



NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION, Inc.

NEWSLETTER – April 2024

President's Message – David McCray



Greetings everyone,

This has been a busy time for your board of directors. Many projects have been worked on since the last newsletter. I want to thank our board for the tremendous amount of work that has been done. I shall also mention some projects, but most will be expanded on in the newsletter.

Jackie Carver brought his excavator and other equipment from Alabama and the bricks were laid for the project. The bricks we purchased failed a paint test in the laser carvings. We have ordered new grey bricks from the company Bricks R Us and they should be delivered in about a month to replace the defective yellow ones. This newsletter has more information and pictures.

The board purchased a memorial bench honoring Medal of Honor recipient Mitchell W. Stout, and it will be placed just outside the doors to the ADA Learning Center and Museum. The schedule is for it to be completed by the end of May.

The NDQSA Memorial Trust established to ensure perpetual care of our Air Defense Artillery Vietnam Memorial located in Constitution Park at Fort Sill is basically complete. The trust's account number information must be added to the trust and filed at the Comanche County Courthouse in Lawton, Oklahoma. I will try to complete this in the next few weeks. Vinnie will give a presentation on the NDQSA Memorial Trust at the banquet in DC.

Without the strength of our wives, many of us would have lost the battle with PTSD. The friendships they form at reunions and their service to NDQSA are invaluable. On behalf of the association, I want to extend a heartfelt invitation to the wives of members who have passed away. Please continue to come to the reunions and share our time together. You make us better people and we love you.

Everyone, please go to ndqsa.com and review the new web site. The web site committee has done a tremendous job and more to come. Rick, George, and Richard are to be congratulated!

My time is getting short as president, and I want to thank the board for all their continued support. Love to all and I will see everyone in DC.

David McCray

NDQSA Website Update

Our president talked about things being done to preserve the heritage of this association and our service in Vietnam. The new website is a key component of that responsibility. There are two pages dedicated to Medal of Honor recipient Mitchell W. Stout that are now the national source site documenting his sacrifice. We have posted over a dozen of your personal stories on the Heritage page, and more are coming. There is a new page we call Scrapbooks. We expect it will get very active over the next few months. We have also learned how to stream videos. Take a look at the YouTube video links of our men and equipment in action. Some are official combat camera, and others are soldier videos. The new website is: www.ndqsa.com. Our email is ndqsaprojects@gmail.com, or contact our webmasters Rick Liebendorfer or George Walko directly to share your digital stories, photos, scrapbooks or even just talk over ideas.

The Story and Legacy of the Quad 50s in the Vietnam War

The Air Defense Artillery combat battalions arrived in Vietnam in 1966. Each battalion consisted of twin 40mm anti-aircraft track vehicles called Dusters and combat attachments of Quad 50 machineguns. In Vietnam they were originally to be used as combat base perimeter security and air-defense in case of being attacked by enemy North Vietnam aircraft. The first of these types of combat units arrived in Vietnam via combat cargo ships along with the 3rd Marine Division. They consisted of 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Dusters, and their attachment, G Battery, 65th Artillery, of Quad 50 machineguns.

Originally, the Duster and Quad 50 were primarily going to be used to shoot down enemy airplanes and help maintain perimeter security for the 3rd Marine Division up on the DMZ. The Marines never had witnessed the enormous fire power of Dusters or Quad 50s. The Marines' combat mission comprised of both combat base perimeter security and mobile combat.

Since the Marines did not have anything resembling the Duster or Quad in their arsenal, it was decided to change the role of the Dusters and Quads to total ground support with air defense being second. These weapon systems and their crews now became the Marines primary mobile combat teams and body recovery units. It was the Army's gift to the Marines, "Mobile Combat Team." Each had more firepower than several companies of the Marine infantry. It meant death and destruction for the enemy, and they became Vietnam's ultimate ground fighting machine. Duster crew members, who were originally trained to shoot down aircraft, were now retraining themselves as a front-line ground support team weapon. The problem of retraining was an on-the-job experience on the front lines of the battlefield. The enlistees operating the Dusters and Quad 50s now became hands-on combat instructors.

During World War II and the Korean War, U.S. convoys operated behind friendly front lines with virtual impunity. Things were vastly different in Vietnam. Our troops never held the ground they fought for. As they advanced from jungle area to jungle area and defeated the enemy, they were not allowed to hold the ground.

There were no front lines, and the American combat bases were prime enemy artillery targets. Convoy duty in Vietnam was dangerous and nerve-racking. Enemy attacks were a constant threat along all their resupply routes. Ambushes posed a serious logistical problem as trucks provided most of the supplies to inland installations and isolated combat bases. There were no modern highways nor trains of any consequence. The roads were mostly narrow dirt roads with heavy vegetation on both sides. Perfect "Ambush Alleys."

The Dusters and Quad 50s engaged daily convoy security, search and destroy missions, body recovery and perimeter security. Guard duty was nightly, and each weapon system would participate nightly in H&I fire missions, short for "harassment and Interdiction" fire missions. Given selected grid coordinates, they each would fire thousands of rounds into suspected enemy territory nightly. The sky looked like the 4th of July. Since the Marine command had the Quad 50 combat missions changed, the next four arriving battalions were now all assigned as mobile combat units. Since all these units were trained stateside to shoot down airplanes or helicopters, they now taught themselves jungle warfare combat. Their new type of combat role left it up to the individual crews to self-teach themselves mobile type combat and how to do body recovery. Combat now became up close and personal as they traveled the jungle roads delivering troops and supplies. Because of the lack of combat medics, crash medical courses were given to crews. The Quad 50 combat units in Vietnam were situated from the DMZ to the Delta and were considered the first air defense artillery combat units and not ordinary machinegun units.

Most of the Quad 50s in Vietnam were mounted on 2½ flatbed trucks and some on 5-ton flatbed trucks. They consisted of a crew of four; driver, gunner and two 50-caliber machinegun loaders, called gun-bunnies. (They each carried their own M16 rifle and or a 45-caliber pistol). Some of the Quad mounts had what they called bat wings extending from each side of the tiny four-gun firing turret. This, hopefully, protected the loaders from enemy bullets. Many of the trucks mounted with Quads did not use the bat wings because they occasionally knocked the loaders off the trucks. The Quad gun mount also had

removeable wheels and could be towed. The wheels were removed when they were truck mounted. Quads were also ground-mounted or air-lifted in enemy territory to support remote firebases or ground troops.

The Quad 50s fought in every major battle in the Vietnam War from the DMZ to the Mekong Delta and were the key fighting forces of the 1968 TET Offensive. From their arrival to Vietnam in 1966 to their departure, they fired more than 10,000,000 – 50 caliber rounds. More 50-caliber bullets were fired by Vietnam Quad 50s than in any other war. Like the flying Aces of WWII, the Quad crews became famous and legendary in every firefight by their individual front shield artwork; The Widow Maker, The Great Eye of Destruction, Blood Sweat & Tears, The Eliminator, Whispering Death, and many others unforgettable names.

Thirty-Six Quad 50 crew members gave the supreme sacrifice of their lives during the Vietnam War.

For their heroism Quad 50 crew members were awarded more than 450 medals including, Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver Stars, Bronze Stars with Valor, and hundreds of Purple Heart Medals.

The combined ADA Quad 50 and Duster units were the most highly decorated artillery unit in the history of the Vietnam War.

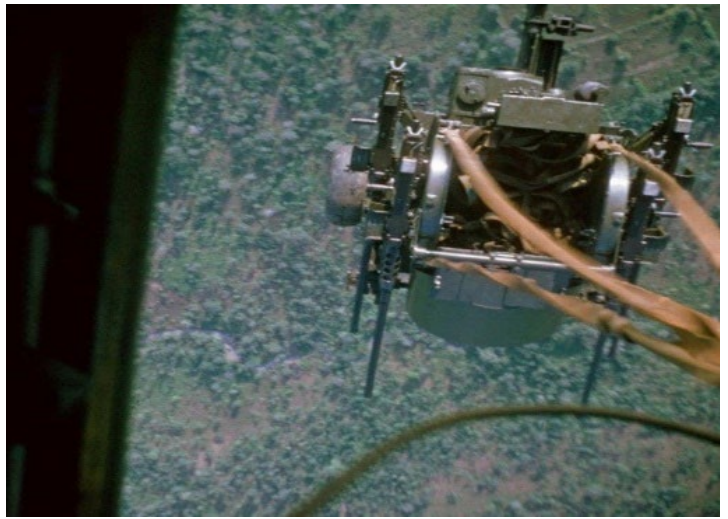
Quad 50 units in Vietnam:

G Battery, 65th Quad 50s was attached to the 1st/44th Duster artillery battalion.

E Battery, 41st Quad 50s was attached to the 4th/60th Duster artillery battalion.

D Battery, 71st Quad 50s was attached to the 5th/2nd Twin 40mm Duster artillery battalion.

G Battery, 55th Quad 50s was attached to the Americal Division.

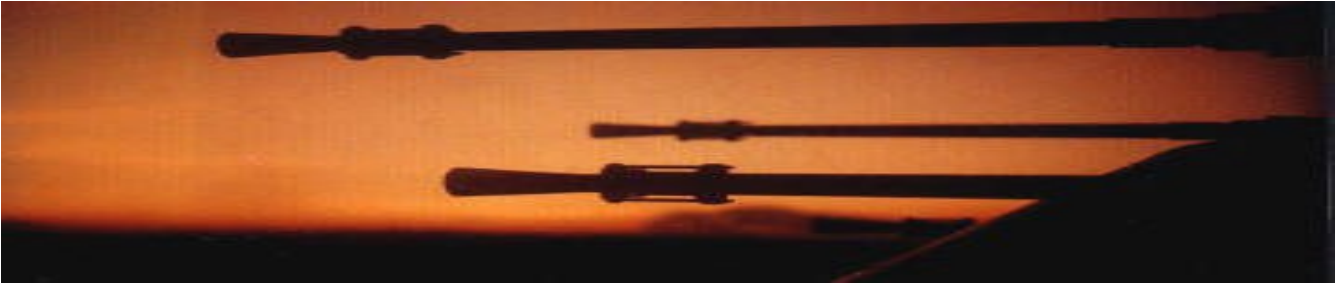


Top Row: Quad nose art collection

Bottom row: Quad with bat wings. Sling load into firebase.

January 31, 1968 - Quad 50's at Hue

By Bob Lauver



I had been in Vietnam for 15 months on the afternoon of January 30th, 1968. Since September of 1967 my time had been served as squad leader and acting section chief with Battery G, 65th Artillery, a "Quad 50" unit. A Quad 50 is an air defense gun turret with four .50-caliber machine guns and a gunner that sits in-between them. At Fort Bliss, Texas, Quad 50 crews trained against aerial targets, but in Vietnam they provided antipersonnel defense at besieged firebases and pulled convoy escort duty for friendly forces moving along frequently ambushed highways. They were deployed on the ground or mounted on trucks to protect convoys.



G 65th was attached to the 1st of the 44th Artillery, a "Duster" (Twin 40mm) battalion. We had been farmed out to 3rd Marine Division for convoy escort duty up and down Highway 1 and had run Highway 9 to Khe Sanh and Lang Vei. We also provided perimeter support for firebases like Camp J.J. Carroll, Gio Linh, Con Thien, L.Z. Baldy, L.Z. Ross, L.Z. Bastogne, and others that either didn't have a name or I have forgotten what they were called.

I had spent time with the 3rd Marine Division, 101st Airborne, and the 7th and 12th Cav. attached to the Americal Division, but until the 1968 Tet Offensive in Hue, I had never

supported the 1st Marine Division. After January 31st, 1968, I would never forget them.

It was always exciting to provide convoy escort duty through the historic Vietnamese provincial capital of Hue. There was a tendency to relax, unbutton the flak jacket, and take off the steel pot. Our gunner would climb out of the sling and sit on the back of the gun mount. We admired our surroundings as we crossed the Nguyen Hoang Bridge across the Perfume River and saw the massive stone walls of the Citadel. We particularly paid attention to the graceful young girls in their Ao Dai whom we supposed were students at the nearby University of Hue. We were looking forward to cold beer and hot chow with our comrades at the 1st Battalion of the 44th Artillery area in Phu Bai.

At about 3:30AM on the following morning, ears trained at Con Thien and Gio Linh picked up the unmistakable sounds of incoming mortars and rockets leaving their tubes. I was in the bunker by the time I woke up. As dawn was breaking, the rockets and mortar rounds had slacked off and a cry came down to "saddle-up". Two G-65th gun trucks escorted a small group of vehicles mounted with marines to the vicinity of a small village outside of Phu Bai where they were to hook us with a unit of ARVN troops. I have no idea of what the mission was, but there were streams of people running through the undergrowth away from the buildings. We did not see any action then and returned to the base compound at Phu Bai and

headed for the mess hall. Before we could get any chow, word came down to hurry up and get back on the trucks. We were going to head for Hue; there was some trouble at the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compound.



3rd Marine Division Officers inspect a Quad soon after our arrival in Dong

The two G-65th Quads, and I believe two 1-44 Dusters hooked up with a group of trucks that I later learned were elements of Alpha 1-1 of the 1st Marine Division. We moved north on Highway 1 toward the outskirts of Hue where we met a group of 3rd Division Marine M-48 tanks. To our left was an ARVN post engaged in a heated firefight on the hillside opposite us. We could plainly see black uniformed North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers running along the hillside from cover to cover. The squad leader of one of the Dusters and myself requested permission to fire, however we were not allowed to fire over the ARVN base. The combined forces now started to move north toward Hue. Facing us, at the edge of a small bridge, was an ARVN tank with the commander appearing to be standing in the hatch on the front deck, but it didn't look right. We then realized that a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) had hit the tank, cut the tank commander in two, and blown the torso to the middle of the deck where it stayed.

The Marines were deployed on each side of Highway 1 with slow progress being made. We could hear the "phitt" of bullets and the sounds of firefights on each side of the column. As we progressed, we would be given targets by the marines. Our progress halted at a traffic circle in the vicinity of the An Cuu Bridge. We backed the Quad into the edge of the circle and dismounted to wait. Although there was heavy incoming fire, I took what I thought was secure cover and started to open a can of "C" rations. I heard several rounds pass uncomfortably close and turning, noticed a line of holes through my "secure cover" right above my head. The cover was nothing more than sheet metal shelving used for market day. I moved.

Incoming enemy fire intensified, and we were asked to direct fire at a multi-story building to the right side of the road. As we poured several hundred rounds into the building, there was a sudden break by several NVA soldiers across an open area to the rear of the structure. Open targets! The guns traversed to the right, cutting down the enemy until they took cover. Fighting was now house-to-house and very slow. We were still a hundred or so meters back from the MACV Compound, battles were raging all around us, and we became more and more involved in the fighting. To our left front, an RPG hit a Marine tank. A corpsman yelled for help, and I jumped off the truck and ran to the tank with rounds kicking around my feet. He needed to get one of the wounded tankers to cover, so I grabbed and helped. The Marine was obviously seriously hurt, I never knew if he made it. I got back on the Quad 50-gun truck and we continued toward the Perfume River. During that day of sheer terror and pumping adrenaline, strange memories can be retained. I remember a Marine going into a building firing repeatedly and suddenly reappearing with a case of warm beer. Advancing towards the enemy was stalled for a few minutes.

We had reached within a few blocks of the MACV compound when PFC Theodore Harris the gun loader and David (?) the driver on my gun truck, jumped down and ran to the assistance of a Marine with his leg

almost blown off. As we neared the Perfume River, the command was given for us to move up to the front. We received sniper fire from a building to our right that had a very modernistic design and was some four stories high. We sprayed the entire front of the building with the .50-cals. There was glass behind the design. I believe that this was the city library. The Quads and Dusters were positioned at the base of the Nguyen Hoang Bridge and ordered to fire across the Perfume River in support of Marines from Golf Company, 2-5, 1st Marine Division, now advancing to the north side of the bridge. I remember a sequence of photographs that was later published; the first showed two orderly columns advancing onto the bridge. The next photo was of men under heavy fire running to get back to cover. The NVA had allowed the Marines to cross the length of the bridge before opening up with automatic weapons, recoilless rifles, and RPGs. Dead and injured Marines lay on the bridge.



My Quad 50 was providing cover fire from across the river when a Marine officer came up to me and asked, "Sarge, my men are getting the hell shot out of them, can you help them out?" I looked at the other guys on the truck (Harris, Davis, the gunner, and David the driver), and they looked at me and shrugged. There was never any thought to say "No" but, I think that each of us told ourselves that we weren't going to make it back from this one. I said, "Let's Go".

We pulled the Quad truck onto the bridge and drove toward the Citadel on the north end. This could have been a technical mistake since our guns were on the back of the truck and not facing the enemy. Why didn't we back across I don't exactly remember? It was a long bridge and driving in reverse that far under enemy fire would have been difficult to say the least. There were dead and wounded Marines along both edges of the bridge's deck. Men were using the bodies of their dead buddies as cover so they could continue to put return fire on enemy. Marines were yelling at us as we drove across to try to tell us where to direct our fire. The incoming fire was intense.

As soon as we reached the north end of the bridge, we opened our machine guns on the buildings that ran parallel to the river. The southeast corner of the wall of the Citadel was just to our left. As we continued sweeping fire across the buildings, I noticed movement to my left rear, glancing down I saw an NVA soldier at the corner of a sandbagged bunker holding a grenade. I yelled "grenade!" and we all jumped off the truck and took cover beneath the truck bed. I remember hiding behind the dual wheels of the truck shooting at this NVA with an old S&W .38 caliber revolver, all the while there were four perfectly good .50-caliber machineguns over my head! Theodore Harris later told me that the grenade actually went under the truck, where we were lying, instead of into the bed of the truck. Fortunately, the grenade did not explode, it was a dud!

We climbed back into the truck and the gunner Davis immediately started firing at trench lines that were in the park to our left. With all the noise of the guns, I had to beat him on the helmet and physically turn his

head to bring him around to fire on the bunker. As he brought the guns around and began to fire, all the bullets went over the top of the bunker. We were too close! The gun mount could not depress down enough! We yelled at the driver to pull the truck up, which brought the guns to bear down on the bunker at point blank range. I remember the tracers going right through both walls of the bunker and glancing off the Perfume River beyond. When we stopped firing the bunker was just a pile of sand.



During this action, I saw many Marines of Golf 2-5 perform heroic actions that remain unheralded to this day. Marines were cut down trying to take out the machine gun in the bunker. I remember a Marine charging the bunker with grenades only to not make it. Another Marine with an M-60 or M-16, firing from the hip, also did not make it to the bunker.

PFC Harris and I got off the truck while the driver turned the truck around. A Marine taking cover beside Harris was shot in the head and instantly killed. As the Quad truck drew even with us, we loaded the Marine in and started back across the bridge, picking up dead and wounded as we went.

That night was spent in the MACV compound under almost continual enemy fire. I did not notice until we were in the compound that I had injuries to my left leg. As a result, I was medivaced to Subic Bay in the Philippines via Hospital Ship the following day. A few weeks later I returned to the G-65th and later left Vietnam after 18 months in country.



Notes:

Both George W. Smith in The Siege at Hue, Ballantine, 1999, and Keith William Nolan in Battle for Hue TET 1968, Presidio Press, 1983, give almost identical accounts of the Quad 50 on the bridge at Hue. I will quote from Nolan: "The NVA fire was still heavy. One of the U.S. Army trucks took off from the relatively safe side of the river, stopped on the other side of the bridge, and started hosing down the enemy positions with its quad-fifties. Breth was watching from the LZ across the river, admiring the crew's bravery, when he suddenly saw two North Vietnamese run from a house. The sappers sprinted a dozen yards and hurled two satchel charges from their back, hitting the truck. The truck and men went up in a hellish explosion. ..." For the record, there was only one Quad 50 on that bridge, the one I have described here.

I have communicated with several survivors from Golf 2/5 over the past year, they all seem to think that there would be fewer of them alive today if it were not for this one Quad 50 from Battery G, 65th Artillery.

For the actions of January 31st, 1968, Sgt. Bob Lauer received a Silver Star and his second Purple Heart. The other 3 crew members were each awarded a Bronze Star with "V" Device. In August 2002, Bob Lauer and his wife Susan, with two other Vietnam Veterans, Escorted a group of four Gold Star Mothers to Vietnam.

The Lauer's made numerous trips across the bridge now known as the Trang Tien Bridge, but their hearts and memories it will always be Golf 2/5's Bridge!



From the Publications Committee and the NDQSA Historian

"We Need Your Help"

We want your "Vietnam Stories" to preserve your heritage and for you to become part of the history of NDQSA.

The NDQSA Association produces and mails three newsletters per year. Our newsletters always includes a message from our NDQSA president, membership roster update page, Taps, and reunion information. What really makes our newsletter is our members individual stories of their time in Vietnam. We desperately need your stories to be able to keep our newsletter in print. Trying our best to keep our members always informed as to what the greatest combined ADA combat units did in Vietnam. Remember. All stories will be archived in the Fort Sill History Department and at Texas Tech. Any questions, please give Joe Belardo a call. Be part of the military and personal history preservation process. Share your stories and photographs with our members. If you have a lot of Vietnam photographs, that you want archived by NDQSA, Joe will gladly scan your photos and return them with a "Flash Drive" for your own personal storage and preservation.

Please mail or email your personal Vietnam stories with accompanying photographs to:

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Email: josephbelardo@yahoo.com
Cell #: 908-510-4349

The Angels on The Wall

Did one of these Angels Save Your Life?

By Joe Belardo



2LT Lt Carol Ann Elizabeth Drazba, U.S. Army
11 Dec 1943 - 18 Feb 1966
Casualty Province: Bien Hoa
Panel: Row: 05E, Line 047
Buried: Scranton, Pennsylvania



CPT Mary Therese Klinker, U.S Air Force
3 Oct 1947 - 4 Apr 1975
Casualty Province: Bien Hoa
Panel: 01W, Row 122
Buried: Lafayette, Indiana



2LT Elizabeth Ann Jones, US Army
12 Sep 1943 - 18 Feb 1966
Casualty Province: Kontum
Panel 5E, Line 47
Buried: Allendale, South Carolina



1LT Hedwig Diane Orłowski, U.S. Army
13 Apr 1944 - 30 Nov 1967
Casualty Province: Gia Lai
Panel 31E, Line 015
Buried: Detroit, Michigan



LTC Annie Ruth Graham, U.S. Army
7 Nov 1916 - 13 Aug 1968
Casualty Province: Phu Yen
Panel: 48W, Line 012
Buried: Arlington National Cemetery



2LT Pamela Dorothy Donovan, U.S. Army
25 Mar 1942 - 8 Jul 1968
Casualty Province: Binh Dinh
Panel: 53W, Line 043
Buried: Boston, Massachusetts



1LT Sharon Lane, U.S. Army
7 Jul 1943 - 8 Jun 1969
Casualty Province: Quang Nom
Panel 23W, Line 112
Buried: Canton, Ohio



CPT Eleanor Grace Alexander, U.S. Army
18 Sep 1940 - 30 Nov 1967
Casualty Province: Binh Dinh
Panel: 31E, Line 008
Buried: River Vale, New Jersey

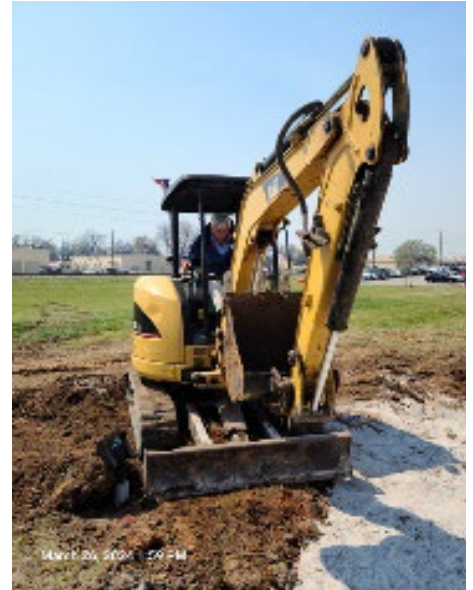
The Fort Sill Brick Project



During the last week of March 2024 the Fort Sill, Oklahoma brick project took a significant leap forward. To fully appreciate the effort, we must go back to Norfolk, Virginia and the NDQSA annual business meeting on November 13, 2021. It was there that Dave McCray presented information about the Air Defense Artillery Association's (ADAA) memorial brick program to raise funds in support of the newly constructed ADA Learning Center. He proposed that we, as an organization, somehow take on the heritage preservation project of obtaining a brick for each of the 212 men who lost their lives while assigned or attached to our ADA units in Vietnam. There was no debate about whether this should be done, only about how to raise the \$21,000. Vince Tedesco said he would go to the ADAA board of directors and ask that we get the bricks at cost and that they be displayed together because of their purpose as a memorial to the fallen.

Jackie Carver trailered in his small excavator to break open the ground.

Within six months the \$14,000 was raised through member donations. Our brick design and layout requirements were submitted and approved. It then became a struggle as the ADAA had to change brick vendors and eventually could not find a landscaping company willing to take on the installation.



Jackie Carver laying down the crushed rock sub-layer.



Volunteers from the ADA Warrant Officer Course help smooth the crushed rock and lay the bricks.



The bricks surround the Stinger Soldier statue in front of the ADA Learning Center, Fort Sill, OK.

Once again NDQSA stepped in to help make this project happen. Jackie Carver has the construction skills and equipment so volunteered to trailer in his small excavator and other necessary material from home in Alabama. Dave McCray worked with the ADAA for site access, a soil compactor, sub-layer crushed rock, and local help. The ADA school coordinated volunteers from the current ADA Warrant Officer course and even a couple of ADAA board members participated in the project. No doubt the standout force of nature was Melita Simley, the ADAA executive director.



Melita Simley takes control of the soil compactor on the stone bed.

These pictures capture the project execution. Dave and Jackie began work on March 25 and the brick installation was done by the evening of March 27. Melita and her husband finished up installing the plastic grass barrier on March 28. This project is not over, but it is timely to share its progress with the membership in this newsletter. There is still a large dedication capstone with information about NDQSA and the ADA units in Vietnam to be engraved. It will be installed beside our memorial bricks to each of the fallen. And finally, because of all the brick vendor changes, the yellow fallen bricks themselves needed to be replaced. The ones they sent did not adhere to the paint in the engraved lettering. They are being replaced at no cost with a grey brick that matches the color of the ADA soldier monument's base. After they arrive, volunteers will swap out the yellow bricks you see with the new grey bricks engraved with rank, name, date they fell, their unit, and their hometown. When

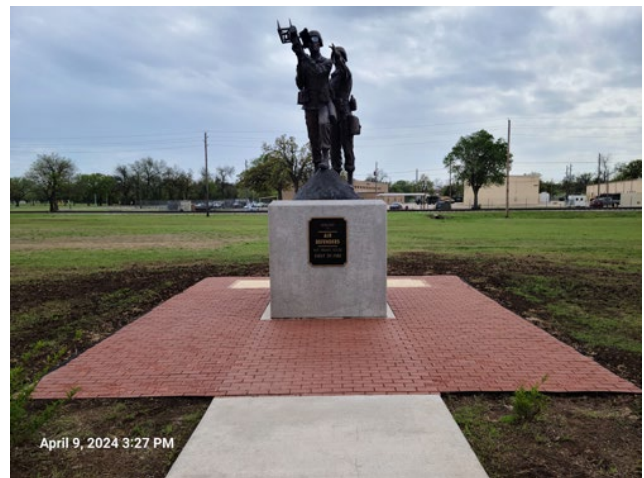
completed the 212 bricks will be arrayed in order by date of death, from SSG Frank Nadany, October 31, 1965, to PFC Bennie Holbrook, July 22, 1972. NDQSA continues its work to preserve our Vietnam service heritage. These memorial bricks are a fitting tribute and in a great location, right outside the ADA Learning Center, where young soldiers and visitors will pass by every day and reflect on their sacrifice.



Laying the memorial brick to the Vietnam fallen soldiers. Personally purchased red NDQSA member bricks surround the fallen bricks in respect.



The Warrant Officer Class received a memorial brick and certificate in appreciation for their help.



The brick project after everyone completed their hard work and went home.

LZ Weight -Davis Combat Base

By Dennis Hoffbuhr – CO 584th Engineers

I was the Commanding Officer of the 584th Engineer Company at LZ Weight-Davis in 1971. I would like to thank the Duster crews who served at Weight-Davis, I firmly believe that they prevented the LZ from being overrun with their awesome fire power. While Weight-Davis was primarily occupied by combat engineers of the 584th, 509th Panel Bridge Co. and Bravo Company of the 20th Engineer Battalion. We were constructing and paving Highway 14 south of Pleiku. The engineer troops lived in 22 living fighting bunkers spaced evenly around the perimeter of the LZ. They worked 10-to-12-hour days and provided perimeter security at night. Six Dusters from the B/4th/60th were interspersed among bunkers around the LZ in sand bagged positions, I remember one Duster was missing a track but still could fire. 1st /92nd Artillery also had guns on the LZ. At first there were 105's and 155's and as things heated up in our neighborhood, they brought in 175's and 8-inch guns. Weight-Davis was isolated and about a mile or so east of Highway 14, so we were pretty much on our own if trouble started. Fire Base Saint George was to our west, but it was being manned by the South Vietnamese and could not be counted on. In fact, one night they started dropping 105 rounds on us by "mistake." They did not kill any Americans, but South Vietnamese Laborers were killed. A branch of the Ho Chi Minh trail was located along a ridge to the northeast, and we were constantly receiving intelligence reports about an NVA sapper battalion that was in our vicinity. In the spring of 1971, the whole area became very active, and we were under mortar attack almost every night. Our perimeter wire was probed on a regular basis, which kept us on alert all night. When the Dusters would cut loose it created what appeared to be continual orange-green plane of tracers around our perimeter with the shells exploding down range. The 22 bunkers all had guard positions with 50 caliber, M 60 or 30 caliber automatic weapons. The mix of orange and green tracer rounds was an impressive sight. The big **guns would** get fire missions for longer range targets and our own mortar tubes would engage the VC mortars with the help of our counter mortar radar. The next day our guys would begin their construction jobs working in the quarry, running the asphalt plant, and delivering asphalt to the paving machines on the highway. This was usually 6 days a week with one day for maintenance.

Thanks again to all you Duster crews out there.

Members Report NDQSA Board of Directors Meeting

February 7, 2024

A regular board of directors meeting was held on February 7, 2024. 1st Vice President Joseph Belardo served as chairman in the absence of President McCray. Agenda items included updates on the reunion preparation, status of our Fort Sill memorial, and new members to approve. The 2024 reunion will be in Washington DC, November 8-12. The hotel will be the Hilton Arlington National Landing, and the reunion committee has their menu for selecting the banquet meal. The Army Museum has donated 200 tickets to NDQSA for the day trip on Saturday. The Hubcaps will be the band for our banquet on Sunday. Arrangements for our large group will be made to attend the Veterans Day wreath laying at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) on Monday. Anyone wanting to go to Arlington Cemetery will need to do it on their own. Costs for trips, the banquet, etc. have not been worked out yet and will be included in the reunion registration form. Action updates were received on The NDQSA Memorial Trust at Fort Sill. An Oklahoma legal firm is preparing the trust agreement, and we should see their document soon. A check for \$2,500 was written to the law firm as a retainer to work on the trust language. Our bank account of \$5,200 at Chase Bank will be closed out and transferred to the trust as the initial funding. Terry Phipps with 4/60 in 70-71, who served in Vietnam with Roger Giza, was elected as a regular member. LTC Sam Pearson, the current battalion commander of 6/56 ADA at Fort Cavazos, Texas, was approved as an associate member because of his support and inclusion of NDQSA members in his unit activities.



In Memory of Our Founder of NDQSA

John "Tank" Huelsenbeck

April 11, 1947 – April 16, 2024

With a broken heart, I must report to our members that our combat brother, John Huelsenbeck, who we all knew as "Tank," passed away in his winter home in Florida. His services were held in his hometown of Avilla, Indiana at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church. Burial was next to Sally in the Avilla City Cemetery. John's obituary can be viewed at www.harperfuneralhomes.com.

John Huelsenbeck was special to us as a friend and as the key founder of NDQSA. Our existence is because of John, and our members are indebted to his organizational skills and endurance decades ago for making the organization we have today. To his fellow veterans, he was much more than a veteran. He was a true patriot and of the highest character. He loved everyone, and when John spoke, all knew he had something important to say. He was a fantastic father, a loving grandfather, great-grandfather, and an overall wonderful person. He was everyone's best friend. He was a man who cared. A man who understood. John was a man who gave you his time, his wisdom, and shared his laughter. John always greeted everyone with a firm handshake, hug, and a warm smile.

John courageously served his country in the U.S. Army in C/1/44 Dusters during the Vietnam War. On the battlefield he was the symbol of an American hero. He fought in battles near the DMZ which included the infamous TET Offensive, the attack at Camp Carroll, and Khe Sanh Combat Base. John received two Purple Hearts and was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor. John represented the true meaning of courage on the battlefield, and the meaning of freedom. Everyone who knew John loved him. Tank was more than a hero to his country. He was a hero to all of us.

OPERATION WELCOME HOME REUNION

We encourage all members to attend our November reunion, as we have no idea when we will have another one in DC. Besides brotherhood and sisterhood camaraderie, a banquet, the president's party, and auction night, we will have two wonderful day trips. Our first trip will be to the new National Museum of the United States Army, and our second trip will be going to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day. At The Wall we will honor our 212 brothers with whom we served in Vietnam and died for their country. This could be your last time to say, "Welcome Home" to your brothers and together pay tribute to those who made the supreme sacrifice.

We hope to see you all at our 41st Reunion in Washington DC

2024 NDQSA REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

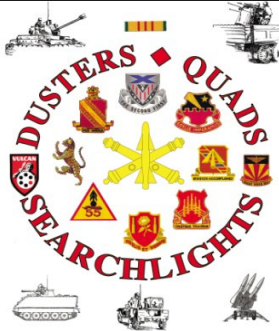
41st Annual NDQSA Reunion, Washington DC Nov 8th– 12th, 2024 ‘Operation Welcome Home’

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

Hilton Arlington National Landing Hotel
 2399 Richmond Highway
 Arlington, VA 22202
 1(703)418-6800
<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/dca-nahf-hilton-arlington-national-landing/>

Book Your Reservations ASAP!

Room Rates: King Bed \$129+tax; 2 Double Beds \$129+tax
 Rates Include: Discounted Self Parking \$15/Day
 Reagan National Airport Free Shuttle to Hotel (571)380-6299
 NDQSA Group Rate 2 days pre/post above dates (11/6/24–11/14/24)
Based on room availability!!! Reservation Cutoff: October 25, 2024
Must Mention ‘National Dusters, Quads Searchlights Assoc. Reunion’
Online NDQSA Reservation Link: <https://book.passkey.com/go/NDQSA2024>
 Hilton Arlington National Landing Reservations: 1(800)445-8667 **Group Code: 904**
 Problems (703)418-6800 Ask for Group Sales (Office hours: M-F 9am–5pm EST)



Name(print): _____
 Spouse or Guests: _____
 Cell Phone Number: _____

Which days are you planning to attend the reunion? (circle)

November 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 We Th **Fr** Sa Su Mo Tu We Th

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 planning 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.

ACTIVITIES

Friday Nov 8 th	Saturday Nov 9 th	Sunday Nov 10 th	Monday Nov 11 th	Tuesday Nov 12 th
Setup/Registration 10am-4pm Hospitality Room Afternoon Sightseeing On Your Own NDQSA Board Of Directors Mtg. 4pm-6pm Evening Activities Hospitality Room closes at ~12 midnight	9:30am-2:30pm Bus Trip to US Army National Museum (Est 3 hrs.) \$35 pp Lunch at Museum On Your Own 3pm board buses to Hilton Arlington Hotel Evening Activities Hospitality Room closes at ~12 midnight.	9:00am to 11:00am Annual Membership Business Mtg. *Members required to attend 9:00am to 11:00am Ladies Continental Breakfast in Hospitality Room 4:30 PM NDQSA Memorial 5:00 PM-10:30 PM NDQSA Dinner Banquet & President’s Party \$65 pp Guest Speaker, Awards & Presentations Hub Caps Live Band	10:00am-3:00pm Bus Trip to Veterans Day Ceremonies Vietnam Veterans Memorial \$35 pp 3:30pm board buses to Hilton Arlington Hotel 7pm Evening Activities, Auctions & Raffle Hospitality Room closes at ~11:00pm	9:00am Chaplain’s Farewell Svc. Safe Travel Home Hope to See You Next Year at Our 42 nd Annual Reunion!

Select & Pay for Activities

	No. of Persons	Amount
Saturday, Nov 9 th 9:30am-2:30pm Bus Trip to US Army National Museum	(\$35) x <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>	= \$ _____
Sunday, Nov 10 th 4:30pm-10:30pm NDQSA Dinner Banquet & President’s Party DJ & Dancing	(\$65) x <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>	= \$ _____
Monday, Nov 11 th 11:00am-3:00pm Bus Trip to Veterans Day Ceremonies at The Wall	(\$35) x <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>	= \$ _____
Voluntary donation 2024 NDQSA Good Works Project: (any amount welcome)		\$ _____
Reunion Registration Fee: Make sure you add it into your total. (\$25 individual / \$30 per family)		\$ _____
Total >>>>>>		\$ _____

NDQSA
PO Box 149
Savoy, IL 61874

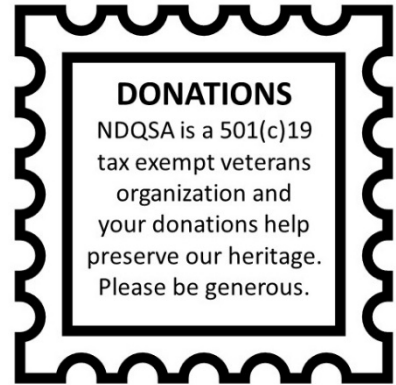
Make your pre-registration check payable to **NDQSA**
 and mail to NDQSA Treasurer:
← Cut out this address label and tape it to your envelope.

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

National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights

Dues and Roster Updates

First Name: _____
Middle Name: _____
Last Name: _____
Nickname: _____
Name of Spouse or Significant other: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip Code: _____ - _____
Email Address: _____
Home Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____
Vietnam Service Information:
Dates of 1st Tour: (m/yr.): _____ / _____ To _____ / _____
Dates of 2nd Tour: (m/yr.): _____ / _____ To _____ / _____
Dates of 3rd Tour: (m/yr.): _____ / _____ To _____ / _____
Primary MOS: _____
Primary Battery and Unit: _____
Attached to: _____
Additional Units if transferred or reassigned: _____
Names of Combat Bases or OP's: _____



Rank (highest grade while in Vietnam) - Officer: _____ NCO: _____ EM: _____

Valor Awards:

PH () DSC () SS () BS () BS/V () ACM/V () OTHER: _____

Dues \$25.00 per Year - Enclosed: 1 Year _____ 2 Years _____ 3 Years _____ 4 Years _____ 5 Years _____

Lifetime Membership Dues \$250.00 _____

Donation to NDQSA: _____

**** Total Enclosed: _____

****How would you like to receive your NDQSA Newsletter – Check One: Email _____ USPS _____

Mail Check to: NDQSA
PO Box 149
Savoy, IL 61874

NDQSA
PO Box 149
Savoy, IL 61874

Forward Service Requested



First to Fire...Last to Leave

April 2024 Newsletter

A tribute to the fallen nurses on the
Vietnam WALL
The Fort Sill brick project
Reunion Registration
Member stories

NDQSA Mission Statement

The National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association™ (NDQSA™) is the original, official representation, and holds the longest, continual and official annual reunion for ADA Veterans who served in Vietnam. NDQSA is the only organization of Vietnam ADA Veterans officially recognized by the Air Defense Artillery Association headquartered in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. As a tribute to the memory of over 220 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 Huelisenbeck et al 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 veterans 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.

