museum Enterprise that will help them tell that history.

And that is only one war's worth of material. It is amazing what treasures will be on display from the other major conflicts where Air Defense/ Artillery was used. **The museum opening is planned for spring 2020. Looks like a strong candidate for the 2020 reunion location**



Be sure to visit the NDQSA Memorial when in the Lawton, OK area (Ft. Sill).

# NDQSA 37th Annual Reunion: "Operation Gulf Coast"

## Schedule & Prices

### Tuesday 14 May 2019

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 15 May 2019

Registration in the Hospitality Room

**Tour Of Historic Mobile (approx. 4 hrs) \$40 pp**  
Your coach and guide will meet you at your hotel for an exciting fun filled day of touring historic Mobile. A tour of the 19<sup>th</sup> century garden district creates a flavor that takes you back in time. There is a unique blend of architecture in the magnificent ante-bellum homes. Many are embellished with delicate wrought iron. Gather in Lobby 11:15AM - Buses Leave 12:00pm – 4:00pm

Evening Hospitality Room Guest Speaker, topic:  
"History of ship building in the Mobile area"  
We will hear about the Navy's State-of-the-Art 'Littoral Craft' that are being built across from the Hotel.  
Hospitality Room closes at ~12:00 Midnight

### Thursday 16 May 2019

**Pensacola Bus Tour To Naval Aviation Museum & Lunch (8:30am--3:00pm) \$60.00 pp**  
Board your motor coach and depart for Pensacola and a visit to the Naval Aviation Museum. The complete history of U. S. Naval Aviation unfolds around you. The museum displays a full-scale panoramic time line of authentic aircraft and aviation memorabilia. You can view the IMAX movie on your own for an additional cost.

Lunch at Mustin Beach Officer's Club located near the museum will be a pasta buffet.  
*Each person must have approved identification, Driver's license, Real ID, passport, DOD card, etc.*  
Gather in Lobby 8:15 AM - Buses Leave the Hotel 8:30 AM

10:00pm Compliments of NDQSA Mardi Gras...Mobile Style. Table decorations with masks, beads, and serpentine. The Mobile Mystery Mystic Krewe will perform a tableau Just like they do at all Mardi Gras Balls. Music & entertainment by the Grand Band. There will be a cash bar available. Hospitality Room closes at ~12:00 Midnight

### Friday 17 May 2019

**USS Alabama Memorial Park & Lunch (9:00am – 3:00pm) \$65.00 pp**  
Board your motor coach for a tour of the USS ALABAMA MEMORIAL PARK. Tour a WWII Battleship. *With a sense of pride & renewed patriotism walk the "footsteps" of the crew while touring the Captains' Cabin, Ward Room, Galley, Radio Room, and Sick Bay. The warship and the submarine USS DRUM, are moored at the edge of Mobile Bay. The Drum is credited with sinking the seventh largest tonnage during WWII. Tour the Aircraft Pavilion with planes from every war. Weather permitting, the NDQSA Memorial Service will be held on the deck of the ship and will include Piper, Bugler, Color Guard, and Honor Guard. We will present a wreath. The Park's many military displays include a Duster, and we hope to have the Quad 50 "Widow Maker" on display. We will have a Mobile Gulf Lunch at the Park.*  
Gather in Lobby 8:30 AM - Buses Leave the Hotel 9:00 AM

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

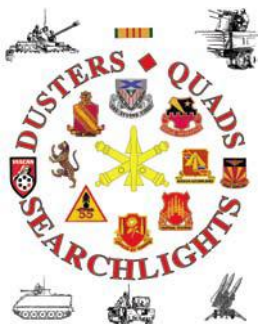
### Saturday 18 May 2019

9:00 AM—11:00 AM Annual Business Meeting\* Room TBD  
\*Members Attendance Required  
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 closes at ~12:00 Midnight

### Sunday 19 June 2019

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

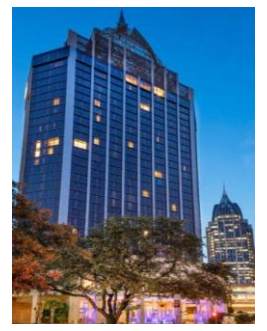


# 37<sup>th</sup> Annual NDQSA Reunion

## “Operation Gulf Coast”

### Mobile, Alabama

### May 14<sup>th</sup> - May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019



NDQSA is pleased to announce our  
37<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion will be in Mobile, AL  
Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel  
64 South Water Street  
Mobile, AL 36602  
1(251)438-4000

[Renaissance Mobile Riverfront Plaza Hotel](#)



**Room Rate: \$109 + tax** King or 2 Queens

includes: Buffet Breakfast for 2 & Internet

Discounted hotel self parking: \$8/day

NDQSA Group Rate 3 days pre/post above dates  
(5/11/19 – 5/22/19 based on hotel's availability!)

**Phone & Online Reservations Must Mention:**  
**National Dusters, Quads & Searchlight**  
**Association Reunion**

**Marriott Central Reservations: 1(800)922-3298**

**Problems Call Hotel Direct: 1(251) 415-3083**

(weekdays only 9am–4:30pm Central)

Ask for: Kelly Smith-Group Housing

Online Reservation Link: [Book your group rate for National Dusters Quads and Searchlights Association 37th Annual Reunion](#)

**Book Your Hotel Reservations ASAP!**

**Reunion Events & Registration Form to follow!**

Mobile Regional Airport has Taxi, Uber & Lyft service available (17.4 miles).



# Activities & Area Attractions

## NDQSA President's Reception (Thursday p.m.)

**NDQSA Memorial Ceremony**



**GulfQuest Maritime Museum**



**Battleship USS Alabama**



**Historic Bragg Mitchell Residence**



**Historic Oakleigh Residence**



**Historic Bellingrath Home**



**Explore Marshland Nature**



**Explore Downtown Mobile**



**Bellingrath Gardens**



**Tour Gulf Marshes**



**Historic District Tours**



**History Museum of Mobile**



**Science Exploreum**



**Mobile Museum of Art**



**Archaeology Museum**



**Mobile Carnival Museum**



**American Sports Academy**



**Plan to arrive early or stay after the reunion to take advantage of the wonderful sights, sounds and history that is Mobile!**

## 2019 NDQSA REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE READ EVERYTHING CAREFULLY AND MAIL THIS FORM TO THE TREASURER – SEE ADDRESS LABEL BELOW

### 37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NDQSA REUNION, MOBILE, AL MAY 14<sup>th</sup> - MAY 19<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Renaissance Mobile  
Riverfront Plaza Hotel**  
64 South Water Street  
Mobile, AL 36602  
1(251)438-4000  
[Renaissance Mobile](#)  
[Riverfront Plaza Hotel](#)

**Room Rate: \$109 + tax** King or 2 Queens Includes: Buffet Breakfast for 2, Internet  
Discounted Parking: \$8/Day, 10% Discount in Restaurant & Lounge (food only)  
**NDQSA Group Rate 3days pre/post above dates (based on hotel availability)**  
Phone & Online Reservations Must Mention:  
**National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association Reunion**  
**Marriott Central Reservations: 1(800)922-3298**  
**Problems: Call Hotel Direct Weekdays Only (9am-4:30pm Central):**  
**1(251)415-3083 Ask for Kelly Smith-Group Housing**

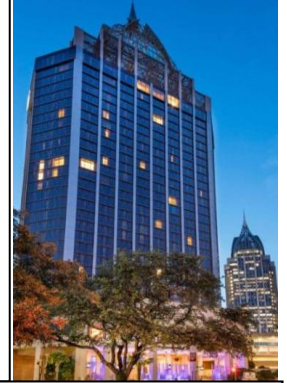


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_  
(print)

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Which days are you planning to attend the reunion? (circle)

**May 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21**  
Su M Tu W Th F S Su M Tu

Remember to make your hotel reservations ASAP to insure room availability.  
If you have already made your reservations, check this box [  ].  
If you are local or not staying at the reunion hotel, check this box [  ].



**To help plan reunion activities including buses & meals, please pre-register now and send fees for the following activities.**

As always, should unforeseen circumstances occur and you are unable to attend the reunion, you will receive a full refund.

Activity times are tentative and subject to change as plans are finalized.

<p><b>Tuesday May 14<sup>th</sup></b> Setup/Registration 1:00am in Hospitality Room</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Open Day Sightseeing On Your Own</b></p> <p><b>Hospitality Room</b> closes at ~12:00 midnight</p>	<p><b>Wednesday May 15<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Historic Mobile Bus Tour \$40:00pp</b> (approx 4 hrs) 11:30am in Lobby Buses Leave 12pm- 4pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration in Hospitality Room</p> <p><b>Evening Activities Hospitality Room</b> closes at ~12:00 midnight</p>	<p><b>Thursday May 16<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Pensacola Bus Tour</b> <b>Naval Air Station Museum &amp; Park</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Activities, Admission &amp; Lunch: <b>\$60pp</b> 8:15am in Lobby Buses Leave 8:30am-3pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Presidents 'Mardis Gras Nite' *Compliments of NDQSA Hotel 6:00pm-10:00pm Cash Bar</p> <p><b>Hospitality Room</b> closes at ~12:00 midnight</p>	<p><b>Friday May 17<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Alabama Battleship &amp; Museum Park Memorial Service, Tour Indoor &amp; Outdoor Museums, Duster &amp; Quad 50 on Exhibit</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Activities, Admission &amp; Lunch: <b>\$65pp</b> 8:45am in Lobby Buses Leave 9:00am-3pm</p> <p><b>Hospitality Room</b> closes at ~12:00 midnight</p>	<p><b>Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup></b> 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM <b>Annual Membership Business Mtg.</b> *Members required to attend 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM <b>Ladies Continental Breakfast</b> 12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM <b>Annual NDQSA Banquet</b> <b>Guest Speakers, Awards &amp; Presentations: \$45pp</b></p> <p><b>Evening Activities, Auctions &amp; Raffles Hospitality Room</b> closes at ~12:00</p> <p><b>Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup> 9:00am</b> <b>Chaplain's Farewell Svc.</b></p>
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#### Select & Pay for Activities

Select & Pay for Activities	No. of Persons	Amount
Wednesday, May 15th 12:00 pm Historic Mobile Bus Tour (approx.4 hours)	(\$40) x _____	= \$ _____
Thursday, May 16th 8:30 am Pensacola Bus Tour Includes Activities & Lunch 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm President's Reception: 'Mardi Gras Nite': *Compliments of the Association*	(\$60) x _____	= \$ _____
Friday, May 17th 9:00am USS Alabama Memorial Park, NDQSA Memorial Svc, Museum & Lunch (\$65)	x _____	= \$ _____
Saturday, May 18 <sup>th</sup> 12:00 Noon - 3PM - Luncheon Banquet, Guest Speakers & Awards (\$45 per person)	x _____	= \$ _____
Voluntary donation to 2019 NDQSA Reunion Good Works Service Project Fund (any amount welcome)		\$ _____
<b>Reunion Registration Fee: Make sure you add it into your total. (\$25 individual / \$40 per family)</b>		\$ _____
<b>Total &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>		<b>\$ _____</b>

**Allan Penwell, NDQSA**  
**1501A Theodore Drive**  
**Champaign, IL 61821**

Make your pre-registration check payable to NDQSA  
and mail to NDQSA Treasurer:  
← Cut out this address label and tape it to your envelope.

**Tear off this  
page, fill it out  
and mail it in.**



D-  
/ /19 # \$  
Q- S- E- P

Mailing Label ->

Cut out and tape  
to envelope

**NDQSA**  
**PO Box 890130**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73189**

**2019 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 NDQSA 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 1<sup>st</sup> tour (m/yr): \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Addn'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 (2019) (2020) (2021) (2022)

**DUES ARE \$25 PER YEAR** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donations: Quad 50 restoration \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Searchlight restoration \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Searchlight Print (\$60 min) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Operation Eagle Repair** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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)

No more jackets being produced

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 2019



Logo Patch \$5



Logo Decal \$5



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



Lucite Coin \$25 50-cal bottle opener \$14



NDQSA Cap \$15 Made in the USA



New Products Size Chart	
Subject to stock on hand	
Give 1st & 2nd choice on color	
<b>T-shirt:</b>	Medium
Black	Large
Gray	XL
	XXL (Tall)
	XXXL (Tall)
	XXXXL
\$15	
<b>Mens Polo:</b>	Small
Black	Medium
Tan	Large
	XL
	XXL (Tall)
	XXXL (Tall)
	XXXXL
\$30	
	XL Tall
	XXL Tall



**M42A1 Duster Twin-40s**  
First to fire...  
last to leave  
1966 -1971 4/44th 5/2d 4/60th NDQSA.COM

**M55 Quad .50's**  
"Whispering  
Death"  
1966 -1972 D-71st E-41st G-55th G-65th NDQSA.COM

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

**Search Lights**  
"Light for the fight"  
1965-1972 B-29th G-29th H-29th I-29th NDQSA.COM

**HAWKS**  
"Homing All the  
Way Killer"  
1965-1969 6/56th ADA 6-71st ADA NDQSA.COM

Brickmania Lego kits are sold out pending orders already received.

**VULCAN**  
"Duster Busters"  
1965-1969 VULCAN COMBAT TEAM NDQSA.COM

**NDQSA BUMPER STICKERS**  
Duster- Quad-50-SLT-HAWK-Vulcan  
\$10 each



## Allan Penwell, C-5/2d '67-68

### Some of my Vietnam Story

*I am writing my memoirs which are almost completed. Only five copies are being made — one for each of my four children and one for me. This is a condensed version of my Vietnam experience I offered to share with our historian.*



After arriving in-country and being assigned to the 5/2d (Duster) Battalion, BN CO Lt. Col. Churchill told me I was being assigned to Charlie Battery which was attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigades of the 9<sup>th</sup> ID were headquartered at Bearcat which was at Long Thanh only a 40 minute drive from

Duster Compound near Long Binh. The Riverine 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade worked out of Dong Tam which was south of Saigon on the Mekong River. Within the next year, the entire division would move to Dong Tam.

Captain Hollis was the C Battery commander in Sept 1967. He came over on the boat with the battalion in the fall of 1966 and directed the battery through the first year. Initially the battery was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division if I recall correctly and participated in several significant offensives in the Iron Triangle.

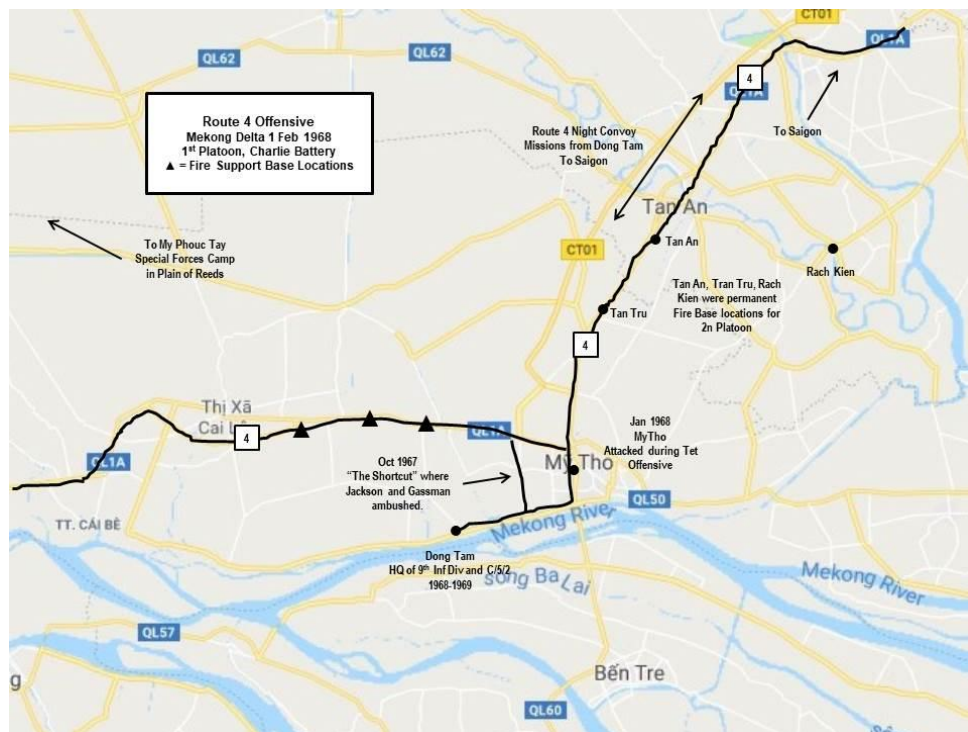
In fall 1967, Captain Hollis was replaced by Captain Tom Casey as it was customary for an officer to be in a command position for only six months. A command position might look good on a resume, but just as soon as one battery commander became experienced, a new one had to be broken in. I then became XO of the battery but was replaced within a week or so by Pete Cangilos who had date of rank on me by only a few days. I was assigned as platoon leader of the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon along with Pete Cheney who was assistant platoon leader.



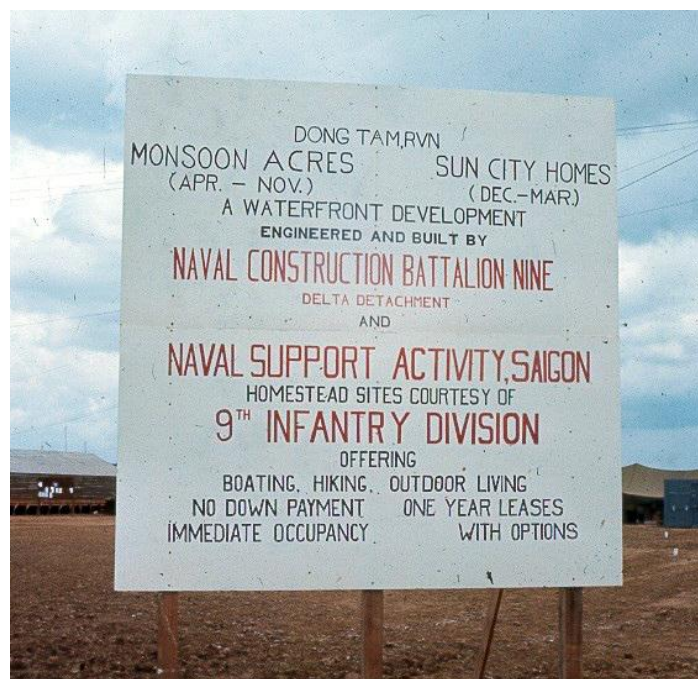
In October 1967, word came that Sergeant Frederick Jackson and SP4 Gerald Gassman of Second Platoon in the Delta were killed in an ambush on what was known as “The Shortcut.” There were fire bases on Route 4 north of Dong Tam, and the safest, but longest way to get to Route 4 from the division base was through My Tho. There was also “The Shortcut” which was dicey, but safer if you were in a convoy. It turned out that Jackson and Gassman took The Shortcut in late afternoon unescorted which proved fatal. Their shot-up

jeep was brought up to our motor pool for disposal. The battalion chaplain came down for a memorial service for both of these men who gave their lives for their country. Later, when we joined second platoon at Dong Tam, I took The Shortcut twice in convoy resupply but could not help but think how dangerous it really was.

The only significant event in 1967 was Operation Santa Fe which was east on Route 1 toward the South China Sea. Pete Cheney and I took two sections of Dusters and were mainly in static defense of Fire Support Base Wildcat for several weeks. Although Intelligence reported there was a well-developed, fortified NVA base on the nearby May Tao Mountains, the enemy laid low and not much went on. The ACAV troop next to us was made up of characters and was a free-wheeling outfit. Their leader, Captain Thompson, would pop out of his commander's hatch from time to time with mouse ears on his head, and yell, "What kind of Mickey Mouse outfit is this?" One afternoon, the ACAV returned from one of their missions with a huge Boa constrictor. Thompson lined up six or seven GIs holding the stretched out snake which they named Houston. Somewhere there is a picture of it on the internet, and the caption notes that Houston was shipped stateside and lived out his or her life in a zoo. That was highly unlikely, and knowing Captain Thompson, the troop probably had snake soup for supper.



Google Maps now calls this Highway 1, but an article in *The New Yorker*, June 17, 1967 clearly refers to it as Highway 4.



Life at Dong Tam was punctuated by nightly mortar and rocket attacks. We slept in sandbagged bunkers usually accompanied by a friendly rat or two scampering around. Despite the frequency of the mortar and rocket attacks which came for weeks, there were surprisingly few casualties and limited damage. It also became habitual to have a couple of AH-1 Cobras in orbit over the nearby canal, and occasionally a Spooky AC-47. The fire from these aircraft was nothing less than spectacular, and they sounded like a chain saw.



In February, my first platoon began a serious move south to Dong Tam. I took orders from the 1/11 Artillery Battalion and set up my platoon headquarters with them in Dong Tam. In addition to this combat assignment, I worked with the engineers at Dong Tam to build our battery area. Compared to Dong Tam, Bearcat was a sea of tranquility. The only enemy activity I remembered at Bearcat was the rocketing of the helicopter strip next to us.



Now that the 9<sup>th</sup> Division was consolidating in the Mekong Delta, its mission became obvious. The Delta was the breadbasket of Vietnam with hundreds of square miles of rice paddies interspersed through tributaries of the Mekong River. The Viet Cong used it as their major supply of food in the southern part of the country as well as to extort tax money from the local farmers. The job of the infantry was to hurt the Viet Cong whenever it could and keep commerce flowing on Route 4. Incidentally Route 4 today has been renamed Route 1 which begins at the South China Sea, and it looks like an interstate.

Second Platoon had sections in Tan An, Tan Tru, Rach Kien and Ben Luc. These towns were roughly in a north-south direction between Saigon and Dong Tam, but now operations began moving west as Route 4 turned toward Cai Lay. New firebases were established for the artillery to support the infantry which helicoptered out of Dong Tam or from the fire bases. One of my sections was left at Bearcat, and the other three were on Route 4.

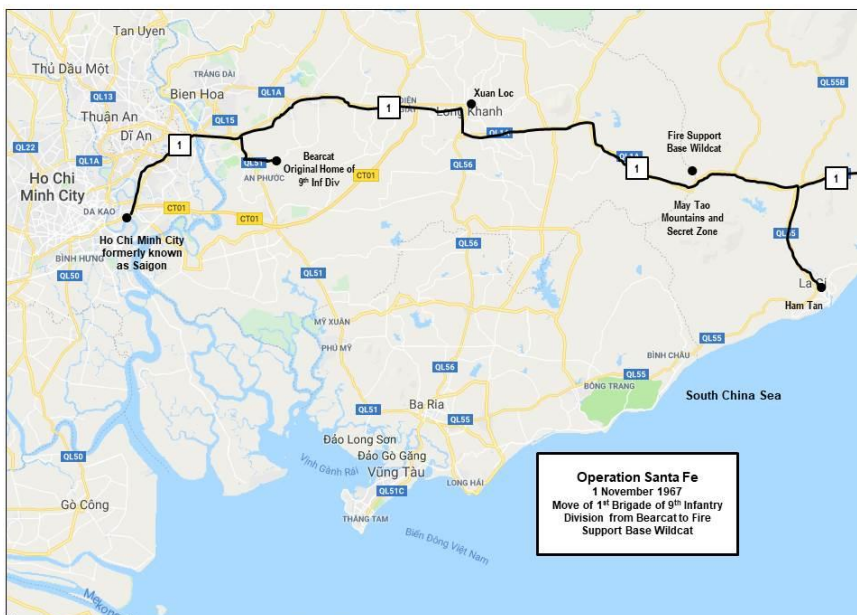
The engineers completed work on our battery area which was on the north side of the base. A sandbagged commo shack, a battery office, and a maintenance tent were finished but really nothing else was completed. When the rest of the battery moved down to Dong Tam (along with our new battery commander, Bill Stender), everyone slept in tents and had to make mad dashes to bunkers when we were rocketed and mortared. The battery headquarters had one side for Mike Renwick, the battery clerk, and the other half was my office where I put my cot. When the VC started their evening activity, I used the commo shack next door as my bunker.



Loads of lumber were delivered, and First Sergeant Michenow supervised construction of three two-story enlisted barracks. As I recall the engineers were there to assist us, but the engineers were more likely comprised of privates who had some classroom instruction on sawing 2x4s with little to no hands-on construction experience. The second building was under construction

when one night we heard a crash. I jumped off my cot and ran around the corner. The barracks had folded up like an accordion. It must not have been braced properly before some of the shear walls were hammered in. Luckily, they were unoccupied, but all we were left with was a pile of lumber that looked like match sticks.

There were three significant events that I remember as platoon leader in the spring of 1968. The first was the attack on FSB Jaeger which was on Route 4 near one of our sections at FSB Lambert. The Cav had just moved to its night defensive position with no time to dig in. The VC attacked in numbers and 11 out of 25 APCs were



destroyed along with 20 dead and 68 wounded of our troops. I was up all night listening to the radio, and luckily our guys were fine.

The enemy took significant losses during Tet 1968, but they correctly sensed the support of the war by the American public was waning after realizing the enemy could marshal sizeable forces and strike at will — particularly the major cities. A plan was developed to hit the cities in South Vietnam in May 1968 although on a lesser scale than Tet. The U.S. command anticipated this through intelligence sources and in April took measures to reinforce defenses around the cities. Our battery had two missions in the May Offensive.

The first mission was in April to include Quad 50s which were quickly assigned to our battery. As soon as the Quads showed up, I was sent with them to a Special Forces camp at My Phouc Tay in the middle of the Plain of Reeds near the Cambodian border. The enemy had bases in Cambodia to move supplies from their strongholds to forces west of Saigon to jump off for an attack on the city, and the camp was in their way. The camp was an old French fort which was triangular and surrounded by rolls of concertina wire. There were friendly mines as well as an unknown number of mines the French had buried. The middle of the camp had two 155mm ARVN howitzers and a heavily bunkered command center. The camp was manned by a Special Forces A Team along with an ARVN detachment for the howitzers as well as infantry and their Vietnamese families. It was the first firebase that I was in that had chickens running around. We were there for a week or so, and all was quiet.

My memory is less clear as to the second mission our battery had as part of the May Offensive which at the time we called the Second Saigon Offensive. Troops of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division were moved into Saigon along with artillery units we supported to defend the city. I took two sections into Saigon for several days where we defended fire support bases of 105mm howitzers. There was significant enemy contact made over a period of three weeks, and ammunition supply for the artillery was critical. Our firebases were never attacked, but there was street fighting around us. Both the enemy and civilians took major casualties.

As my tour was coming to its end, early one morning in August, I grabbed my duffel bag and caught the 6 a.m. mail shuttle to Long Binh. Over the roar of the rotor blades, I asked one of the pilots if he could drop me off at Duster Compound. I sat down among the mail bags for my last Huey ride. About half way there, the helicopter went into a screaming dive from 3,000 feet down to tree top level. All I could do was sit there and say to myself, “This has been a pretty good life.” The helicopter came out of the dive, and we landed at the helipad at Duster Compound with no clue as to what had happened. I hopped out and stayed overnight to process out of battalion.

The next evening a bus load of us dressed in our khakis were driven to Tan Son Nhut and off-loaded into a large military hanger. We waited at least an hour under the darkening sky before the landing lights of a Boeing 707 appeared in the distance. The plane landed and taxied beside the hanger and a set of stairs was wheeled to the plane. Over 150 soldiers came off the plane and silently walked past us. They were just starting their year of service. This was startlingly reminiscent of the last scene of “Close Encounters of a Third Kind” when the missing airmen and sailors walk off the mother ship. Our group was leaving, but sadly some of those taking our places would not be returning home. We boarded the 707 and were on our way to San Francisco.



**M42A1 “DUSTER” AW SP “TWIN 40’s”**

**“If the left one don’t...the right one will”**

**“Have Guns Will Travel”**

## BRICKMANIA NEWS

**David Siskind**, the owner of Brickmania and a good friend to NDQSA, continues to support NDQSA and the special ADA weapon systems used during the Vietnam War. Brickmania has already made special NDQSA versions of three of their Lego brick kits like the Quad .50-cal gun truck, the M42A1 Duster and a M-151 Mutt jeep with a searchlight. I took the opportunity to show him and his model developers one more ADA related Lego brick model I was working on. It is of the HAWK missile system. Specifically the various radar units. I did not have the skill to mock up a version of the actual missile launcher or carrier, but that is something they are very good at. I also gave them schematics of an early plastic model to help them try to make Brickmania version of the system.

In January of 2019, Brickmania reissued their Vietnam era APC kit. I bought several kits and tried to modify one to look like a Vulcan. I sent Dan some photos of my construction and was surprised to get a reply within a few days. It turns out that he was also preparing to make an add on for their APC kit for a Vulcan model! Their friends at Brickarms is working on a proper version of the 20mm gatling gun for use on this kit. I will continue to work with them and when and if they make a general release of these kits, I will be sure to ask them to make a special release for NDQSA members.

### NEW IN THE ARCHIVES

John Stencel of H-5/2 '67-68 sent me a DVD with copies of his Vietnam photos. Lots of great images AND in the album were several photos of one of the early attempts to find an alternate vehicle (prime mover) for the M-55 Quad 50 gun mount.



I had known of this configuration because the was an actual plastic model kit of this very tracked quad.



I had never seen a real photo of the configuration until now. If you served on this D-71 quad in this configuration please contact the historian.



Was it ever used this way in the field?

**National Dusters, Quads &**

**Searchlights Association  
PO Box 890130  
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**Forward Service Requested**



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**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion**

**Mobile, Alabama**

**May 14-19, 2019**

<http://www.ndqsa.com/>

Issue #1 February 2019

Face Book : [Dqs historian](#)

Many of you have already paid for multiple years, so look carefully at the mailing label for the year which shows when you are paid up through. (2018 or beyond)

However, if you see the number 0000 or 2018 and below, we have not seen a dues payment from you in a while. If you can't afford the dues, we fully understand so do not worry about it. We only ask that you update your status and verify your contact information, **phone numbers and email address**. Just mail in the info using the multipurpose form or send an email.

Current rosters are printed out when your form is submitted and will contain the most up to date information. So please make any updates or changes ASAP!

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To be sure you get the newsletter via email, tell your email program to accept emails from dqshistorian@cox.net.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association <sup>tm</sup> (NDQSA <sup>tm</sup>) is the original, official representative for ADA Veterans who served in Vietnam. NDQSA is the **only** organization of Vietnam ADA Veterans officially recognized by the Air Defense Artillery Association headquarters in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. As a tribute to the memory of over 200 ADA Warriors who lost their lives during the war in Vietnam, NDQSA members have funded, constructed and dedicated a magnificent monument in the Memorial Park at Ft. Sill.

NDQSA was founded in 1981 by John Huelsenbeck et al, holds annual reunions and has grown to about 600 active members with a directory of over 2200 ADA Vietnam Veterans and supporters.

NDQSA is an IRS 501(c) (19) non-profit veteran's organization and is incorporated in the State of Indiana.

We welcome and encourage all ADA Veterans who served in Vietnam to join NDQSA and to share the fellowship, mutual support, and continued service to our nation on behalf of all military veterans and active duty personnel.