



Sua Sponte

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Third Quarter 2009

Inside this issue:

President's Message

By: Joe Meinike 2

Tom Nash Remembers Victor Valeriano

By: Tom Nash 3

Victor Valeriano Memorial Photos

By: Michael Monfrooe 5, 7

Reunion News From the Editor

By: Ed Carey 8

Reunion Photos

By: Sua Sponte Staff 10

LRRP Concessions

By: Sua Sponte Staff 11

Victor Diestro Valeriano

Entrance to
Arlington National Cemetery



02/28/1942 to 02/19/2009

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

Sua Sponte

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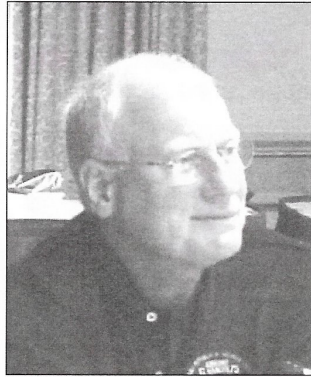
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Membership Information: All former members of the 196th LRRPs, E/51st LRP, and G/75th Rangers are eligible to receive Sua Sponte. Membership applications can be obtained by contacting the Association at any of the addresses or phone numbers listed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

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By: Joe Meinike

Yes, it has been a little over one year since I took over the helm of our Association from Tom Nash. The past year has been full of a lot of frustration and some disappointments with regard to getting our newsletter out and keeping the information flow to the membership going. However, at the same time there were a few bright moments. The moments that provided some sense of job satisfaction and humor were enough to keep me going for another year.

One of the many challenges we as a group face is that we will have declining membership in the future. Every year there will be fewer of us. That is a fact we need to face. For that reason alone, we need to think about the different areas of responsibilities within the organization and people to handle these tasks. We need to have people step forward and fill some of these spots. This past year the Association lost five members. I was able to attend two of the memorial services. It was great to see that quite a few of our members were able to make it to Vic's memorial service. In another section of the newsletter Tom Nash has provided a lot more information and details about the memorial service and Vic's life. Vic will be missed by many of us.

I was pleased to see so many of you at the Reunion this year. After the initial rocky and somewhat confusing start we had with the preparation phase this year, I was truly surprised about the

end result.

Dinah and I attended the RHOV Induction this year. I think that it was one of the best organized military events that we have attended in a long time. The event started on time and was organized in true military precision. I think the fact that it was held indoors had a major impact. It was unfortunate that none of our recommendations for the RHOV made the list this year. We will try again next year. However, it was somewhat disappointing to see that only two of our members joined Dinah and I at the RHOV carillon with some of the new faces at this year's reunion was none other than Cpt. Mac and his wife. From the rumors that were floating around on Saturday, I'm glad that I was not anywhere close to the combination of Cpt. Mac, his wife, and my wife and the somewhat embarrassing conversations that took place on Friday night at the banquet and around the pool. Cpt. Mac, I hope that we will see you and your lovely bride again next year.

As most of you know by now, we had quite a bit of excitement at the Reunion. About forty-eight guys went to Alabama for some old-fashioned airborne excitement. Unfortunately, two of our members got hurt at the drop zone. John Starnes fractured three vertebrae, and Steve Franklin broke his left leg in two places. The good news as of last week is that they both are doing fine. Steve will be walking around in a cast for a while, and John will be wearing a back brace for a few weeks. Perhaps it is time to think about other activities at our reunions?

Some of the changes that were voted on and implemented during the meetings this year are as follows: The number of board members has been reduced from seven to five. Tom Nash has decided to continue taking an active part in the Association and has come back as a Board member. We welcome Tom back after being away for a year.

Another decision that was made at this year's reunion is that we will have locations for future reunions scheduled. **Continued on page 11**

TOM NASH REMEMBERS VICTOR VALERIANO



It seems like yesterday that I wrote an article, with great pleasure, both for "*Sua Sponte*" and "*Patrolling*" relating how friends and comrades had gathered at Fort Benning, GA, to honor Vic on the occasion of his induction into the US Army Ranger Hall of Fame. It was only 2002, a scant seven years ago, but seven years filled with the most rewarding "lifetime" of memories, camaraderie and stories. How sad then, to now relate that friends and comrades once again recently gathered to pay homage to Vic, this time at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington as he was laid to his eternal rest.

Vic passed away on February 19, 2009, after an adventurous life, succumbing to a massive infection that began with an injury to his foot that occurred on his beloved island near Palawan in the Philippines. He was cremated in the Philippines shortly after his death and his remains were accompanied by his brother Francisco back to the US to await interment at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington. Vic had always thought it was bad luck to speak of his own death and what sort of ceremony he wanted, but he made it clear, in his own unique way, that he wanted to rest at Arlington with other warriors. So, family, friends, old comrades, and several former members of other LRRP detachments and a number of Ranger veterans, who had not known Vic, but who wanted to join us to pay their respects to a fallen warrior, gathered on a gentle slope in Arlington, just down from the old Amphitheater, and across the road and down the hill from President Kennedy's grave, in the late morning of May 21, 2009 to say their last "good-byes."

The service at Arlington was properly somber and respectful; the day was clear and the sun was bright; and the Old Guard did their usual superb and respectful job in a ceremony that was befitting the hero that Vic was. The graveside service was attended by an Army chaplain as well as Father Alfredo Balinong, the Valeriano family's long time pastoral cleric. Vic's three brothers – Francisco, Jed and Butch - and so many other family members that they are too numerous to mention here, traveled to Washington from all corners of the globe to be with him at these last moments. BG Mark Brennan USA (Ret) who along with Vic, was one of the first members of the embryonic LRRP unit of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade ("196thLIB") led all LRRPs and Rangers in attendance in the very poignant "Once an Eagle" ceremony. A silver 75thRRA challenge coin, with his name inscribed was then presented to the family. Afterwards, Francisco and his bride Rose held a repast at their nearby home.

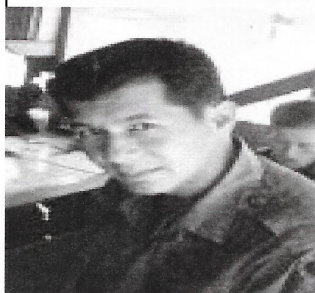
It was inevitable that Vic would choose a martial life for himself. Vic was born on February 28, 1942 into a well-known Filipino military family. His grandfather – Benito Valeriano - was a famous general in the Philippine army. His father – Napoleon D. Valeriano – was a major in the U.S. Army when the Philippines fell during World War II. Major Valeriano was a part of the Bataan Death March from which he escaped into the jungle. After escaping, Major Valeriano helped to organize an insurgency network to fight the Japanese occupiers of the Philippines. Major Valeriano was there when General MacArthur returned to the Philippines and was with him as much of the Philippines was liberated. Major Valeriano was later a noted speaker on the subject of counter-insurgency, including a number of seminars at West Point, as well as an American advisor during the initial stages of the United States presence in the Republic of South Vietnam.

Vic spent his formative years in the Philippines. He always liked to point out (perhaps as a counterpoint to his reputation as a soldier) that as a youth, he engaged in a nationwide competition sponsored by the Catholic Church in the Philippines in celebration of the Marian Year Congress, by writing an essay about the Immaculate Conception. For his efforts, Vic was awarded a special prize – a Papal Medallion from Pope Pius XII. At this time in his life, despite his military lineage, there was little to suggest Vic's future calling. He traveled widely throughout his youth in Southeast Asia; and in his later teens, attended high schools in Bangkok before moving to the United States, where he completed high school. Vic once told me of how, as a teenager, he had taken tea with President Diem of the Republic of South Vietnam and his father, who at that time was serving with the United States Embassy in Saigon as an advisor to President Diem.

Vic joined the US Army in 1965 and attended Leadership School later that year. In 1966, Vic attended Airborne School, and was later assigned to C Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196thLIB. When the 196thLIB was deployed to Vietnam, Vic learned that a LRRP unit was being formed. It seemed right up his alley, and so Vic immediately volunteered and became one of the unit's founding members, along with Joe Smith, Earl Toomey, Bob Webber, Mark Brennan, and (then) 1LT John Maxwell. Vic's contributions to the group's ability to quickly become fully operational cannot be overestimated.

Continued on next page

TOM NASH REMEMBERS VIC CONTINUED



With another of the founding members of the unit, Vic embarked on a now legendary scrounging mission in Saigon to outfit the group, a project on which he enlisted the aid of his father, who at that time was still stationed in Saigon. The mission was a complete success, with critically needed gear and equipment being brought to the unit, sometimes in taxicabs, including original tiger stripe fatigues, virtually completing the unit's initial equipment needs, allowing it to become functional almost immediately.

I've told and retold the story of how I first met Vic, and it bears repeating. I volunteered for the LRRP unit and was in the next wave of about 10 guys (a few days after the original 6) joining the unit. Earl Toomey, who was then acting as de facto NCOIC, took a few of the "FNGs", including me, around to the detachment's hooch to introduce us to the "old guys." As he introduced Vic to us, Vic barely looked up from the honing of his Fairbairn. He looked at us, nodding, not saying a word. Later, I would pull many missions with Vic, and got to know him better, and learned that he was the proverbial "man of few words," and was basically kind of reserved. I now look back on my original assessment that this was one ominous SOB, and realize that this was only part of Vic's makeup. He was also one of those people who would do anything for a friend or teammate. He actually had little regard for money, and at that young age, recognized that true wealth is measured in the friends you collect along the way. And despite his adventurous life, this was something he would never forget.

In early 1967, Vic, then a SP4, participated, as an assistant team leader on one of the 196th LIB's earliest known clandestine forays by US Forces into Cambodia. The patrol, near the Parrot's Beak in Tay Ninh Province, encountered a large enemy element that set up for the night within a few feet of the LRRP team's night laager. After a few hours, several members of the enemy unit walked into the LRRP team's position, and a fierce firefight broke out. The team managed to escape to the rear of the firefight in the confusion that ensued, successfully breaking contact. Unfortunately, the team was forced to withdraw further to the west into Cambodia, since the enemy blocked all other possible escape routes. From its position in Cambodia, the team was able to flank the enemy position and called in an artillery fire mission. Forced to remaining in the area overnight, the team was extracted the following day. At the debriefing, BG Richard T. Knowles, who was then commanding the 196th LIB, participated. The mission was also reported prominently in a front-page story in the *New York Times*, written by a reporter who was accompanying the General.

Vic became a stalwart on those early LRRP teams, exuding a quiet confidence about his own abilities and those of his teams, without ever becoming overconfident. Vic quickly became a team leader, a position he held, while often simultaneously holding other positions, such as supply NCO. Vic remained with the 196th LIB's LRRP unit through its transition to E Company (LRP), 51st Infantry, until the events of January 20, 1968, at which point he was a Sergeant (E-5). He was asked to lead a 6-man team on a mission in Thien Phouc to locate and eliminate an enemy mobile radio unit. After having received fire shortly following insertion, Vic's team was ambushed by an enemy "LRRP hunter" unit. The team was caught in a bloody cross-fire, which prevented it from moving, and which resulted in every man on the team being wounded – wounds which resulted in the deaths of three members of the team. During the ensuing firefight, despite having lost the use of one arm due to his wounds, Vic was effectively able to respond to the withering fire of the superior enemy force, holding it at bay. At one point during the firefight, Vic's weapon was shot from his hand, and he was forced to retrieve several enemy grenades thrown toward his team and throw them back at the enemy with his other arm. His tenaciousness and leadership during the encounter saved the lives of the remaining members of his team.

After recovering from his wounds, Vic left the Army, and began to pursue a career in civilian life. He joined United Air Lines, working his way up to senior sales representative, where he regularly arranged charters for sports teams, like the Washington Redskins, and for the White House press corps. But after 13 years, Vic yearned for a return to the combat arms.

In 1984, Vic began to undertake security work, an undertaking that continued through the early 1990s. One of his more important undertakings was to lead the formation and training of home defense forces in one of the provinces of the Philippines. This province was a major sugar producing area, and many of its villages and farms were regularly raided by Communist insurgents. Vic's organization of the province's defense elements became a successful model used repeatedly in other provinces by the Philippine government over the next several years. As Vic became better known, and as his security business started to become successful, he began to adapt his ideas to other uses. Toward the end of the decade of the 1980s, Vic was approached by the US Government to use his skills and talents to help US interests and companies operating in the Philippines to establish similar defense forces. Vic also became very active during this period, at the behest of U.S. interests, in the Philippine government's efforts to rescue victims of kidnappings, as well as in bringing the kidnappers to justice.

Continued on page 6

VICTOR VALERIANO MEMORIAL PHOTOS



More Photos on page 7

TOM NASH REMEMBERS VIC CONTINUED

Continued from page 4

In the early 1990s, Vic returned to the United States, and resumed his civilian life. He began a car service in the Washington, D.C. area, and was even called upon by the US Government to assist in the unmasking of an espionage operation undermining US interests by using one of his cars to clandestinely bug conversations among several passenger targeted by the investigators. Several times a year, a couple of weeks at a time, Vic participated, in conjunction with a private consulting organization, as an instructor in a series of courses designed to help train US Government employees, particularly those about to embark on overseas assignments, in such things as surveillance and counter-surveillance, and other self-protection and self-defense measures.

I had not seen Vic for many years, but a serendipitous encounter brought us together again. The short story is that, because of an initiative undertaken by a firm with which my firm had an interest in doing business, I was introduced to Vic's brother Francisco, and once it became clear that he was Vic's brother, we spoke for hours. And within a few days, Vic and I were regularly speaking by phone, making plans to get together in Washington, DC. I traveled to Washington a couple of weeks after that, and we visited the Wall, where we looked up the names of those members of the unit that we knew lost their lives in Vietnam. Vic was especially emotional at the sight of those names of those who had lost their lives on that ill-fated mission in 1968.

For the last couple of years, Vic had undertaken the building of a home on an island in the Philippines of which he was steward, mostly from native materials, and he took up scuba diving. He and I spoke, and communicated by email often, about his plans for the island, our time in the unit, old friends, and his running battle with the VA. For the most part, I think he was finally able to relax, and recognize that the time had come for him to pass the torch to a new generation of warriors.

When I learned that he had passed, it was as if I had lost a part of myself. The unit had lost one of its heroes. The world occasionally produces the kind of person whose likes will not come this way again. Vic was such a man, and he will be missed.

Godspeed my old friend!

TOM NASH

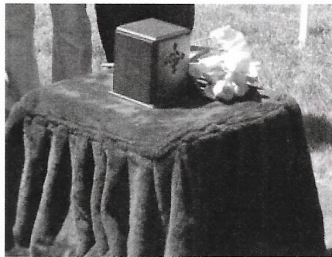


VIC

I dream the dream of death, so brilliant and vibrant, so real, yet so ethereal. I walk with heroes under a canopy of green and black complexity and through pools of scarlet, midst things that crawl and slither. And always he is there. I exist in and travel through verdant fields; swamps of primal origin; and exquisite forests. The night sounds its call; and the sky of stars blanket a Southern Cross. I sense the heat, the smell, the closeness, the dankness of the journey, the inevitability of what is to come. And they are all there, heroes all – those who have gone before, waiting silently, and he is there. Their faces, painted as always to be one with their surrounds, so young and yet so old, so bright and indestructible, yet so weathered and tired. Their eyes so wide, witness to their own passage in a world foreign to them. They are gone now, but they are all there in my dream. And he is there, so calm, so invincible, so determined, at the rear in tiger stripes. Through the rains, the chill of the night, under the withering sun, the heat of the day, they gather, and he is there in my dream. He looks and waves to me with his injured arm, laughing, as he did in life, calling *"just one more mission; just one more firefight!"*

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare [children] to them, the same [became] mighty men which [were] of old, men of renown." Genesis 6:4

VICTOR VALERIANO MEMORIAL PHOTOS CONTINUED



REUNION NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

PRUNE JUICE AND MEDICATION...I'll get to this later.

Flip I lost your e-mail address.

Ft. Benning provided the back drop for the 2009 reunion again. Home of many memories most of them faded into pleasurable experiences. Isn't it amazing how we remember so many good times? What made those good times special was the insanity of our experiences and the people we met. Who can say (other than me) that drinking water from a tire rut while on a field exercise was fun. Oh no, the fun came several hours after that! Moral of the story was rationing your water well. I already look back on the 2009 trip from Colorado fondly. Well, maybe not so much.

A great start in the Colorado sunshine. Packed, planned, ready to go and eager to see my brothers. You may remember it was Tom Nash's article that spoke of why we attend reunions. Something about how we trusted each other to carry our legacy. That moved me. Not the way the tire rut water moved me though. So, the airport shuttle is on the way. The pickup is 10:00 AM sharp. That's plenty of time to get to Denver International, check in, and read the morning paper with a cup of coffee. The shuttle is 45 minutes late. Hmm. Still time, might have to have the coffee to go.

Well, hello United Airlines! Good morning to you. Why I'm traveling to Atlanta, thank you. Just one bag to check. Pardon me? I'm too late to get my scheduled flight? I was standing in line waiting for the next agent. Problems always have solutions. Since my ticket is a mileage ticket you need 14 days to make any changes? But I was in line! What are my options? I can go standby on the following flights. Ok. The planes holds 60 passengers, you've sold 61 tickets on the next flight and I am number 37 on the standby list. Perhaps I could stay at the airport for the next several weeks. I should have the crossword done by then! Give me my bag and I'll try another airline. The bag is where? On the plane I'm not on. I see.

Off I go to the other airlines I know serve Atlanta. Frontier, all flights booked solid. Delta! Yes! An Atlanta hub carrier, largest US airline. Lady luck, Daddy needs a new pair of shoes!

And what luck. One seat and it's mine for only \$595.00. One way. First class. Big leather seat, comfortable, on the bulkhead. Not so comfortable, the cost, but my wife won't know about the expense till later. Deal. Let me tell you what you get in first class on Delta. (The exact same things you get in steerage on the Titanic. Not much.) All the pretzels you want and free booze. Dang, I don't drink. I could start though. Madam, may I have a Sprite and the pretzels well done? Pretzel salad with honey mustard dressing, baked pretzels with sour cream AND butter. Oh! arteries how hard thou art! Skim milk and for dessert, pretzel cobbler ala mode. Keep the refills coming too. Atlanta at last.

Flip, did I mention I lost your e-mail address?

Now to the rental car desk.

Yes sir, your car is ready and of course you have the free full size up grade. Of course. Your car is parked in space number ONE. Yeah baby, VIP. The shuttle is continuous 24 hours a day, about 5 minutes between trips. Smooth sailing. Big airport and busy even at 9:00PM.

Say officer, that electric scooter looks cool. Red, blue lights, high beam headlight. It has a siren too! Could I borrow it for a few hours? Oh I'm an ex-Denver cop. Just ten years. Injured in the line of duty. Um, no not a head injury. Why do you ask?

Grab a bite to eat. A tuna salad sandwich and pretzels please. Ma'am, may I have the crossword puzzle from your paper. No, I am not homeless! But if you call the cops they drive really cool electric scooters. Same to you lady.

Wow its midnight already. The bag is right on time. Looks like no standby passengers made it. Too bad. The bag and carry ons move rapidly to the shuttle pickup area. Remember this. The shuttles do not run very often after midnight. Just thought you should know. Space ONE here I come.

Continued next page

REUNION NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

Driver, my car is in Space ONE! Thanks. Oh my. There are three vehicles in space one. Interesting way to park. I'll bet mine is this full size mini-van. Oxymoron. So I load all the equipment into the van and head for the open road. Me and Willie Nelson. Just a quick stop at the security gate. WHAT? The wrong car. Back to the office.

Sir, let us put your luggage in the car while we straighten this out. That sounds like a coiled snake if I ever heard one. No I will not take the PT Cruiser unless you can make it full sized. Give us a few minutes to bring another car from the back. The back. The black hole of THE BACK. There are 7000 or so cars in the front, but I get one from the BACK. \$%#^.

I get a full sized four wheel drive. In Georgia. In August. Thanks for putting my stuff in the car. See Ya. The security gate, then 80 miles per hour to Columbus! Yeah, I've got the right car. Yep, prepared for snow too. What's that? Go slow around the airport 'cause the cops ride really fast electric scooters. OK.

Those of you that drove from or through the Atlanta area know there is a construction area on the interstate toward Columbus. Yes it's the same area that was under construction in 2007 when I made the drive from the airport then. In a full sized car I might add. It's 39 miles long. Speed limit reduced to 50 or so. Yeah right. Look at that nice big deer staring at me from the side of the road. Wanna pretzel?

Got to Columbus in one piece. Found the hotel and unpacked. Where do you think my apnea breather and video camera were? Yeah, at the rental car office. Sorry sir we forgot to move everything to your full sized car. Let us just end the story here. Oh there is more, including 2 trips to Atlanta. Why bore you with the details? It was a fun trip. I did give some thought to taking up that drinking habit.

As the editor of the newsletter I will confess to struggling with the format that is used. I tried to make this issue as close to readable as possible. The next issue will be much smoother as I am more familiar with the software. I had to delete a member submission since it was too long. Hopefully we will be able to add it to the next newsletter. I encourage you to submit stories, war stories, personal stories, photos as well as recollections of the friendships you made.

The real reunion news.

It popped into my beady little brain that the record of our unit and the young men who served was not very complete. I looked at the lineage from our web site as well as other sources. John Stearns did a commendable job of recording the history. What I feel is missing are the people. Who will know us and how will we present ourselves to history?

To that end I have started a video record of E 51st (the unit I started in) to Co. G. 75th. We, all of us, have so much to share about what drew us to the military and where we ended up. I will say that those I interviewed made me more aware. For those I missed, please do not feel forgotten. I was limited in time. (Refer to the above escapade.) However, if you want to participate in the video history before the next reunion, contact me. I'll explain the format as informal as it is. You can have a relative or friend ask the questions. Be open and have your significant other with you.

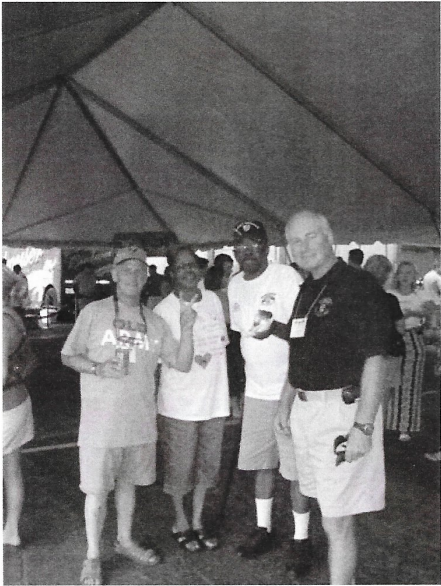
I started with Capt. McWilliams. If you were in the unit while he was commander you must sit down and speak to this man. His story is fascinating. The "Capt Mac" of today is every bit the career soldier he was years ago. The difference, at least for me, is that I am much more open as a listener. You can't go wrong in hearing him share his life story and his recollections.

While he spoke freely to me we both had a remarkable insight to something long forgotten. And I have forgotten much. He brought the light back. His charming wife sat with him while he spoke. The session was revealing and emotional for her and me. Urge him to come to the next reunion and make yourself available to listen.

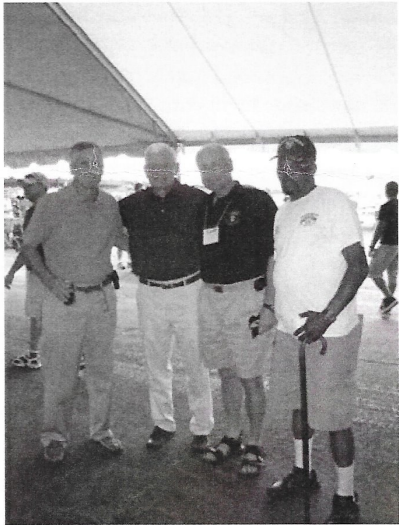
Next I interviewed George Beach and Tom Nash. I have a great deal of respect for George and Tom. George. Well he's George and also a remarkable man. Great sense of humor too. Tom made me feel welcome at the 2007 reunion. He shared history from the 196th.

Continued on page 11

REUNION PHOTOS



CAPTAIN MAC AND FRIEND



YOUR BOARD HARD AT WORK!



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGES

Reunion News from the Editor Cont.

Continued from page 9

The 2010 reunion will be here in Denver. I have several special events to share with you when you arrive. Please take a few minutes and email me what is important to you as a guest at a hotel. This will help me in the selection process. The event will be put out to bid by the Denver Convention Bureau. That means we will have hotels in the metro area bidding for our business. Should keep rates low. I hope. I would love to see 100 attend with partners too.

My wife made the trip to Columbus albeit a short stop for her. She thought she would hear war stories and such. While we do share those things, she was more surprised to hear us talk about what medication and the dosages we take.

That's right **PRUNE JUICE AND MEDICATION**. I think we are aging. At least you are.

Ed

PS. Flip I lost your email address.

President's Column Continued

Continued from page 2

three years out. We may not have hotels scheduled and firm dates to provide to you, but we will attempt to give you the best information possible.

REUNION SCHEDULE:

Next year, in 2010, we will have our get-together in the Denver, Colorado area. The tentative dates are July 22-25, 2010. Ed Carey will be the contact person on the ground and will firm up the dates and hotel accommodations in the near future. One of the attractions will be a tour of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Additional information will be available by the time the next newsletter is published.

For the 2011 Reunion we are looking at Louisville, KY, Branson, MO, and Myrtle Beach, SC. The 2012 Reunion is scheduled for San Diego, CA.

In the future we will try to select locations that are in closer proximity to where our members are located and where we have boots on the ground to help make the arrangements for the reunion. With the publication of

Continued next column

and where we have boots on the ground to help make the arrangements for the reunion. With the publication of this newsletter, Ed Carey will officially take over the responsibilities of newsletter editor. After some OJT from Jerry Schuster and Steve Johnson I believe he is ready to tackle the job.

Regards,

Joseph Meinike

Moving?? Please let us know!

By: Sua Sponte Staff

A forward address left with the Post Office is only effective for 6 months. After that the mail received is considered undeliverable and returned to the sender if the mail has been sent first class. If it has been sent bulk mail, it will be trashed and no one on the mailing end is aware that the mail was not deliverable.

If you know someone who has moved within the last or so and is not receiving their Sua Sponte mail, please encourage them to contact us to make sure we have their current. Address.

If you are planning a move, please let us know so there will be no interruption in receiving your Sua Sponte.

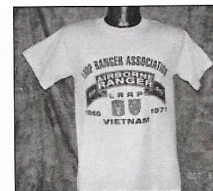
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Aurora, CO
Permit #1152

227-5



REUNION PICTURE