

# NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION, Inc.

## NEWSLETTER – March 2025

### President's Message – Joe Belardo

Dear NDQSA Members,



Our newsletter team hoped you enjoyed our January 2025 Newsletter. There was great stories and the list of “Candidates for Director Positions. A formal election ballot will be mailed to all dues paid members. I want to thank Bruce Geiger and Doug Hemphill for putting together a great June 2025 San Antonio River Walk Reunion. Make sure you make your hotel reservations and mail in your choices of reunion events. There is a separate mail in flier attached. I’m still looking for the crew of the Duster called the “Iron Coffin”. I placed their photo on the front page of the January 2025 newsletter “Can you name this Duster Crew?” I encourage you all to look up old friends and give them a call, it is very rewarding. This month after about 35 years I called a Duster buddy that I went from boot camp to Vietnam and home. His name is Paul Raymond. We were both on the 1st/44<sup>th</sup>, but different

batteries. It was fantastic hearing his voice and catching up with our lives. Paul is a great guitarist and introduced me to all kinds of folk, blues and country music. There was Joan Baez, Joani Mitchell, Johnny Cash, and Muddy Waters. One of them was Buffy Saint Marie, who I still listen to. She has this crazy vibrating voice, and I was thrilled when my wife Nancy took me to a Buffy Concert. Paul would sneak over from Dong Ha to Camp Carroll and spend the day serenading us with his guitar and fabulous voice. On our way home from the DMZ, we spent a few days partying at China Beach and did a duet together on their famous stage. It was a blast. I remember he rewrote the song Ottis Redding’s song Dock of the Bay too; Sitting here at Cam Ranh Bay and Kingston Trio’s Greenback Dollar with one of the lyrics being a “For an M16 with a Full Magazine is the only thing that I understood, poor boy”. Maybe one day he will come to a reunion and play and sing for us. I want to thank all the NDQSA Board members for their continual hard work, keeping us the number one veteran’s association in the country.

See you all at our San Antonio River Walk Reunion – June 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>,

*Joe Belardo*

#### Hot Links in Your Newsletter

Technology has given us the ability to share information far beyond the capability of print-on-paper media. Your newsletter editorial staff provides the web address used to locate the resource on the internet. If you receive your newsletter through the USPS as a paper copy, the hotlinks are printed but would be hard to type because they are so long. We now provide those URL hot links on the **news page of the NDQSA website**.

In the web browser's address bar on your phone or computer type: <https://ndqsa.com/news/> and hit enter. Halfway down the page you will find a link to the digital newsletter and right below are active hot links associated with the various URLs for the paper newsletter readers. Thank you –Newsletter Editor

#### Can you name this Duster Crew?



Searching for the names of this Camp J.J. Carroll Duster crew reloading after a fire mission. Please contact NDQSA historian:

[josephbelardo@yahoo.com](mailto:josephbelardo@yahoo.com)

# Dusters Put Out to Pasture

## By Carl Dorsey

Hello NDQSA Members. How many of you know the military is still using the Duster in 2024?



We have all seen pictures of Dusters parked in displays at various locations around the country and there are pictures on the internet of several that have been sunk in different oceans around the world as an attraction for scuba divers. One is around Aqaba, Jordan. There are some other pictures of Dusters in the oceans, I wanted to include one here but was unsure about a copyright infringement. So, you'll just have to do some surfing for Duster pictures on your own if you want to look for the underwater ones! So, how many of you knew the military is still using Dusters in current tactical operational training? Last winter I saw several Dusters still being used by the Marines out on the Barry Goldwater bombing range south of Yuma, Arizona. Since the Duster was developed as an

air defense weapon and that's how we were trained to use them, that is also what the Marines currently use them for. They are to simulate ground targets that are protecting radar sites, valuable point targets and guarding mock-up middle Eastern villages that were built far out in the desert south of Yuma Arizona. The Marines are using them to train their F35 and F-18 Hornet pilots, and possibly other aircraft (drones) for practice attacking ground targets. The Dusters are the pilots' first objectives when attacking those sites. They use electronics to acquire their targets and then use lasers to simulate firing on their attack runs. If they used live bombs or missiles, we all know it would only take one or two hits, and the Dusters would be gone. The Marines have multiple villages out there in the desert. One is called Combat Village and can be driven to, (4x4 Jeep or ATV road) but then you can only walk through it. Because this one is accessible by vehicle there are a lot of great pictures on the web for the site. Here is the link.

<https://www.mcasyma.marines.mil/Portals/152/Docs/Range/Combat%20Village%20Orientation%20170323%20V2.pdf?ver=2017-03-24-115802-447>

The other one is called Yodaville and is a couple of miles off the road and is strictly off limits. This one is called an Urban Target Complex. Here is a link if you are interested.

<https://virtualglobetrotting.com/map/yodaville-urban-target-complex/view/google/>

Also here are a few pictures of the Dusters, the first one, at the beginning of this article, is a museum display, and the other pictures of Dusters guarding their sites. The static display is between Quartzite and Yuma AZ Just off Highway 95 going west on the Imperial dam road. This road accesses the Laguna Army airfield. On Google maps it is called the Yuma Proving Ground Open Air Museum. There are several other old military weapons there too. It looks like they are redoing the displays as the last time we were there all the information signs had been removed. Maybe they had been removed because of vandalism?



The second picture is a Duster guarding a radar site. Here are coordinates for them. 32°37'24" N 113°58'59" W

The third and fourth pictures on the next page are Dusters in the combat village guarding the area. I think there are five Dusters located in and around the village. The Marines move them around frequently so the pilots never know where they will be.

Here are the coordinates for the Combat Village. 32°31'28" N 113°57'46" W

The first time my wife and I went out in the desert ATV riding we were with some friends from Canada that were showing us some of the area trails for riding. We stopped to look at some Dusters, which I didn't know were out there. Our friends didn't know I was serving them, and while we were walking around looking at them, he was just thinking out loud. "I wonder how many HP the engine was"? I said it was a



500 horsepower Continental engine, that got a strange look from him. Do you know anything about the guns” he asked? I then started in with pretty much a full run down on the Duster specifications. “How do you know all of that” his wife asked?

I told them after my Army Basic training I initially trained on them for two months, then another twenty-one weeks in NCO school and then was a squad leader on them for a year in Vietnam. Then I gave them a

little more information how they were used in Vietnam.

When I finished, she said “I can tell they mean a lot to you, because I could hear a lot of emotion in your voice as you were talking”. I told her, they still mean a lot to me and a whole lot of other veterans. It is something none of us Duster Veterans will ever forget.

Well, I hope this was enjoyable to you, I know it’s not about our service in Vietnam, but it still has interesting ties for us.

Sgt. Carl Dorsey, B Battery 1/44, 70-71



## Our Memories

Say it fast it’s fun!

Zippos, red ants, rubber trees, bamboo, Lucky’s, Camels, Salem’s, Paul Malls, Tarryton, Menthols, hedgerow, triple-canopy, re-supply, Medic, sulfur, death, mosquito’s, leaches, fox-holes, sweating, monsoons, rice paddies, booby traps, elephant grass, trip-wire, fire-support, water buffalo’s, B-52’s, Tet, perimeter watch, Ho’s Trail, search and destroy, incoming, fire in the hole, dust storms, Dust-offs, flares, night vision, infra-red, shit burning, outgoing, friendly fire, hot chow, no chow, cold chow, sea-rats, big rats, piss-tubes, chow lines, mail, saddle-up, WIA, MIA, KIA, POW, BNR, Medics, Corpsman, Gunny, mad minutes, spotter round, willy peter, RPG’s, AKA’s, land mines, toe poppers, punji pits, Montagnard’s, ARVNS, friendly forces, snipers, sappers, bodies, body parts body bags, no bags, green smoke, red smoke, yellow smoke, short rounds, air bursts, real world, my world, no world, short time, long time, no time, make time, medivac, CP, recon, LRRP’s, big guns, arc-lights, NVA, Viet Cong, R & R, China Beach, scented letters, Mom’s cooking, home, live friends, dead friends, no friends, tracers, H & I’s, high explosives, full-auto, rapid fire, return fire, single fire, blocking force,

L-shaped ambush, malaria pills, Agent Orange, bamboo vipers, cobra’s, scorpions, spiders, centipede’s, rats, Rock Apes, Spider Monkeys, body counts, mass graves, no graves, pieces, 364 days and a wakeup, Tracks, Trucks, Jeeps, Mules, Mighty Mites, Wreckers, guard duty, KP, hooch, bunkers, LZ, Bros, napalm, 57 recoilless, claymores, choppers, MOS, REMFS, daytime, nighttime, Star light, dig-in, parapets, slit trench, tears, crying, screaming, cheers, joy, laughter, hate, killing, fear, buddies, cold beer, hot beer, no beer, soda, water, hot, dusty, stinky, hot shower, no shower, river bath, helmet shower, no sleep, poppa son, momma son, Number one GI, Number ten GI, Tinky toa, number one bom-bom, Chu-hoi, Rocks, Aussies, Sanctuary, Repose, church, prayers, praying, dreams, bugs, darkness, electricity, candles, The Night, C4, lightning, sunsets, mud, red clay, freedom bird, goodbye, later, bouncing betty, 50 cal., full-auto, single fire, bloopers, 240 a minute, 175, 155, 105, 106, 40mm, 90mm, 4.2, M60, 81’s, M16, M14, M79, sandbags, ammo boxes, Puff, blood, beetle nut, frag, flak jacket, LAWs, flame thrower, rocket launcher, mine sweeps, Dusters, Quads, Searchlights, Pric-29, PC’s, Am-tracks, Tanks, wire, mine field, Nurses, Donut Dollies, round-eyes, generators, lima-lima, SOP, trip flares, convoy’s, rough riders, make a hole, foul bore, bilge rat, lookout tower, coming home, NAM

# The Legacy of the Duster from the Factory to Combat to The Vietnam Graveyard to our VFW Lawn Ornaments



Reproduced copy for newsletter  
Richard Burmood, Secretary



NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
NDQSA Annual Business Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2024 Arlington, Virginia

President Dave McCray opened the 2024 annual membership meeting of the National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association, Inc. at 9:07 a.m. EST on Sunday, November 10, 2024, in the Hilton Arlington National Landing Hotel, Arlington, Virginia. The meeting began with The Pledge of Allegiance. The secretary conducted a membership roll call. Sixty-two (62) members were present for the meeting.

**Secretary's Minutes:** The 2023 annual membership meeting minutes were provided to attendees. These were approved by last year's minutes committee. There were no corrections to the 2023 minutes offered from the floor, so they stand as written and approved by the special committee. After soliciting for member volunteers, the minutes approval committee for 2024 will be Phil Hosey (chairman), Bruce Geiger, Ed Tidwell, John Mowatt, and Pat McLaughlin.

**Treasurer's report:** Allan Penwell gave the treasurer's report. On December 31, 2023, your organization remained in good financial health with year-end operating cash of \$75,500 (rounded). However, the last two years have followed a negative pattern with losses of (\$14,600) in 2022 and (\$9,400) last year. The losses were mostly due to the timing of newsletters and dues with one exception. The exception was in 2023 when \$10,500 was spent on attorney fees to explore legal action against the NDQSA historian who resigned in 2022. We alleged that he kept physical property that belonged to NDQSA and engaged a law firm to help recover the property. Eventually, the board terminated the action, and \$3,137 of our retainer fee was returned to our treasury this year. The year 2024 appears to be a more normal expense year, and we may finish with over \$80,000 in cash due to the exceptional generosity of members with dues and donations. This will allow for normal operations for several years going forward. The NDQSA Memorial Trust was established this year. The board had set aside \$5,200 toward this several years ago, and additional contributions have increased the fund to \$6,450. The money is invested and carried as an "other asset" on our balance sheet. More announcements on this are forthcoming.

**Finance Committee:** Paul Hanson introduced Bill Sturgeon who is a CPA. Bill conducts an independent review of our financial books in lieu of doing an annual audit. Bill reported that NDQSA has good internal controls. Nothing came to his attention to be concerned about. He stated that this organization has great internal controls, and he did not find any risks or weaknesses in them. The financial statements are sound and provide full information on accounting.

**Historian:** Joe Belardo is going back to the old newsletters and extracting the member stories. Then he will associate them by combat unit as well as location and time. He also talked about this year's guest speaker Zachary Wood, a historian who does personal military interviews. His contact number is (336) 618-6345. You and your family will have a copy of your interview to keep your legacy alive and honor your memory.

**Good Works Committee:** Bruce Geiger reported that NDQSA will make its charitable donation to the Vietnam Women's Memorial in honor of Diane Carlson Evans who had the idea and helped get it built. The donation will probably be \$3000 when we figure out the logistics of getting the donation to the right organization.

**Future Reunions:**

- Bruce Geiger reported the reunion committee has run into problems setting up the 2025 reunion. The Marriott Riverfront in Savanna where we had gone before was not willing to work with us on room prices or timing. He is going to shift attention to San Antonio, Texas and the Riverwalk hotels or Pensacola Beach in Pensacola, Florida. A third option might be Colorado Springs but again it depends on rates. Even going back to Mobile, Alabama might be possible. Time of the year is becoming more critical. The committee now tries to look for dates between April and early June or Veterans Day weekend when the weather is cooler. He will let us know as soon as possible, but he has nothing that works right now for location and dates.
- Dave McCray stated that the 2026 reunion selection will probably be one of these same options. With no objection, he directed the committee to work on 2026 options without the normal preferential voting by the membership.

**Old Business:** Dave McCray gave an update on projects at Fort Sill. The Memorial Brick project has been completed except for one brick that was missing. It has been ordered and he will install it along with some final red bricks when

they are delivered. Jackie Carver was recognized for trailering his excavator all the way from Alabama to Fort Sill to prep the ground for the bricks and his efforts in overseeing their installation.

**New Business:**

- Dave McCray informed the membership that the association has established a Trust fund to protect and preserve our memorial at Fort Sill and other heritage property and assets.
- Vince Tedesco explained that the trust was established as insurance against catastrophic loss from the weather in Oklahoma. We need enough money in there to repair or replace the memorials to those killed in Vietnam and also preserve our legacy. The Trust is set up in a way to make sure this commitment will be carried out in perpetuity by investing the funds so they grow over time. When we are gone the Air Defense Artillery Association will take over as the trustee to ensure that the trust obligations are sustained. What the members can do is start making annual donations. NDQSA is tax exempt so donations may even help you with your income taxes. We need to build the trust to at least \$50,000, so that if something does happen the money will be there when needed.
- Vince further explained that he is on the board of the ADAA. He will make sure they pass a resolution affirming that they understand their duties as successor trustees and will take responsibility for managing the money in the trust. They will become the stewards to preserve the memory of the Vietnam fallen and the Duster, Quad and Searchlight legacy.
- Joe Belardo stated that the next newsletter will have more information about the trust and how to donate to it.
- Luke Clark thanked the members who are at Fort Sill every year to lay the wreath on the NDQSA Memorial on Veterans Day; especially noting the commitment of Dave McCray, Richard Russell, Jackie Carver, and Pat McLaughlin. He further explained that we are now deeply involved in the organizational activities of some of the active-duty ADA units, especially those whose lineage includes Vietnam service.
- Barry Willever informed the membership about VA 100% disabled criteria and procedures. There was also information shared about the PACT Act law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. When you pass away, your wife may be eligible for a Veterans' Survivors Pension. It is important that your medical records are up to date with your health conditions that are presumptively caused by exposure to Agent Orange and the death certificate must reflect what is in your records.
- Joe Belardo and Luke Clark will coordinate a newsletter article explaining these VA disability and survivors benefit issues, so all members have the information.

**Nominating and Election Committee:** Paul Hanson read the teller's report to the membership.

It is entered into the minutes as follows:

Number of votes cast 285

Necessary for election (Bylaws requires 10% of active membership) 42

**Votes received:** for president Joseph Belardo 284

for 1<sup>st</sup> vice president Rick Liebendorfer 284

for 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president Barry Willever 284

for secretary Richard Burmood 285

for treasurer Allan Penwell 284

**There were two write-in votes**

for president Patrick Johnson 1

for 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president Phillip Pettice 1

**illegal votes**

for 1<sup>st</sup> vice president Robie Welsman 1 (not an active member as required per NDQSA by-laws)

rejected ballot 1 (not filled out)

- President Dave McCray announced the results of the election. The executive officers, elected by the membership for the 2024-2026 period, are as follows: treasurer Allan Penwell, secretary Richard Burmood, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president Barry Willever, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president Rick Liebendorfer, and your new president is Joseph Belardo.

**Meeting Closure:**

- Ed Tidwell moved to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Keith Fullerton and approved by the membership.
- The NDQSA 2024 annual business meeting ended at 11:04 a.m.

Minutes compiled by:

**signed**

Richard Burmood  
Secretary, NDQSA

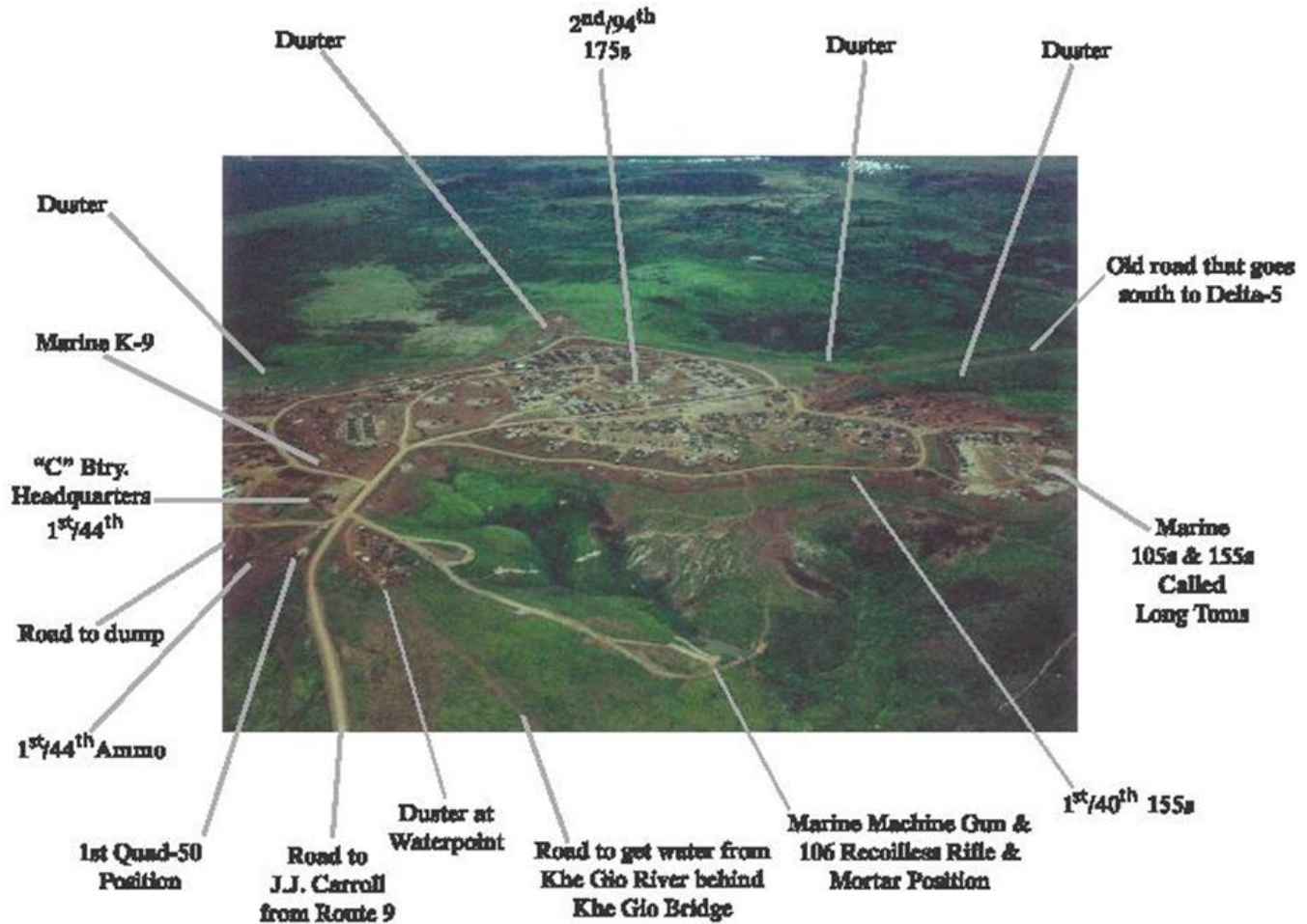
Approved: December 9, 2024

**signed**

Phil Hosey  
Chairman, Minutes Approval Committee

## The History of Camp J.J. Carroll - Vietnam DMZ

### Charlie Battery 1st/44th Duster Headquarters - Camp J.J. Carroll



**1966-1970:** Camp J.J. Carroll was centrally located on a flat mountain top along the DMZ on Route 9. This was headquarters of Charlie Battery 1st/44th. From here "C" Battery also did daily security and combat missions with the Marines at the following combat bases or outposts: Delta-5, Khe Gio Bridge, Rockpile, CaLu and Khe Sanh. The 3rd Marine Division had overall command and control of the DMZ area. The camp was commissioned on 10 November 1966 (aka Camp J. J. Carroll) and became home for the 3rd Marine Regiment. The camp was named after Navy Cross recipient Captain James J. Carroll, who was the commanding officer of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, and was killed by friendly tank fire on 5 October 1966 during Operation Prairie. It was one of nine artillery bases constructed along the DMZ and was known as "Artillery Hill". It had 90 artillery pieces including 175mm guns, 8" howitzers, 155mm both ground mounted and self-propelled, 105mm, and 4.2mm, 60mm, and 81mm mortars. Plus, eight Dusters and two Quad-50s. Camp Carroll was subject daily to NVA artillery and perimeter attacks.

**1970:** Camp Carroll became an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) combat base. The ARVN's renovated and restructured to base.

**1972:** On 30 March 1972, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) launched their Easter Offensive. NVA rockets and artillery shells slammed into Camp Carroll as the opening phase of the First Battle of Quang Tri. The base received more than 200 rounds of 130mm fire in the first hour of the attack. On Easter Sunday, the pressure increased. Infantry probes from the north and west suddenly merged into three all-out NVA



assaults as the 24th NVA Regiment hurled itself at Camp Carroll. But the enemy found that the base was not as easy to crack as the tiny firebases they had so easily trampled in the preceding two days and by noon the attacks had died down. It soon became obvious that the ARVN Commander of Camp Carroll, Lieutenant Colonel Dinh, was going to surrender the camp. All communication with the 56th ARVN Regiment suddenly went off the air at about 3:30 PM. Not until 3 April, did the ignominious fate of the 56th ARVN Regiment become clear. In a communist radio broadcast picked up by American monitors, Colonel Pham Van Dinh helped the North Vietnamese exploit their victory. During the broadcast he was fully cooperative with his new masters, telling his former brothers-in-arms, "I think that your continued sacrifice at this time means nothing.... Find out how to get in touch with the NVA in order for you to return to the people. Your action will effectively assist in ending the war quickly and also save your life." Dinh also confessed that, "My personal feeling is that the NVA is going to win the war. The NVA is ready all the time to 'Welcome You Back'. The NVA is expecting you to return very soon."



Yet, not all the South Vietnamese inside Camp Carroll chose surrender. One ARVN artillery battery, placed inside the firebase to augment support to the Marine units on the western perimeter, radioed Mai Loc saying they would not give up. As the victorious North Vietnamese marched through the front gates of Camp Carroll to accept the 56th ARVN Regiment's surrender, Bravo Battery lowered its guns and fired point blank. They fought to the last man. Nor did all the infantry units go along with Colonel Pham Van



Dinh's decision to give up. An entire battalion of 300 men rallied behind its commander and broke free of the perimeter. Over the next few days, the unit exfiltrated east to Dong Ha "intact and under control." Although they were tired and shell-shocked, most of the soldiers still had their weapons. In fact, by mid-April almost 1,000 soldiers from the ill-fated 56th ARVN Regiment had filtered through enemy lines to Dong Ha, Quang Tri, and Ai Tu. They were sent south to Danang for refitting and retraining before being sent back into combat in Quang Nam Province during the summer. The NVA finally overran Camp Carroll and sat victoriously on the old Charlie Battery Duster.

## TAPS

### MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED

Name	Unit	Yrs	Date	Loc	
Allan Mohagen	Hq/5/2	69-70	12/9/14	ND	
William Dzurill	Hq/5/2	69-70	2/26/19	CA	
Paul Pagel	B/5/2	66-67	7/8/21	PA	
Richard Foster	B/1/44	68-69	2/24/23	NY	
Raymond Garcia	G-65 Quads	1970	12/26/24	TX	
David Starghill	E-41 Quads	1971	2/15/2018	TX	Found by his squad mate Jack Thompson
John Manning	H-29 SLT	68-69	1/13/25	NC	
obituary: <a href="https://www.paulfuneralhome.com/obituaries/print?o_id=9194964">https://www.paulfuneralhome.com/obituaries/print?o_id=9194964</a>					
John Wagnon	G-29 SLT	67-68	2/27/24	NY	
Richard Spillman	G-65 Quads	66-67	2/28/25	FL	obituary: <a href="https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/new-port-richey-fl/richard-spillmann-12267510">https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/new-port-richey-fl/richard-spillmann-12267510</a>



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



# Hawk Battery, "D"- 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion - 71<sup>st</sup> Artillery

By Robert "Bruce" Hamilton

I am a retired teacher, and we own a publishing company who primarily publishes real estate magazines in the Palm Springs/Coachella, Joshua Tree National Park area of California. I love fishing too... not a bad way to spend your time. <http://www.desertmoonpictorial.com>

I came from training at Ft Bliss, TX. As 'trainee of the cycle' I expected to jump right in to a HAWK unit in Europe as I heard there were 35 HAWK units spread across the continent. There were two units in Vietnam, one in Guam and a few in Korea, guess where I went? Yes, Vietnam.

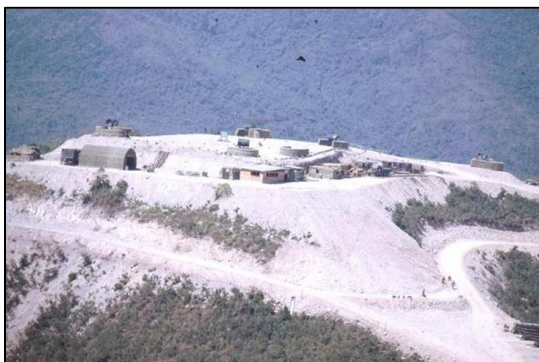
Arrived in-country at Bien Hoa, outside Saigon. I was taken to a reception center. Held there for about a week as we waited for a flight north to Cam Ranh. My fellow travelers were given various jobs, such as KP, etc. I joined a daytime security for our group headquarters in Saigon, mostly from a tower armed with a shotgun. I'd go up and down that ladder into the tower 20-30 times a day, opening the gate for those associated with the headquarters or doing official business.

Then we flew to Cam Ranh Base. Extensive base that the HAWK unit was mandated to protect with our surface to air HAWK missiles. Guess what, I didn't spend one day while there involved with what I was trained for. They placed me in S4, and I became the ration guy, with 10 guys to provide water, oil, fuel, rations, ammo, uniforms etc for our batteries that spread out around the air base.

I only spent 10 months in-country. Unheard of, I know. One day our S4 clerk walked in to our tent and said, "Hey, Hamilton, how many days do you have?" I replied, "I'm 75 days short!" He said, "Nope, 15!" What, just barely had time to get my replacement trained? I was sent to the 11th Light Infantry Brigade. in Hawaii.

My memories of Cam Ranh were both hot and dry and hot and wet... emphasis on hot.

The view of our Hawk missile site from our tent encampment is misleading. Hawk Hill, also known as Hill 580 can be seen in the distance. An ARVN Artillery Battery down below our mountain sent 105 artillery rounds into the valley. The Hawk D Battery was to provide air defense for the air base, and Nha Trang.



Hawk Battery "D", 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion. 71<sup>st</sup> Artillery, Nha Trang, 1966. Top of Hill 580, known as Hawk Hill. South China Sea can be seen in the distance.

On guard duty inside the sentry post. We have ammunition for the M-60, and an extra M-60-barrel, hand grenades, flak jackets, a flare gun, and flashlights. The MP Company that served us on Hawk Hill had three M-60 placements that covered the hilltop perimeter.

There was a total of three M-60 emplacements on Hawk Hill.

Plus, we had three MP sentry dog handlers.



## Very Important Message from the NDQSA President

Dear Brothers,

For years the Newsletter committee has been asking for your Vietnam Stories. Our newsletter is predicated on our members emailing or mailing in their stories. Without these stories our newsletter will no longer exist. I know from attending our reunions and hearing hundreds of stories, all of you have a story to tell.

Hopefully, you will participate and become part of history. Don't worry about spelling or grammar, our committee will help make your story come to life. If you submit paper photographs, after publication they will be returned. 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 photo paper 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.

After publication, the newsletters are donated to the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive which preserves them in a state-of-the-art-facility located on the campus of Texas Tech University. Your individual story and photos from the newsletters are also sent to Dr. David Christensen of the ADA History Department at Fort Sill, OK for future reference by colleges and military historians. Another point to make is that we are upgrading the NDQSA official website-<https://ndqsa.com/>-as part of your heritage preservation. The website is ideally suited for shorter stories and photo essays. We have arranged for the website to be under the umbrella of the ADA Association, and it will remain accessible long after we are gone.

**REMEMBER WITHOUT YOUR STORIES THERE IS NO NEWSLETTER!**

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

NDQSA Historian  
c/o Joe Belardo  
527 O'Donohue Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Email: [josephbelardo@yahoo.com](mailto:josephbelardo@yahoo.com)  
Cell #: 908-510-4349

*Special*  
**GIVEAWAY**

- 1**  
Write  
Story
- 2**  
incl 3 - 4  
pictures
- 3**  
Share  
w/Joe

**One Year Credit  
Membership Dues  
when published in Newsletter**

# Battle of Hue City 1968

## Looking for the Story and Our History

*"D" Battery 1/44th Heading to Hue City*

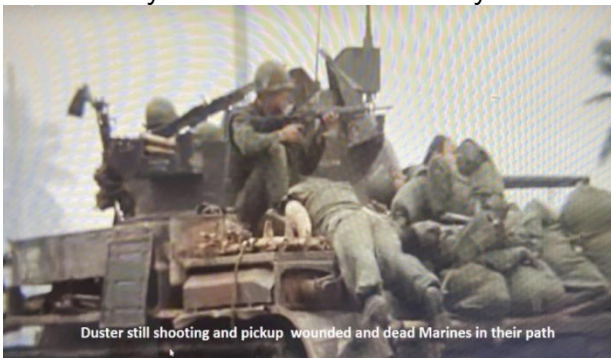


We had Dusters and Quad 50s in the battle of Hue City. Yet, we only had one story from G-65th Battery Quad 50 member Bob Lauver. The battle of Hue City lasted from 31 January 1968 to 2 March 1968), and was a major battle in the TET Offensive when the North Vietnam and the Viet Cong during the tried to overrun the City and at the same time in the early morning hours of 31 January, their offensive was countrywide. Eventually more than 80,000 PAVN/VC troops struck more than 100 towns and cities. Including 36 of 44 provincial capitals, five of the six autonomous cities, 72 of 245 district towns and the southern capital. War. The combined forces of South Vietnam and the United States gradually recaptured the city after a little over one month of intense fighting. The battle was one of the longest and bloodiest of the war. The battle is widely considered to be one of the toughest and most intense urban battles ever fought.

My Marine friend Walter Kaczmarek was with Hotel Company - 2nd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. He told me when they first saw the Duster heading towards them, they thought it was an NVA Tank until they saw the star on the front. Their Lt. asked for the Dusters Lt. and the Squad Leader told him he was charge and the Lt. asked what the Duster was and where did it come from and what can it do. The Lt. told him they needed to get past the next building that the NVA were holding. The Squad Leader said just give us a "Minute". After they hit the building, all the NVA were killed and the Marines applauded.

The Marine Lt. said can you get me a dozen of your Dusters.

Now is the question? There were at least two "D" Battery 1st/44th Dusters and two G/65th Quad 50s. I have taken the time to search the internet and found the following photos of the battle. Hopefully, several members will jump to the occasion and contact me about these photographs, and we can write together some history of the Battle of Hue City.



Duster still shooting and pickup wounded and dead Marines in their path

### **Taking Hue City Building by Building | Against the Odds**

Picture to the left is a screenshot 0.50 min into the story from this American Heroes Channel YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FY4W3uplXo>

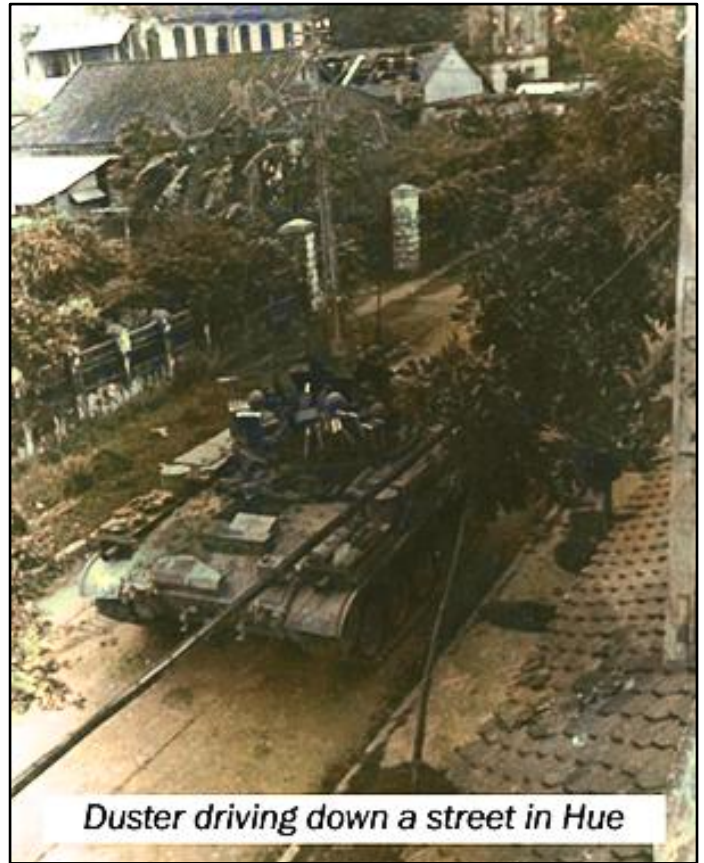
1:14 min in see left tracks of Duster with a patrol

1:52 Duster in street

1:58 two Dusters with Marines using as cover

2:01 Duster fires

2:11 Gunners in tub and loading clip



Top: A young Vietnamese boy dressed in Buddhist monk robes passes the crew on a M42 Duster gun turret in the grounds of the University of Hue, in Hue, Vietnam, 9th February 1968. One of the soldiers sits with his feet up on the gun of the turret. Standing is Floyd "Red" Seratte. Below: The Duster is protecting the refugees hiding in the University. You can see them under the building's eave.



# **The First TET Offense Battle on the DMZ**

**By Joe Belardo Charlie Battery 1<sup>st</sup>/44th**

On January 13, 1968, we ran a small convoy of India Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines known as the "Flaming I's" to the Rockpile, dropped off some supplies and Marines, and continued to Calu. As the convoy turned into the curves in the road, the NVA blew the middle out of the convoy taking out the lowboy first. The trucks in front of us came to a scattered halt all over the road. Marines, seeking cover, started jumping off the vehicles. They landed on NVA personnel mines and were tossed into the air like bloody rag dolls. Wounded and dead Marines were instantly everywhere. We started shooting but were not able to clear the area close to the convoy of NVA because of the Marines jumping off the trucks were in the line of fire. Now, the Marines, knowing they would be killed by the land mines, were forced to push into the heavy brush and tried to regroup. Our standard shooting and killing routine was to shoot close, sweep quickly out about a hundred yards, mow the middle, start all over, and quickly pick targets. The NVA were shooting RPGs and recoilless rifles from both sides of Route 9. The NVA were so close you could see them throwing satchel charges into the trucks. We shot as many as we could with our M16's. We were now forced only to shoot over the Marines to give them cover from the rushing NVA. We shot into the ridgeline on both sides of the road, knocking out two 51 cal. NVA guns. As I slowly drove forward, you could hear and feel the small NVA personnel mines explode as our Duster hit them. My fear was that the mines would blow off our tracks. I would drive a few feet, only to stop and remove the injured and dead Marines from our path and place them on the back of our Duster. I then repositioned our Duster so we could suppress the heavy NVA automatic weapons and RPG teams on the ridges or we would all die. I called for two more Dusters from the Rockpile and a truck full of ammo. The two Dusters were ordered to stand down by a Marine officer and not enter the ambush area. Like jerks, they listened. I kept screaming at them on the radio but was reminded the Marines ruled. Finally, our ammo driver John Rowe arrived with a pickup truck full of ammo. By the time his truck got to us it was riddled with bullet holes. As we unloaded the 40's into our Duster, John Rowe gave us cover and emptied his M16 into the rushing NVA. Rowe, a volunteer from the Rockpile, continually made round trips to our Dusters with ammunition from the Rockpile. On every trip back from the Rockpile, he and I would load his truck with wounded and dead Marines. As he pulled into the Rockpile with the last of the wounded we could find, his truck engine ceased. The radiator and engine were pierced with holes from the heavy NVA firepower. Marine reactionary forces from both the Rockpile and Calu saved all of us that day. The two other Duster crews, who were called to the ambush, but ordered by the Marines to stand down, were still waiting for orders to help. As usual, the Marines never asked for more Duster help. The Marines seemed to never want help and charging Charlie was their given right. One Duster crew could kill hundreds more than any one Marine platoon. Dusters had firepower. The Marines, now regrouped, swept both sides of the road and killed or cleared out the NVA. It was a sad day for the Marines. Our Duster never got to Calu. I returned to the Rockpile with our rear deck covered with more Marines, wounded and dead I had retrieved from the ambush. We heard later that the Marines had 22 KIAs and 60 WIAs. At the end of the battle, it took two days to recover all the Marines. If it weren't for my grenades and a 45 pistol I had acquired from some Marine, I would have been killed on January 13. An NVA soldier had gotten within a few feet of me and my Duster. I was lucky, he was out of ammo, and I wasn't. Thirteen becomes my unlucky, lucky number. January 14, we returned to the ambush sight looking for a few Marines that were missing. Dead NVA were everywhere. We helped with the removal of the destroyed vehicles. What a nightmare. The grunts found their missing comrades. I just sucked it up and lit another Tarryton. Back at Carroll, we cleaned up the blood off our Duster with a bucket of water and our spare fatigue shirts. Our Duster was never cleaned of blood and the hot air-cooled engine gave off a terrible smell of death. Then our ritual started, As Earl "Tex" Holt prayed we burned all of the bloody shirts. We were running out of shirts to burn. We needed a mail run back to Dong Ha, so we could replenish our clothes from the fatigue rag bin at the motor pool.

## 2025 NDQSA REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

**42<sup>nd</sup> Annual NDQSA Reunion, San Antonio, TX June 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 'Operation Riverwalk'**

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

### Holiday Inn Riverwalk Hotel

217 N. St. Mary's Street

San Antonio, TX 78205

1(210)224-2500

<https://www.holidayinn.com/sat-riverwalk>

**Book Your Reservations ASAP!**

**Reservation Cutoff: May 15,2025**

**Room Rates: King or 2 Queens \$139++tax**

(Tourism District Tax 1.25%=\$141+Sales Tax:16.25%=\$164)

**\$20/Day Discounted Self-Parking**

**\$20 All Inclusive Discount Buffet Breakfast**

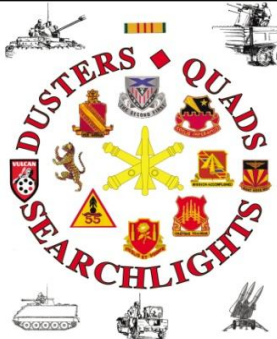
**10% Discount Hotel Restaurant**

NDQSA Group Rate 3 days pre/post (6/4/25 – 6/08/25)

**Based on room availability!!! Reservation Cutoff: May 15,2025**

**Must Mention 'National Dusters, Quads Searchlights Assoc. Reunion'**

**Online NDQSA Reservation Link: [NDQSA Reunion\(NDQ\)](#)**



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

Spouse or Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

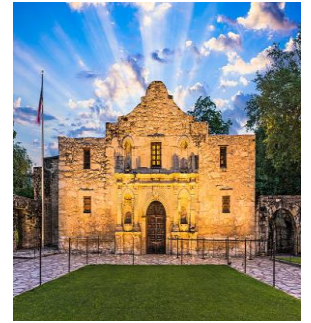
June 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa Su Mo 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 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

Wednesday, June 4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday, June 5 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday, June 7 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday, June 8 <sup>th</sup>
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-3:30pm <b>Bus Trip to                      Nimitz Museum of                      the Pacific</b> (est 6 hrs) <b>\$45pp</b> Lunch In Town of Fredericksburg On Your Own 2:30pm board buses to Holiday Inn Riverwalk  Evening Activities Hospitality Room closes at ~12 midnight	Sightseeing on your own  Hotel Ballroom 5:30 PM-10:30 PM <b>NDQSA Dinner                      Banquet                      &amp; President's Party</b> Guest Speaker, Awards & Presentations <b>DJ Music/Dancing/Cash Bar</b> <b>\$65 pp</b>  Hospitality Room closes at ~12 midnight	9:00am to 11:00am <b>Annual Membership                      Business Mtg.</b> *Members required to attend 9:00am to 11:00am <b>Ladies Continental                      Breakfast</b> in Hospitality Room Afternoon Sightseeing On Your Own  <b>7pm Evening                      Activities, Auctions &amp;                      Raffle</b> Hospitality Room closes at ~11:00pm	<b>9:00am                      Chaplain's Farewell                      Svc.</b>  <u>Safe Travel Home</u>  Hope to See You Next Year at Our 43 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Reunion!

#### Select & Pay for Activities

	No. of Persons	Amount
Thursday, Jun 5 <sup>th</sup> 9:30am-3:30pm Bus Trip to Nimitz Museum of the Pacific	(\$45) x <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	= \$ _____
Friday, Jun 6 <sup>th</sup> 5:30pm-10:30pm NDQSA Dinner Banquet & President's Party DJ & Dancing	(\$65) x <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	= \$ _____
Voluntary donation <b>2025 NDQSA Good Works Project:</b>	(any amount welcome)	\$ _____
Reunion Registration Fee: <b>Make sure you add it into your total.</b> (\$25 individual / \$30 per family)		\$ _____
<b>Total &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>		

**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.**



NDQSA  
 PO Box 149  
 Savoy, IL 61874

**Forward Service Requested**



First to Fire...Last to Leave

**March 2025 Newsletter**

- President's request for history
- Reunion Registration form
- Member stories
- TAPS

**NDQSA Mission Statement**

The National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association™ (NDQSA™) is the original, official representative, 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 headquarters 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 Huelsenbeck 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.

