



Sua Sponte

www.lrrpranger.org

RANGER HALL OF FAME

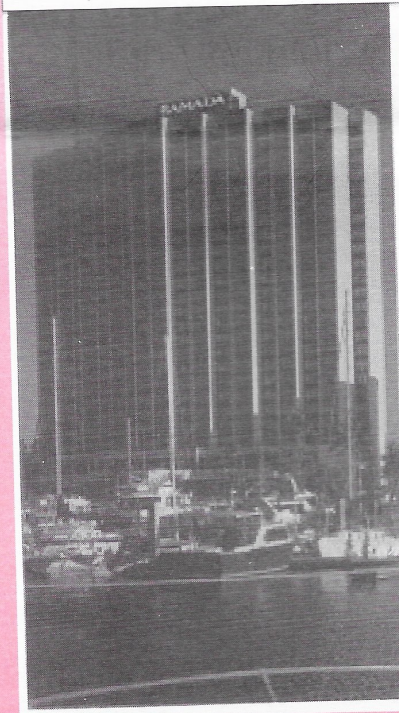
★ Our ★
TWO
new
Inductees!

**Co E. 51st LRS sending
Honor Guard from
Darmstadt,
Germany**

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Reunion 2005 ~ Ft. Myers, Florida



The Ramada Riverfront

Reunion 2005 promises to be one of our best yet! Our gathering this year will be in the lovely Ramada Riverfront Hotel. With views of the ocean, warm sunshiny breezes and great company to

tell tall tales with...who could miss it?

This just in via email from Tom Nash..."...Based on what we've heard so far, at least 80 of our comrades have committed to attend. That's not the casual "maybe I'll be there" commitment, but the firm "I will be there" variety. As opportunities go, this could be the best one in years to get together with this many old friends and comrades."

Company E. 51st Infantry LRS is sending an honor guard from their current duty station in Darmstadt, Germany for our Memorial Service on Saturday. We welcome them with open arms.

Every effort is being made to include the families of our fallen comrades. What better way to memorialize them than to give their families a taste of the camaraderie, loyalty and bonds of friendship that have made this group of Rangers great. Not to mention all the "war stories"...

Let's "lead the way" and make this the best reunion ever!

Quarterly Newsletter of The 196th LRRPs, E51st LRRPs, and G-75th Rangers

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75th Infantry Association

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Tom "Dolly" Robison

SPENCER THE 2ND



Tom Nash

Photo Credit: Monica Kepa

Those of us in this association of veterans in our unit are at an age when it becomes more difficult to avoid the cynicism of the times (as frequently expressed in our news media) and still remain optimistic about the vagaries of life. Then too, we lose friends and family; friends and family become ill; and disappointments - many of them great - must be weathered. The business of life can indeed be taxing. But occasionally, you run across a small vignette - a small slice of life - something that goes against the grain - that has a certain quiet power and dignity to it. It's the kind of thing that can reinforce your faith in the human race or which has the transcendent ability to affirm life when such an affirmation is most needed. I recently had such a moment, and I thought that you might feel the same way.

I've written here of my admiration for the men of E51 LRS. I've come to know a number of them, albeit only through emails, and through some of the stories they are



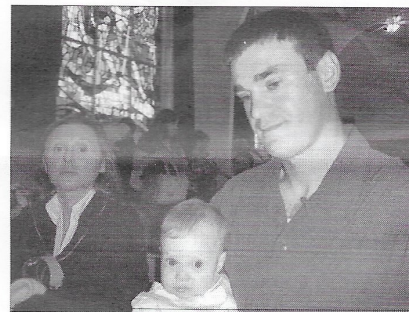
Bridget Madison
- Spencer Karol's mom -
with young Spencer Timothy Kepa...

Photo credit: Tom Nash

living. They are doing in the Global War on

Terrorism much the same thing that we did in a different corner of the world, in a different war, and at a different time. The long and the short of it is that we have much in common with these men some 34-40 years removed.

I've also written about Spc. Spencer Timothy Karol of E51 and E51 LRS Team 2-1 mission on which Spc. Karol lost his life in Iraq. It's been a year and a half since I first came across his name, when I received a couple of emails from Spc. Karol's comrades from E51 in Iraq shortly after his death. Over the ensuing year and a half, I feel like I've come to



Ssg. Dominick Kepa, wife Monica and young son Spencer Timothy Kepa...

Photo credit: Tom Nash

know Spc. Karol and the other men of E51 in a way, from the manner in which his loss was handled and absorbed by his teammates and family, and the dedication of his comrades and teammates to ensure that Spc. Karol was properly memorialized. And then there was that picture of him that graced the cover of "Patrolling" a few months back. I don't think I have ever seen a photo of a man prouder to be wearing the uniform than Spencer Karol in that photo. Seeing him as a living breathing

(Continued on page 9)

Sua Sponte is the official newsletter published quarterly by the Company G (RANGER) 75TH Infantry Association edited by Jerry Schuster. **Change of Address:** Any Address Changes should be sent to Jerry Schuster, 522 N. FM 1417, Sherman, TX 75092

or emailed to e51lrp@yahoo.com.

Membership Information: All former members of the 196th LRRPs, E/51st LRP, and G/75th Rangers are eligible to receive Sua Sponte. Membership applications can be obtained by contacting the Association at any of the addresses or phone numbers listed above.

Newsletter Submittals: Article, photos, announcements, etc. are always welcomed. Sua Sponte reserves the right to accept and edit all materials as necessary. All submitted photos will be returned if requested. Authorship and photo credits will be provided. Submittal of written articles may be handwritten, typed or on computer disk. We can translate most files. Windows is preferred.

Deadlines: Sua Sponte is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. Absolute deadlines for submitting material for the newsletter is the first of each month identified above. Time sensitive material will take precedence. Send material to the Sua Sponte address in Sherman, TX.

Featured Article

SITREP: Long Range Recon Patrol February 1968 TET

By: Gary Bjork

It didn't have a name when it began. Like Antietam, its significance would only be realized gradually, somewhere about half way through it's happening. And then it *would* be given a name—the TET Offensive.

It began slowly at first—reports coming in from the patrols furthest out—ours and other LRRPs to the north in I Corps...sightings of enemy movement...more than usual. And there was something different in what we were seeing this time. It wasn't VC. And it wasn't the usual NVA, moving from one position to another.

New khaki, short hair, heavy weapons.

But not that many ... not yet.

They were doing a pretty good job of hiding what was coming in. Moving at night, small groups, about 8-10 men. One squad here, another a dozen clicks and three valleys away. But within a few days, our patrols were reporting more and more sightings. And I Corps and Americal G2 were beginning to come up with a pretty grim picture.

It looked like this might be developing into something ... But what? Were they planning to hit a particular unit? Or could this possibly be some kind of major offensive?

G2 called a meeting of company commanders, including myself as the LRRP commander, and briefed us on what they knew and didn't know, mostly from LRRP and overflight reports.

G2 wanted blanket coverage — every patrol in the field. We didn't hold back even one in reserve.

My patrol left at dawn, and after about a 30-minute ride, jumped from the choppers and headed for the tree line. Our mission was to keep an eye on a narrow dirt trail about eight miles

straight out in front of Chu Lai. Our patrols had spotted some NVA moving down through the valleys in this area, and they could pour a lot of troops down the valley really quickly if they wanted.

Our LZ was about three clicks to the southwest, and it was going to take some serious climbing to reach our objective—a high mountain slope overlooking the trail, about a mile below, winding it's way through a large open valley some three miles long and a mile wide. (I know that a lot of you guys have been there, because it was always a serious concern and a watch zone for us.)

We reached the ridgeline that evening, just after sunset, coming up through the trees and brush on the backside. The top of the ridge was flat. No cover, just bare rock and dirt, about four yards wide.

We waited for it to grow a little darker, and then crawled across the ridge and down into the grass on the other side. There were no trees on this side, nothing to hide behind...only the thick grass, dry and yellow now, sometimes only a couple of feet high, sometimes taller than our heads, sweeping down the mountain until it met the dark brush running along the stream in the valley below. On the other side of the stream lay the small village and then the trail.

...A light mist slips into the valley. Points of light flicker here and there in the village below. Through the binoculars, we can still make out the trail — running the full length of the valley and following the base of the mountains on the other side.

This is not a good position ... nothing but grass between us and any fire we might draw ... but I know from the recon I flew three days earlier that this is the only place we can get a good handle on the trail.

It's EENT, the first day. We settle



Photo Credit: Gary Bjork

in and watch.

I've forgotten most of the Army lingo, these so many years later, but not EENT or BMNT. *Ending Evening Nautical Twilight*... that moment when the last speck of light is gone and you've got the long, cold night stretching ahead of you ... and the leeches. *Beginning Morning Nautical Twilight* ... that blessed moment when the mist starts to dissolve and the first warmth of the daylight creeps into the trees.

Nothing happens this first night except a forwarded radio message from G2. They want us to check out the village in the morning ... see if we can spot any NVA.

Now and then throughout the night, we hear the 'whump' ... 'whump' ... 'whump' of the artillery our other patrols are calling in.

We start down the mountain a little before dawn, while the village is still buried in mist, taking a long sweep to

(Continued on page 4)

Featured Article

SITREP: Long Range Recon Patrol

(Continued from page 3)

the south where we've got good cover coming down, and then cutting back north into the undergrowth bordering the stream.

Two hours later we're just about there, some fifty yards south of the village and threading our way slowly, carefully, through the high grass and brush by the stream. — **Damn!!** — It happens in a flash! Up comes a kid out of nowhere — right against the point man!

We stand there, frozen in time, the kid looking at us, we looking at him. The point man runs for the kid, tries to grab him. But he's gone.

Just one of those things ... it happens.

"All right", I say quietly, "we're out of here. Let's go."

We swing back to the south, moving quickly. Then up the slope at the point where we've got good cover. We radio in that the patrol has been compromised. They want to know if we want extraction. Ordinarily, of course, we'd be out of there ... moving on to a secondary objective or heading for the LZ.

But it's the trail that holds us. We just have the feeling that something's coming down.

"We're going to take a chance on staying," I say over the radio as we head up the hill. "We'll let you know if we have to make a run for it."

We head back north, to where we can see the trail again, and then settle into the grass about fifty yards from the top of the ridge. We don't like being

this far down because we'll be in the open if we have to make a run for the top. But we don't have much of a choice... the grass up near the top is only about waist-high.

I have one man crawl over to the back side of the ridge, just to make sure we don't get any surprises from that direction. Our first rendezvous point is about 500 yards below him.

I'm thinking maybe we better set up some artillery cover. I'd talked to the arty unit before we left camp, showing them on the map where we'd be and the trail we'd be watching. And I'd planned to call in spotting rounds on this second day anyway, just to make sure we had the trail well bracketed. But that was before this village fiasco.

If there's any NVA in the area, calling in the spotting rounds will probably convince them that we're still around... but we figure we have to go for it.

We try to make it look as random as possible, leaving plenty of time between rounds... a smoke puff up at the other end of the valley, another over on the other side of the mountain, another at the point where the trail first comes into the valley, another couple of puffs in the air about 75 yards below us, and so on for about two hours... until we're sure the arty's got the trail calibrated and we've also got some protective fire if we need it.

The sun is warm on our backs. It's about noon. We're in a pretty tight formation, about ten feet between each of us, so we can communicate and concentrate our firepower if we have to.

The grass around us is about five to six feet high. Because of the slope of the ground, we can see the trail without

standing up, but not the village or the base of the mountain.

And then all of a sudden, we hear a banging, clattering noise way down the mountain, about five hundred yards be-

low us. And it's coming up the hill. I stand up so that I can just see through the grass. There are about a hundred of them, strung out in a long line, banging on tin plates and boards and cups and I don't know what all... raising a hell of a racket... trying to make us spook and run. And behind the line of paddy hats and black pajamas are the khakis... AK 47s at the ready... waiting for us to bolt.

The options are flying through my mind... make a break for it... call in the artillery... just sit tight and hope we aren't spotted.

It's the trail that holds us... still.

The NVA have been coming down most of the other valleys around us... we can hear our guys calling in the artillery. Sooner or later, they're going to come down this trail.

And up they come... slowly... beating on their pans and boards.

I turn around to check the guys out. "All right," I whisper, "we'll hold. If they uncover us, let's blow the hell out of 'em and make for the LZ." The radio man turns down the squelch all the way, quietly calls up the arty unit, and has them stand by with the defcons.

Then we all go flat on our backs, heads to the uphill side, rifles pointing belly-level at the grass in front of us. All we can see is a little blue sky above the top of the grass. They're getting closer. I grip my Thompson tightly, my finger on the trigger. My palms are sweating.

And then they stop... about twenty-five yards below us. We can hear them talking and yelling at one another. And then three or four of them come on up to the ridge, passing about thirty yards north of us. They stand on the ridge for a while, looking around and talking, and then they come back down. We can't see any of this, just hear it. And finally we hear them all going back down the mountain... their voices growing fainter. They must have figured we were hanging around the stream or were somewhere lower down the mountain. Either that or maybe they thought we'd cleared out once the kid saw us.

After a while, the adrenalin stops

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...DAMN...
It happens in a
flash!
Up comes a kid
out of no-
where...
Right against
the point man!
We stand there,
frozen in time,
The kid look-
ing at us..
We looking at
him...

Featured Article

Gold Star Presentation

By: Steve Crabtree



Bridget Madison displaying her Gold Star Mother's Plaque honoring her son, Spencer Timothy Karol KIA 6 Oct 2003

drove up. She could not have been more hospitable and invited me in to see the house. After meeting the dogs, cats and the cockatoo, she took me on a tour. The ranch was located at the base of a hill and had a beautiful view of the valley below. The walls were lined with Hollywood



Bridget Madison displaying her Gold Star Mother's Plaque in front of an oil painting of her actor father, Guy Madison.

Presenting a Gold Star Mother's Plaque is not the most enjoyable task. I remember the escort who brought my girlfriend's brother's body back from Vietnam. He told stories of being shot at by the family members. What would I be in for? What do you say to a mother who has lost her son in combat? These are just a few of the thoughts I had during my two and a half hour drive up to Morongo Valley from San Diego.

Bridget Madison was standing in front of her ranch style home as I

posters of her dad's, Guy Madison's, movies. I really took a step back in time when I saw the Wild Bill Hickok posters on the walls. Roy, Gene, Andy, The Duke were all there along with most of my early favorite cowboy actors.

Then we went into the guest house. The walls were lined with pictures and mementos of her son Spencer. She told me of the visit from SSG Dominik Kepa who had been on the fateful mission with her son and how much she appreciated his taking the time to come and see

her. She told me of how much her son loved what he was doing. I told her that his unit was completely voluntary and the he wasn't "assigned" to his LRS unit but volunteered to do so. I don't know how she kept her composure because I was tearing up as she spoke.

We went out for lunch and chatted for about an hour. We then went back to her home and I presented her with her lifetime membership to the 75th Ranger Regiment Association and 75th RRA Gold Star Mother's Pin. I told her of the Ranger Memorial's refusal to allow Spencer to have a brick as he was not a "tabbed" Ranger. Spencer's unit, E Company, 51st Infantry LRP. I will never give up fighting until Spencer has his brick at the Ranger Memorial because "Rangers don't leave anyone behind."

In closing I would personally thank SSG Dominik Kepa for the time and comfort he has given Bridget. She is a fantastic person, one I am proud to have the honor of meeting and yes, Dominik, your name is tattooed on her left arm.

CRABS OUT



The walls of Ms. Madison's home are lined with tributes to her late father, Guy Madison, who is best known for playing Wild Bill Hickok in 1950's Hollywood westerns.

Updates and News

E51 G75 LRRP/Ranger

Association:

Reunion 2005

Ramada Riverfront Hotel
2500 Edwards Drive
Fort Myers, FL 33901
1-800-833-1620
1-239-337-0300

.....
Thursday, June 30, 2005

Advance party arrives, Set up

1700 hr. Hospitality Room opens

Friday July 1, 2005

1300 - 1800 hr Check in, reunion registration in Hospitality Room

1900 - ?? hr Opening Ceremonies, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres in Hospitality Room

Saturday, July 2, 2005

1000 hr Formation in front of hotel for pictures

1030 hr Short walk to the Airborne Memorial for Memorial Service

1130 hr-1230 hr Board Meeting

1230-1400hr General Membership Meeting in the Hospitality Room.

1300 - 1600 hr Ladies shopping trip

1700 - 1800 hr. Cocktails & Pay as you go bar

1930 hr Buffet Dinner provided by the Association followed by the Association Auction

Sunday, July 3, 2005

0900 hr Breakfast get together in hotel restaurant.

1100 hr Sunday Brunch & 3-hr optional sight-seeing cruise.
Cost \$22.00/person

Reunion Itinerary and Map

By: Sua Sponte Staff

Reunion Itinerary continued.....

1900 hr Dinner in area restaurants.
Hospitality Room open 'til last war story is told

Monday, July 4, 2005

??? Check out, final drinks and good-byes

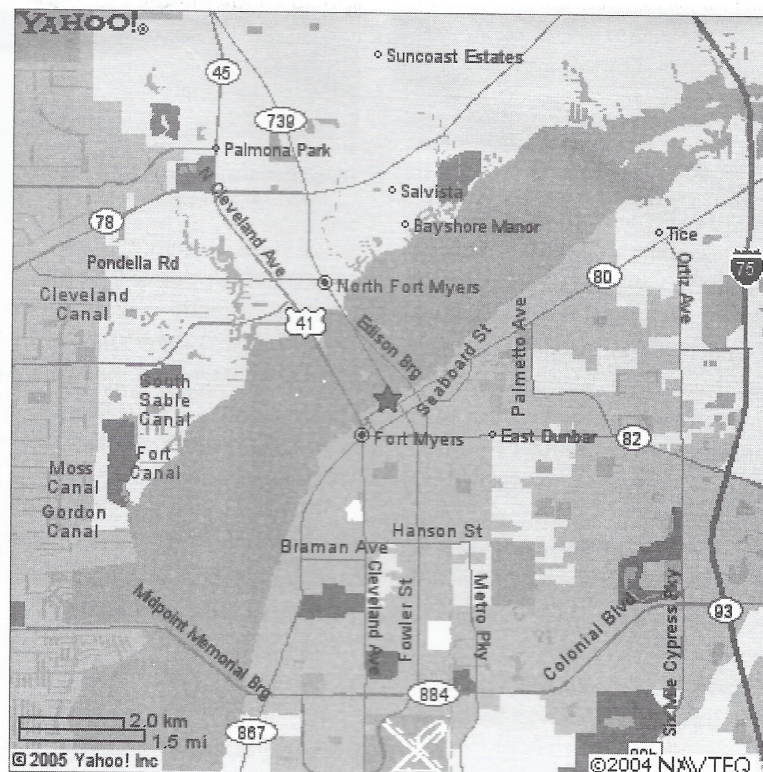
Reservations may continue to be made up to Reunion date. Please remember to mention "Rangers", "G75th" or in some way make sure the reservation desk is aware that your reservations are to be included in the Reunion group rate of \$59.00/room.

Driving Route

From Interstate 75, take Exit 141 west on State Road 80 (Palm Beach Blvd.) for about five miles. The road will become a one way street. The Ramada Riverfront is the 25 story coral bldg. on your right (after you cross Fowler Street.)

Flying

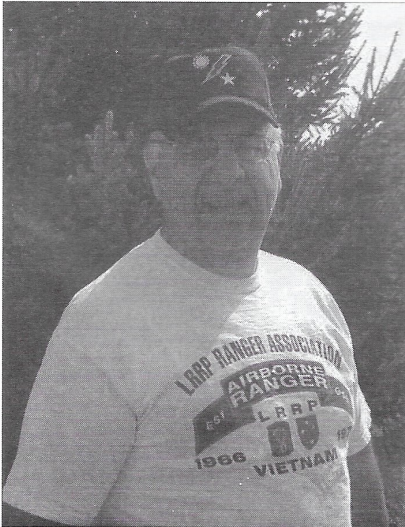
South West Regional Airport has shuttle service provided by the hotel. Expect an approx. trip time of 20 min.



Breaking News!

The Ranger Hall of Fame: Our Two New Inductees

By: Sua Sponte Staff



"I can't tell you how proud and overwhelmed I am by having members of the association submit my name for the Ranger HOF."

Tom Robison

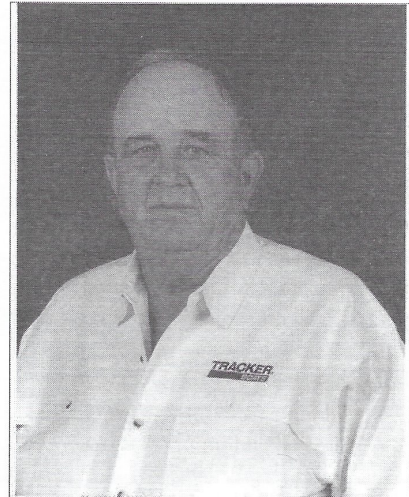
Photo courtesy: Tom Robison

It is an honor and with tremendous pride that Sua Sponte announces...

SSgt. Danny Lee Jacks and Sgt. Thomas C. Robison have been elected into the U. S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame with the induction ceremonies to be held July 7, 2005 in Fort Benning, GA.

Danny and Tom will be joining Robert Pruden (KIA-MOH) and Vic Valeriano who have been selected from our association for this honor.

Next issue...look for a full spread following the induction ceremonies!



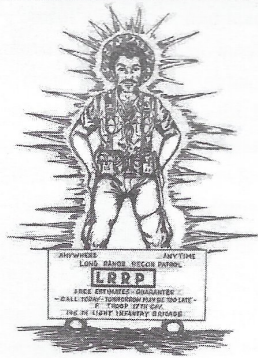
"I'm overwhelmed. I still can't believe it's happening."

Danny Jacks

Photo courtesy: Danny Jacks



WHO DREW THIS??
Inquiring Minds Want to Know!!



Charlie Haussler sent this several years ago. He couldn't remember who the artist was. If you have any idea, please contact the editor at 903-870-7999

Don't Forget the Auction!

Pull out the old trunk... dig in the kids toy box... rummage through the lady of the house's craft box...

You never know where you'll come up with the most wonderful treasure that someone else would love to take home! Bring them along and help the Association by auctioning them at the Association Auction on Saturday night!

Notification of Annual Meeting

Pursuant to Article III, Section I of the Association Bylaws, the Board of Directors hereby designates and announces the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Company G (Ranger) 75th Infantry Association to be held on Saturday, July 2, 2005 at 11:30am in the Riverfront Ramada Hotel in Fort Myers, Florida for the purpose of transacting business and other matters brought before the Board of Directors.

Featured Article

Where are these guys?

By: Jerry Schuster

HELP!

Do you know where any of these guys are? Do you remember where they were from?

Over the past few months we have located several members of the unit that had never been found. They had no idea we had an association, and believe me, many of them were so excited it made all the effort worthwhile.

We need to locate these guys and bring them back into the fold. Please send any information you can think of regarding them to:

Jerry Schuster
522 N. FM 1417
Sherman, TX 75092
903-870-7999
e51lrp@yahoo.com



Acquire, Ron
Adams, Edmund
Alauser, Frank
Alexander, John H.
Alexander, James E. "Moose"
Baumfeld (Baumfield), Jeffery M.
Bishop, John F.
Bjornquist, ??? SSg.
Blankenship, Tony
Boling, Stephen P. "Rope"
Branham, Danny
Brown, Albert R.
Brown, John M.
Brown, Gary W. "Pinky"
Brown, Mike
Burrell, Joseph T. "Cherry"
Carter, Donald
Chalmers, Santaos S.
Cipkar, David P.
Clark, Ralph C.
Clark, Robert C.
Collins, Lester

Cross, Al F.
Cunningham, Keith A.
Curran, Paul J.
Dean, Douglas T.
Deaton, Bobbie "Red"
DeLowe, Delbert
Denney, Donald L.
Dietrich, Kenneth "Marlene"
Dillon, Curtis W.
Erskine, Charles E.
Evans, John H.
Fenton, Kenneth L.
Ferguson, Ronnie
Finrock, Calvin B.
Flores, Angel E.
Fultz, Christopher W.
Gardner, Lloyd B. "Hose"
Garter, Donald F.
Gietzen, William R.
Gonzales, Dave
Gordon, David R. "Pot"
Grimble, Ted D.
Grimes, Raymond
Guthmiller, Marlyn D.
Hamer, James M. "Nails"
Harris, Winston V.
Harris, Harry L. II "Fourth"
Harshaw, Grady
Hayes, Joseph M. "Sperm"
Hazelton, Richard
Helms, Ed
Hendley, Alan G.
Jenkins, Larry
Jones, Martin O. "Boscar"
Juan, Frederick L.
Kiraly, Laszlo
Landers, Herb
Landis, Harold
Lopez, Juan
MacDonald, Ivan T. "Hamburger"
Martinez, Ramon
Matyjasik, John E. "Pole"
McGahan, Randy D.
McGee, John
McKinnon, Richard L.
McWhorter, James
Metcalf, Dennis M.
Miller, Lonnie D. "Stumbler"

Mitchell, Robert L.
Mitchell, Robert A.
Mouton, Leroy A.
Nagakura, Leo T. "Ming"
Naisbitt, Val
Nelson, Michael J. "Ozzie"
O'Neal, James
O'Reilly, William
Paige, Stanley C.
Parson, David E. "Preacher"
Pellitere, ??? SSg.
Plendle, William E. "Piper"
Price, Wayne L.
Price, Dick
Read, Ward O. Jr. "Write"
Reed, Larry E.
Sanchez, Adalberto
Sawyer, ??? SFC
Sechrist, Robert E. "Fats"
Settles, David M.
Sexton, Steve
Sharp, Leonard C.
Sisson, George H. Jr. "Crosscut"
Spivey, Ray O.
Stevens, Charles
Stewart, ??? Lt.
Thompson, Jerry E.
Townes, Richard
Tracey, Chester L. "Sam"
Unterzuber, William H.
Wall, Alan S.
Webber, Robert
Weyhenmeyer, Harold J.
Wheeler, ??? Lt.
Williams, Roger A.
Williams, Howard
Woodard, James L. "Slim"



Featured Article

Special Thanks to Steve Johnson!

By: Sua Sponte Staff

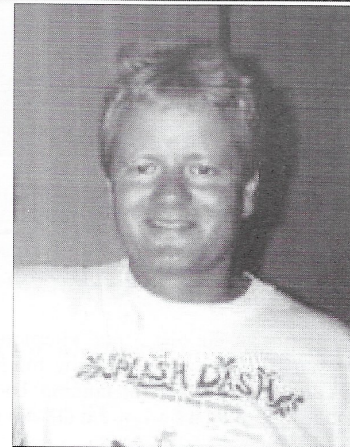
"Announcing Change of Editors"

"After several years of yeoman service to the members of this Association as editor of Sua Sponte, Steve Johnson has concluded that he is no longer responding to his inner Mark Twain and will step down as Editor-in-Chief of our newsletter. Being editor of the newsletter is not an easy task, and Steve has done a good job indeed. Thanks, Steve, for your contributions to the unit. Jerry Schuster becomes editor effective with this issue. Steve will continue as a member of the Board.

THANK YOU!!"

Tom Nash, President

When the new editor contacted Steve by phone and asked him what he was going to do now, he choked up. Steve works full time as a teacher, has a family, and has managed to do a really remarkable job editing *Sua Sponte* for the past 8 years. When he finally cleared the piece of meat out of his throat, he stated, "it's been a real pleasure and honor to be able to work for and with the Association. Hearing from the guys, keeping up with the new events...it's been a pleasure. Thanks to all the guys who have sent in articles and pictures



Steve Johnson

Photo Courtesy: Sua Sponte web-site

and kept me up with what's happening. Now I will remain active with the organization by continuing on the Board." Steve then continued his dinner.

Spencer the 2nd.....

(Continued from page 2)

person drew me further into his story, as did the failed efforts to secure a Memorial Stone for him at the US Army Ranger Memorial in Fort Benning. Karol's team leader Ssg. Dominik Kepa performed admirably and with great courage the day that Karol lost his life, rallying the wounded of the team, collecting Karol's remains, and leading the team, virtually weaponless, back to their base without the transportation that brought them to the field in the first place. (If the events of that mission are unfamiliar to you, you can review them in the winter 2004 issue of *Patrolling* magazine under the G Company heading.)

Ssg. Kepa was unable to travel with Spencer Karol's remains back to Woodruff, Arizona to present them to Karol's mom -that duty fell to Captain Kelly, E51's XO and Sfc. Todd Galliand, Team 2-1's former team leader. But Ssg. Kepa

has stayed in touch with Karol's mom - Mrs. Bridget Madison. A couple of weeks following Spencer Karol's death, Ssg. Kepa received a 14-day leave. In addition to spending some time with his wife Monica, Ssg. Kepa was drawn to Woodruff to see Mrs. Madison and to share with her some of the events of Spencer's life with the unit and how he died.

And nine months after Ssg. Kepa's brief leave, Dominik and Monica found themselves, on July 8, 2004, the proud parents of a baby boy. And because of Dominick's friendship with Spencer, and because of the bonds they had forged in Iraq, the newborn was named after Spencer, i.e. Spencer Timothy Kepa. And, to complete this circle of life, Dominik and Monica asked Mrs. Madison -Spencer Karol's mom- to be the young Spencer's godmother. The baptism took place on April 3, 2004 at the JFK Memorial chapel at Fort Bragg. Young Spencer's uncle -Lucas Oracz-

was godfather, but I believe that Spencer has a company full of "godfathers" in Germany where E51 is currently stationed.

One thing I don't want to do here is, by omission, somehow forget that the war in Iraq continues and that E51 will be in the thick of it, or in any way forget the hundreds of other soldiers, sailor and Marines who have given their lives in this cause. Nor do I want to suggest that this small event in the overall panoply of life, while nonetheless important, somehow rationalizes the magnitude of the loss of our best and brightest in Iraq. It does, however, remind us that there are hundreds, or thousands, of stories of courage and valor like Spencer Karol's and Dominik Kepa's emanating from Iraq and Afghanistan, in which people try to pick up the frayed strands of their lives and move forward with them, and that life goes on.

Tom Nash

Featured Article

SITREP: Long Range Recon Patrol

Cont. from page 4.....

running and our heartbeats gradually settle down from about 300 beats a minute. Everything's quiet. Just the dusty odor of grass, blue sky over our heads, a few wispy clouds.

It's quiet the rest of the afternoon. The sun slides down behind the mountains and the mist starts coming back into the valley.

And then we see it.

A small fire in the trail, way up at the far end of the valley. We check it out with the binoculars... looks like cornstalks tied up in a kind of teepee. After a moment, we see another little fire, further down the line. And then another.

I nod to our radio man. "Get artillery on the phone. Something's coming down."

But nothing. Just the mist growing thicker in the valley. Cornstalk fires burning down to a red glow... and then dying out altogether.

Nothing.

But the cornstalks had to be some kind of signal. Why else would someone set them on fire?

Darkness... nothing... the cold coming in against our bones.

—And then it's there! We see the first flashlight, clear up at the end of the valley, just the tiniest point of light moving down the trail... and then ten yards behind, another point of light, and then another, and then another.

Our radio man is back on the phone.

We can hear the muffled noise far below... the sound of movement, some faint voices... as the long line of lights begins to pass the village below, stretching out for a mile up the valley, moving past the village and on to the south. Through the binoculars, we can barely make out the khaki uniforms of the men with the flashlights.

I roll over on my back and look to the radio man. "Blow the shit out of 'em."

We'd have preferred to use air bursts, of course, but can't because we want to try to keep the shrapnel out of the village.

But it works out ok because of the smoke we'd called in and adjusted earlier. The arty guys have got the road dead cold. They begin at each end of the valley, marching the rounds as fast as they can toward the center. And then almost immediately, another battery opens up and starts hitting the road right in the center — ba-whoom, ba-whoom, ba-whoom!

And then we're hearing artillery in other places too... way out in front of us and somewhere behind us.

The valley floor is lit up from one end to the other... three miles of bursting shells and smoke... and amid the thundering, we hear yelling and running.

And then it stops.

The radio man passes the handset to me. "How about it?", asks the voice on the other end.

"Really nice," I say.

"Well, we're moving on then... Your guys are calling in all kinds of shit tonight."

The thunder of artillery is rolling through the hills all around, reflecting off the clouds like sheet lightning.

But it's completely dark in the valley now. The people in the village have snuffed out all of their candles and lamps. We hear an occasional shout here and there, but nothing more.

The acrid smell of gunpowder begins to drift up the slope. We stay the night, just to keep an eye on things, relieving the guard on the back side every couple of hours.

And then, just before dawn, we head on back over the ridge and down toward the LZ.

There would be more fighting, of course, in the days that followed... some heavy stuff by the infantry companies.

But the big push, at least in our sector, was over.

A number of units up north took some bad hits. But the Americal was mostly okay, and I came off patrol that next morning with quiet thankfulness. First, because the NVA never made it to our Division Headquarters in Chu Lai. But more immediately and profoundly because every one of our

patrols made it home.

And I can see them even now... tired, smiling... coming down the road... one patrol, and then another... the guys already in are whooping and cheering and running out to hug the guys just coming in ...

You did good, LRRPs.

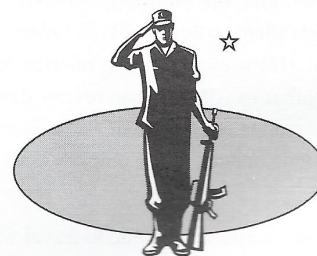
Real good.



Photo Credit...Gary Bjork

Gary Bjork....

"Toasting the LRRPs..."



Association Updates

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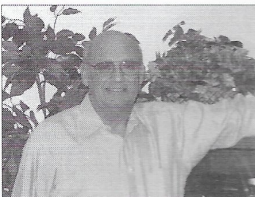
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IRAQ WAR PRANK!

By: Jerry Schuster



Our son Chuck is a United States Marine. He has just returned

stateside from his second tour in Iraq.

His first tour was with the Marine Expeditionary Force during the invasion.

After things had started to simmer down a bit, his unit was relieved and transported back to Kuwait. Upon arrival, they were required to turn in their weapons, ammo, etc.

They had been wearing hot chemical suits and had not had a shower in over three weeks. Needless to say, these guys stunk to high heaven. Camels and

skunks wilted in their path.

Anyway, they entered a supply/arms room staffed by REMFs, which was gloriously air conditioned. The REMFs proceeded to raise hell about the stink. They just plain insulted these warriors. Tried their best to run them out. Mistake, right? Right!

After polishing each individual round and stalling as long as they could, they finally had to leave the delightfully cooled premises.

Outside, a council of war was convened. It was decided that all socks should be removed and stuck in the air conditioner vents, which they managed to do unseen.

A week later, they ran onto one of the REMFs who raised hell with them saying "You guys stunk so bad we are still trying to get the smell out of the place !!"

As far as anybody knows, the socks

are still there.

Even if Chuck is a Marine, he reacted as any LRRP/Ranger would.

I bought him a case of Heineken.

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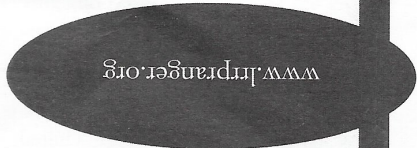
DUES TIME!

Borrow Mama's scissors, snip this off, fill out the back, add a check and mail to:
Frank Svensson
Treasurer
6964 Berkshire Ave.
Alta Loma, CA 91701

Paying dues is a great way to support the association and help pay the bills. All of us want to continue the association as long as possible and keep the newsletter going. We can do this with your continued help.

Also, we heard through the grapevine ... lifetime membership fees may have to be increased. Now is the time to purchase. You never have to pay dues again.

Great Bargain!! Get in under the wire!!
See you at the Reunion!!



Quarterly Newsletter of
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