



ALPHA'S PRIDE

April 1, 2024

A/2/12, 1966-67

Volume 23, Issue 4



LAKE FOREST HIGH SCHOOL

CARL THORNE-THOMSEN TRIBUTE

Last year during the association visit to Chicago, there was time on Saturday morning and afternoon when Chris and I could drive north to Wisconsin to visit the Livingston family.

We were joined by Sam Babcock and headed up the highway towards the Badger State. Along the way, I was able to take care of one of my bucket list items that I wished to check off.

Since discovering the death of Carl-Thorne Thomsen and the event's leading up to the man who replaced me in Vietnam, I've always wanted to visit his hometown in Illinois to learn more of his history growing up in Lake Forest.

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It was a Saturday, and the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff History Center was closed. There is a highly regarded Research Center in that establishment, and I planned on mining that source for whatever I could

learn about Thomsen. It wasn't to be, but luckily, nearby was the Lake Forest Main Library.



We dropped in and I introduced us to the lead Librarian and shared that we were interested in researching any data that the library may have on our fallen brother from A/2/12. She passed us off to the Adult Service Librarian, Krista Kosar. She told us that the library held no specific information on Carl-Thorne Thomsen, but there were archived yearbooks from when he attended Lake Forest High School.

She brought us to a rear room which contained a locked cabinet which contained decades of "FOREST TRAILS" (their title) yearbooks to peruse through. Knowing the year that he graduated (1964),

I [Lake Forest/ Lake Bluff History Center](#) reached for that year's yearbook and learned a lot more about the man who left Harvard in 1966 with idealistic beliefs about the men who were then fighting in Vietnam. He felt that the war was inordinately being fought by men who were not as fortunate or connected as he and his Harvard classmates were.

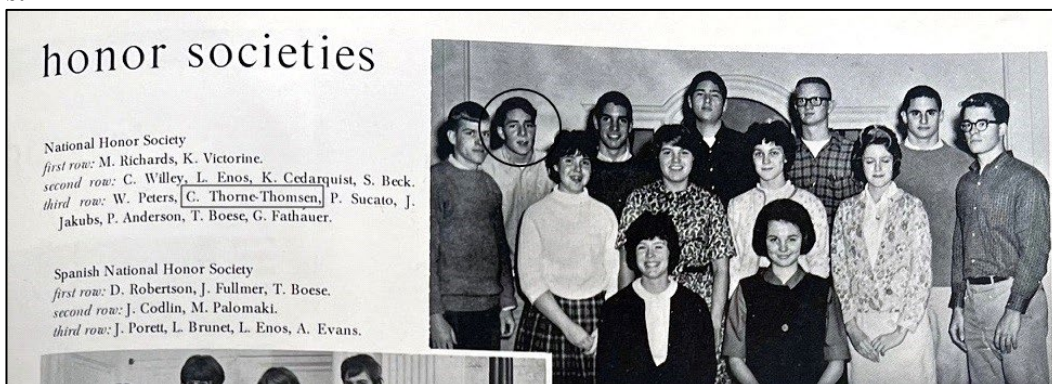
I was able to take quite a few related pictures from that yearbook and I will sprinkle them into the story I prepared for this newsletter.

In 2017 I was approached by Professor Bonnie Docherty in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of Carl-Thorne Thomson's of his losing his life in Vietnam. Together, she and I were able to produce a tribute story that was published in the "HARVARD CRIMSON MAGAZINE" in October, 2017.

Excerpts from that story and photos we took at his hometown library in 2023:

"The Vietnam War era at Harvard is largely remembered as a time of resistance. In the late 1960s, students burned draft cards, occupied University Hall, and helped drive ROTC off campus. But before the anti-war movement became daily news in The Harvard Crimson, one undergraduate—Carl Thorne-Thomsen '68—engaged in a personal and uncommon act of protest.

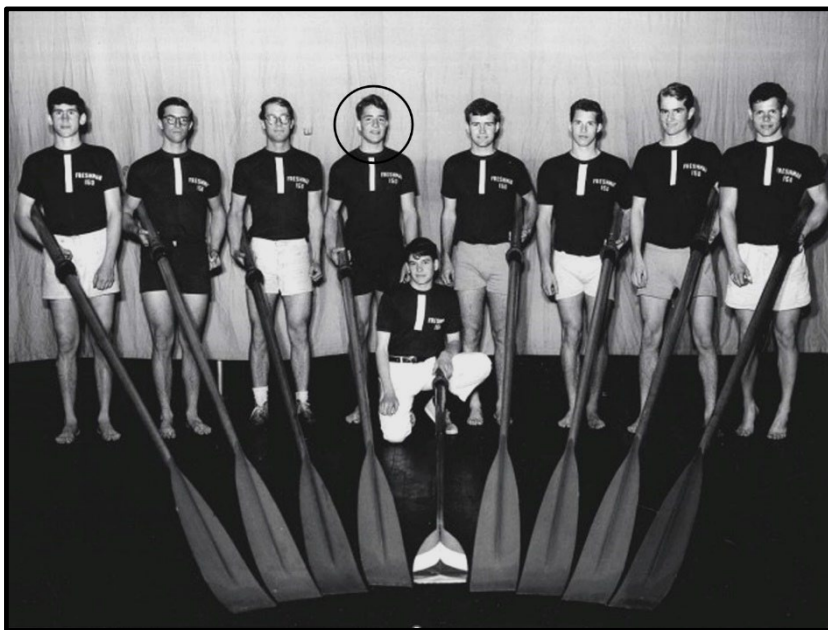
The fourth of five children in a politically conscious family, he grew up north of Chicago. At Lake Forest High School, he earned academic honors, played the cello, and was a standout athlete. His best friend, Jim Kahle, recalls summers when "we would go sailing, swimming, and play wiffle ball during the day and at night engage in solving the world's problems." As student-council president, Thorne-Thomsen demonstrated his democratic values by working to eliminate a grade-point requirement for future officers.



[Honor Society photo from his 1964 graduation high school yearbook](#)



Carl's yearbook photo of the Senior High School Officers showing Carl, Class President, seated to the left of Bonnie's Docherty's mother, Vice President. The formal photo shows Carl's photo of him being chosen as the King of his Senior Prom. The Queen went unidentified.



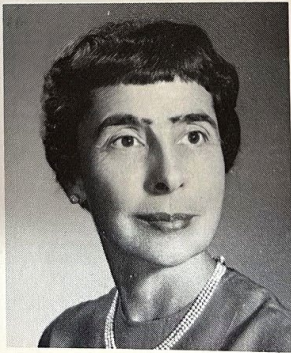


At Harvard, the six-foot Midwesterner tried out for freshman crew and became one of two first-time oarsmen in the 1965 undefeated lightweight boat, rowing in the number-five seat. Teammate Chris Cutler remembers an exceptional athlete who “brought humor and joy to the boathouse.” Bill Braun adds, “Carl always wanted to do more than his fair share. You never had to look over your shoulder to see if he was pulling his oar.”
Carl shown circled, fourth from left in this photo.

But the Dunster House resident had more on his mind than rowing. With the Vietnam War escalating, concern about the draft led students to forgo leaves of absence, join the Peace Corps, and apply to graduate school. According to the 1966 Harvard yearbook, many considered military service in the unpopular conflict to be a “waste of time” and “the work of a high-school dropout.”

This may have been the prevalent attitude at Harvard, but there were many Harvard graduates who went on to serving our country and distinguished themselves, many at a cost of losing their lives B.C.

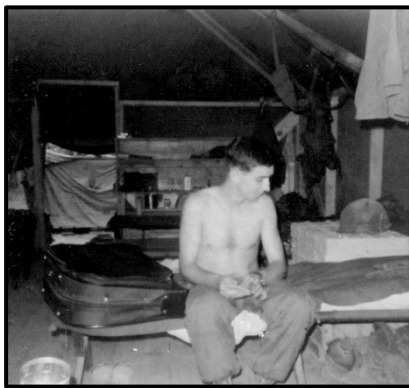
Thorne-Thomsen saw it differently (and so did many other young men who attended Harvard during this period B.C.) He believed it was unjust for him to remain sheltered at Harvard while the government sent poorer, less well-educated young men to war. In late 1966, he told his friend Linda Jones (Docherty, Bonnie's mother), who had served with him on student council, that he was thinking of leaving college; she recalls him saying, “Talk me out of it.” She couldn't, nor could the few family members and friends in whom he confided. “He scorned that student deferment,” says his oldest brother, Leif. Thorne-Thomsen withdrew from Harvard in his junior spring and was drafted shortly thereafter. Rejecting the offer of a hiding place in Canada, and a safer post in the Pentagon, he told his father, “I have to do this.”

His mother, who begged him not to go, wrote later that his decision exemplified “the qualities I loved most in him. He was perceptive, he hated unfairness, he was courageous, and he lived by his principles and acted on them despite personal consequences...”

<p>MARY THORNE–THOMSEN, <i>English</i>; Bennington College; Mills College; Stanford University, B.A., B.E.</p>			
<p>FRANK H. TOWNSEND, <i>English</i>; Williams College, B.A.; University of Chicago, M.A., Ph.D.</p>			
<p>ELSA UTSCH, <i>English</i>; DePauw University, B.A.; Washington University; Lake Forest College; Northwestern University</p>			

Margaret Swanson, Home Economics	1945	Salisbury	8,350	Steinke	9,200
Cora L. Tebbetts, Social Studies	1935-41	Schillereff	9,740	Swann	10,455
J. Thompson, Art	1955	Schmalzuss	7,400	Thorne-Thomson	8,300
Mary Thorne-Thomson, English	1957-64, 66-67	Shamo	6,400	Tobasco	11,500
L. Vern Tinkham, Commerce	1935-37	Short	11,500	Townsend	10,400
Frank Townsend, English	1951-1961	Siewertn	6,100	Ullman	5,900
		Silber	6,100	White	10,100
		Simon	14,700	Wiesel	3,000
		Spooner	8,500	Apprx. avrg. sal.	7,950
		Steele	6,500	FACULTY SALARIES	

Ironically, the yearbook also featured private information on faculty members, including salaries, as you can see in Carl’s mother’s notation on her tenure at the school and her 1964 salary!

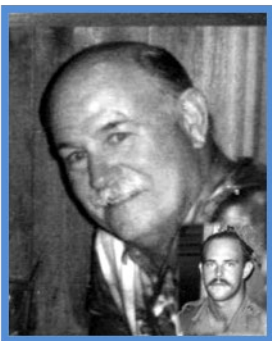


This photo was taken of me by Ron Del Orefice as I was packing up to go to Saigon for my transfer back to America. The date was August 20th, 1967, three days before Thorne Thomson’s arrival.

Malcolm took my place as Alpha 6xray. He was badly wounded three weeks later, and I suspect it was then that Carl Thorne Thomson moved up (or down) the ladder and assumed my role for Burnie Quick, as his Company level radio operator. Barely two months later Carl was killed in the ambush of October 25th.

.. Pfc. Thorne-Thomson arrived in Vietnam on August 23, 1967, and quickly bonded with his unit—Alpha Company, Second Battalion, Twelfth Infantry...

He wrote home that he was “glad to be in the infantry because of the lack of ‘pretension’ there.” Army buddies Charlie Page and John Stone knew him as friendly, quick-witted, articulate, and sensitive. Impressed by his abilities, Lt. Burnie Quick made him a radio operator, a vital but dangerous position...”



Charlie Page, shown left, said this about his friend Carl Thorne Thomson:

“I WAS A FRIEND OF CARL'S IN VIETNAM. CARL & I WERE IN DIFFERENT PLATOONS, BUT BOTH IN ALPHA CO. CARL AND I WOULD TRADE MAGAZINES AND BOOKS TO EACH OTHER WHEN WE WERE BACK IN BASE CAMP. IT WAS GREAT TO TALK AND EXCHANGE FRIENDLY BARBS WITH EACH OTHER. I WAS A USC FAN, AND HE WAS A HARVARD MAN. HE WOULD SAY "USC HAD THE BEST ATHLETE'S MONEY COULD BUY". I WOULD REPLY "HARVARD DIDN'T HAVE ANY SCHOLAR ATHLETES BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE ANY ATHLETES". IT WAS NICE TO CARRY ON AN INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE IN THE MIDST OF TRAUMATIZING TIMES.

THE DAY CARL WAS KILLED, HE WAS WITH OUR COMMAND GROUP, DIRECTING OUR RESPONSES TO THE ENEMY AMBUSH. A ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE (RPG) HIT IN A TREE ABOUT 10 FEET ABOVE CARL. A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL HIT CARL ON TOP OF THE HEAD, KILLING HIM INSTANTLY. AFTER THE FIGHT WAS OVER, ANOTHER GI AND I WERE TASKED WITH LOADING OUR DEAD

COMRADES (5) ON A HELICOPTER. CARL WAS THE LAST ONE ON. THE HELICOPTER WAS OVERLOADED AND COULDN'T LIFT OFF. THE PILOT SIGNALLED TO TAKE ONE BODY OFF. I GRABBED CARL'S UPPER TORSO, AND WE LIFTED HIM OFF. I PUT MY HAND UNDER HIS HEAD SO HE WOULDN'T SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF HAVING HIS HEAD BOUNCE ON THE GROUND. THE HELICOPTER TOOK OFF. I STAYED WITH HIS BODY FOR 30 MINUTES UNTIL THE 'COPTER CAME BACK. WE HAD 5 KIA AND 30 WIA THAT DAY; 2 KIA WERE IN MY SQUAD.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH TO TELL HIS MOTHER OTHER THAN CARL WAS RELATIVELY UNTOUCHED; HE HAD A SERENE LOOK ON HIS FACE, AS IF HE WERE ASLEEP.



John Stone, shown left, said this about his friend Carl:

"I WAS ALSO A FRIEND OF CARL. I SERVED IN VIETNAM IN 1967- 68. OUR BASE CAMP'S NAME WAS "CAMP RAINIER" AND LOCATED NEAR THE VILLAGE OF DAU TIENG.

IN THE YEAR 2003, THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER I RETURNED FROM VIETNAM, I JOINED THE RECENTLY FORMED ALPHA ASSOCIATION GROUP. IT IS DEVOTED TO THE MEN OF "A" COMPANY, WHO SERVED TOGETHER, THEIR FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS, AND ABOVE ALL, DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE. IN 2017, I ATTENDED MY 13TH ALPHA ARMY REUNION REJOINING SOME OF THE GUYS I SERVED WITH. THERE ARE MANY OTHER

GUYS I WISH THAT COULD BE THERE, BUT SADLY IT'S NOT POSSIBLE. ONE OF THOSE GUYS IS CARL S. THORNE - THOMSEN

THE MEN OF ALPHA COMPANY CAME FROM MANY LOCATIONS AND DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS. CARL CAME FROM NEAR CHICAGO AND I WAS FROM BUFFALO. I'M NOT SURE WHEN I FOUND OUT CARL WAS A HARVARD MAN. HE RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP AND WAS DOING WELL, BUT IN 1967 HE POSTPONED HIS EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERED FOR THE DRAFT. AFTER MUCH TRAINING, WE WERE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO ALPHA COMPANY TO REPLACE THE GUYS THAT WERE HEADING HOME OR ALREADY GONE FOR WHATEVER REASON. CARL ARRIVED IN ALPHA COMPANY ON AUGUST 23RD 1967. I ARRIVED IN A COMPANY, AUGUST 28TH 1967.

CARL AND I WERE NEW GUYS, AND NOW BEGINNING OUR YEAR TOUR IN NAM. OUR MEETING AND FRIENDSHIP STARTED WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE DAYS OF MY ARRIVAL AT OUR BASE CAMP. CARL SPAULDING THORNE-THOMSEN WAS THE FIRST GUY I RECALL MEETING THAT HAD 4 NAMES. INITIALLY I THOUGHT HIS FIRST NAME WAS "THORN". THAT WAS ONE OF THE COOLEST FIRST NAMES I EVER HEARD. THEN I WAS CALLING HIM BY WHAT I THOUGHT WAS HIS WHOLE NAME — THORNE THOMSEN. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I GOT IT RIGHT. CARL WAS SO MUCH EASIER.

HE WAS THE TYPE OF GUY YOU WANTED TO HANG WITH. HE WAS VERY OUTGOING—SO FRIENDLY—QUICK WITTED AND ONE "SMART COOKIE". HE KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT EVERYTHING AND EVERYTHING ABOUT SOME THINGS. HE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY SPEAKER. HE HAD A SKILL OF CHOOSING AND ORGANIZING HIS WORDS WELL IN ADVANCE AND THE ABILITY TO RECALL THINGS THAT WOULD FIT THE CONVERSATION. WHEN HE WOULD TALK, I WOULD LISTEN, AND WHEN I WAS TALKING, HE WOULD LISTEN. THE DIFFERENCE WAS I WAS PROBABLY GETTING MORE OUT OF OUR CONVERSATIONS THAN HE WAS. I CAN STILL HEAR HIS VOICE... THE TONE... AND THE WAY HE SPOKE. IF HE CALLED MY PHONE THIS MOMENT, I'M SURE I WOULD RECOGNIZE HIS VOICE. HE WAS ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING GUYS I HAD MET.

ON THE 30TH OF AUGUST, 1967, THE NEW GUYS WERE ISSUED OUR FIELD EQUIPMENT, AND WE BEGAN OUR 5 DAY PRE-COMBAT TRAINING. ON SEPTEMBER 6TH, WE ZEROED IN OUR NEWLY ISSUED M-16'S. ON THE 8TH OF SEPTEMBER WE HAD OUR FIRST CHOPPER FLIGHT MISSION. AFTER THE CHOPPERS LANDED IN THIS OPEN FIELD LANDING ZONE, WE HAD OUR FIRST WALK THROUGH THE JUNGLE. ALPHA AND THE ENEMY KEPT US BUSY THE REST OF SEPTEMBER. VILLAGE CLEARINGS, SEARCH AND DESTROY MISSIONS, AREA SWEEPS, DAY AND NIGHT AMBUSHES, EAGLE FLIGHTS, BUSHMASTERS, AND THE LIST GOES ON. WE WERE NOW SEEING MORE OF THE JUNGLE THAN OF BASE CAMP. THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT SEPTEMBER WAS, IT'S THE ONLY MONTH ALPHA WOULD HAVE NO FATALITIES.

CARL'S CONVERSATIONS AND OUR JOKING GOT US THROUGH SOME ROUGH TIMES. CARL WAS MY JOKING BUDDY AND A REAL FUNNY GUY BUT NOT SILLY. WHEN I SAID SOMETHING FUNNY, HE WOULD TAKE IT TO A NEW LEVEL. BOY DID HE MAKE ME LAUGH WITH HIS LITTLE COMMENTS AND JOKES. OTHER TIMES IT WAS SERIOUS, BUT ALWAYS INTERESTING.

ON OCTOBER 4, 1967, CARL, AND I, AND 42 OTHER NEW GUYS WERE AWARDED THE "CIB". THIS COVETED COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE IS THE HIGHEST (INFANTRY) BADGE AWARDED, SIGNIFYING YOU HAVE BEEN IN COMBAT AND IS PRESENTED ON YOUR UNIFORM ABOVE ALL YOUR OTHER MEDALS.

21 DAYS LATER, ON OCTOBER 25TH 1967, CARL SPAULDING THORNE-THOMSEN WAS ONE OF FIVE MEN THAT WERE KILLED IN THE SURPRISE DAYLIGHT AMBUSH THAT OUR COMPANY WALKED INTO. THE BULLETS WERE WHIZZING CLOSELY BY US FROM EVERY DIRECTION, AND FROM EVERY TYPE OF WEAPON. AT TIMES THE NOISE WAS DEAFENING. HAND GRENADES AND RPG ROUNDS

EXPLODING. THOSE OTHER MEN KILLED THAT DAY WERE BOBBY JOE BONIN, ART ROESLER, GORDIE GRAHAM, AND ALEX HOUSTON. IT WAS A TRAUMATIC DAY FOR OUR COMPANY. TO PUT THIS INTO PERSPECTIVE WE ALSO HAD ABOUT 30 WOUNDED.

MY CONVERSATIONS WITH CARL ALL CAME TO AN END SO FAST, SO SUDDEN, AND SO DEVASTATING. EVEN THOUGH I KNEW HIM FOR A SHORT TWO MONTHS, OR ABOUT 59 DAYS, HE LEFT A LIFELONG IMPRESSION ON ME; CARL WAS A GOOD SOLDIER, A FRIEND, AND ONE EXTRAORDINARY GUY. I KNOW HE MADE AN IMPRESSION ON EVERYONE THAT KNEW HIM. I WOULD GUARANTEE, IF HIS LIFE WASN'T CUT SHORT, HE WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ANY ENTERPRISE ATTEMPTED.

EVEN AFTER 50 YEARS, I STILL FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE HE IS GONE. I WILL NEVER FORGET HIM. RIP BROTHER!

“...Alpha Company operated out of Dau Tieng, between Saigon and the Cambodian border. A Vietcong supply route ran through the region, and the unit searched for and destroyed enemy bases, weapons, and food. On one mission, ordered to clear villages where the Vietcong had been hiding, it evacuated dozens of civilians, then burned down their homes. “It is justifiable in terms of winning the war,” Thorne-Thomsen wrote. “Now if we could only justify the war.”



That village clearing episode was dramatically depicted in the movie “Platoon”. Oliver Stone, at that time was a new member of B/3/22nd, were also involved in that village clearing operation in September of 1967.

Stone was earlier teaching English at a Saigon school when he got the urge to join the fight.

Some of that movie was overdramatized, however this scene and the final battle scene were true.

Scene from the movie depicting the destructions of villages



On October 25, as Harvard students protested campus recruiting by napalm manufacturer Dow Chemical, undermanned Alpha Company trudged through dense jungle. Entering a clearing of tall elephant grass, the soldiers received fire from all sides. Thorne-Thomsen repeatedly exposed himself to maintain radio contact and facilitate the unit’s maneuvers, until a rocket propelled grenade exploded above him, killing him instantly. When reinforcements arrived two and a half hours later, four more men were dead, and about 30 wounded.

The Crimson magazine did not report it, but Harvard responded to Thorne-Thomsen’s death. According to an Al Gore biography, “the news swept through [Dunster dining] room like a shock wave.”

The varsity lightweight crew named a new racing shell in his honor. A 1968 yearbook essay, “The War Comes to Harvard,” opened by noting that “a junior who had left Harvard last year had been awarded the Bronze Star...posthumously ‘for heroism.’ One of only 22 men on Memorial Church’s Vietnam honor roll, Thorne-Thomsen also received a Bronze Star “for outstanding meritorious service.”

Fifty years later, his personal act of protest elicits admiration. Leif Thorne-Thomsen, who initially viewed his brother’s reasoning as crazy, now sees his choice as that of a “remarkable man.” Crew teammate Monk Terry observes, “[It] shows a lot more strength of character than the rest of us had.” Bill Comeau, a draftee from a poor family and Thorne-Thomsen’s predecessor as radio operator, regards him as a hero for “taking the risks and making the sacrifices to right what he considered an injustice perpetrated on the underprivileged class.” Made without fanfare, Thorne-Thomsen’s decision to forsake self-interest for principle retains the power to inspire.”

Bonnie Docherty,
the author of the
Harvard Magazine
piece on Carl

I check marked my bucket list option to visit Carle Spaul Thorne-Thomsen’s hometown. I didn’t get everything I wanted but took solace in being able to visit familiar sites that Carl enjoyed while he was living in Lake Forest.

QUARTERLY OBITUARIES

LARRY PFLUEGER

I received this message recently from Larry Pflueger’s brother-in-law.

Sir,

I would like to report the death of my very good friend and Brother-in-Law, Larry Lee Pflueger.

Larry Lee Pflueger, 78 of Latham, Tennessee, passed away at home Saturday February 25, 2023. A Graveside service was held Monday, February 27, 2023, at New Hope Church cemetery near Latham. Larry was born in Latham on December 3, 1944, to the late Albert and Artie Smith Pflueger. He is survived by his wife Shirley Poyner Pflueger, and brothers Robert Pflueger of Dresden, TN and Tommy Pflueger of Latham, TN.



He was a Veteran of the Vietnam War serving in the light infantry.

His active service was September 1966 until September 1968 and reserve until September 1972.

After retirement from Ferry Morris seed company, he spent much of his time hunting, fishing, and trapping in the Obion River Bottoms of West Tennessee near his home.

“Larry joined the Company CP group in the Fall of 1967. Melvin “Harvey” Houck also became part of the group a little later.

Larry took over as Commo Chief after I left in January 1968.” - Ron DelOrfice

NAOMA LIVINGSTON, BOB LIVINGSTON'S WIFE



This photo on the left was taken right after we visited Lake Forest during last year's reunion. It was the last picture that we have of Naoma before she passed.

The Livingstons and Comeaus were good friends for many years.

Chris and I will never forget the visit we spent with them at their home. Naoma was experiencing an issue with her leg, and it precluded a number of other medical issues that plagued her over the past few years.

She and Bob were frequent reunion attendees.

Chris and Naoma Livingston, August 2023

Naoma Livingston Obituary

Naoma A. Livingston found peace on the morning of March 23, 2024, with her loving husband, son & daughter at her side. Born in Chicago on November 12, 1940, to Frank & Andree (Eliet) Platts, she entered the world on the Armistice Day Blizzard and departed it after a spring snowfall. She grew up in Twin Lakes, WI, the eldest of six children and made a life in the small-town community that she loved. She graduated from Wilmot Union High School, and in 1958 pursued an underwriting position with Marsh McLennan in downtown Chicago. She had an artistic eye and generous nature. Her siblings recall the many times she'd return home with treasured ornaments from Marshall Field's for their Christmas tree, and always helping her mother at the family home. On July 23, 1966, she would embark upon a 57-year marriage with her beloved "Bob", the young infantry soldier whose nice Irish family summered on Lake Mary. When he returned from Vietnam, they would raise a family and build their home. Naoma retired after 50 years telling "at the bank", where she was always known for her outgoing disposition. Over the years she volunteered many hours, fundraising on behalf of American Legion Post 544, and when her children were young, she assisted with costuming & make-up for a local theater group she helped form, known as The Gaslight Players. Most recently she will be remembered as a woman of simple pleasures: happiest in the presence of her family, "Grandma" to Victoria Rose, Evelyn Andree & Sophia Violet, a gentle observer of wildlife on the marsh at her home, and a little lady with a big heart doing her best for all of us.

She is survived by her loyal husband Bob Livingston; loving son Robert Livingston & his wife Corinne; three adoring grandchildren; devoted daughter Yvette Livingston; dear siblings, Frank (Patricia) Platts; Pete (Arlene) Platts; Juanita (Mark) Schittina; and Alice Shuping; life-long friend Sue Johnson; and many cherished nieces & nephews whom she loved. She was preceded in death by beloved sister Mary Ann Platts.

Visitation will be held at 10:00AM, Thursday, April 11th at St. John's Catholic Church (701 N. Lake Ave.) followed by funeral mass at 11:00AM. Private family burial at Mound Prairie Cemetery, Twin Lakes. In lieu of flowers, memorials in her name may be made to Hospice Alliance in Pleasant Prairie, Alzheimer's Assoc., WI Chapter or Save the

Children, Fairfield, CT, an organization dedicated to providing aid to vulnerable children in the U.S. and abroad. Online condolences haaselockwoodfhs.com. The Haase-Lockwood & Associates Funeral Home of Twin Lakes, WI is honored to serve the Livingston family.

Services

VISITATION

Thursday

April 11, 2024

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

St. John's the Evangelist Catholic Church

701 N. Lake Ave

Twin Lakes, WI 53181

MEMBERS REMOVED FROM ASSOCIATION LISTING

During the month of December, I mailed out letters to all our remaining members asking everyone to confirm that they were still around and chose to continue remaining in our organization. I also sent out the same message to all the email addresses of our members that I had on file. I made the same request in the January 2024 issue of Alpha's Pride. These 42 members never responded to any of my request and so we need to assume that they no longer want to belong to our association, or they are no longer with us. Here is the list of those people:

* Indicates Widows, or Associate Members

David Askham
Ron Auterson
Martin H. Beach
Peter Beale
Candy Berardi*
Denis Boudreau
Katie Bracy*
Larry Brossman
W.G. Brown
Douglas Buhl
Rose Carle*
Malcolm Cartee
Diana Castaneda*
Roy Coln

Paul Conefry
Orville Daugherty
Lucille Filous*
Frank Flores
James Force
Thomas J Francisco
Arlene Fritz*
Judy Gobeil*
James E. Harris
LansingHewitt
Kenneth Juhas
Tsuzuki Kimura
Jane Kirkup*
Nancy Kruse*

Gary Lawrence
Randy McConnell*
Chuck Mohr
Steve Monnin
Elgin Panicelle*
Larry Pfluger
Gilbert Robinson
Ray Slavik
Rodric Squier
Jerry Takier
Terry Wilt
Donna Winchell*
Jim Yates

Below is a list of current members who I did hear from:

* Indicates Widows, or Associate Members

Joseph Amos, Sr
Fred Armstrong
Samuel Babcock
Gary Barney
Skip Barnhart
Bobby Benson
Lou Berard
Sandra Bergeron*

Everett Berry
Jim Bisson
Rosemary Bogdas*
Doug Brablec
Bill Braniff
Thomas Bremner
Gary Brenly
MaryAnn Butkus*

LeRoy Carpenter
Wayne Clark
Bill Comeau
Linda Concannon*
Peter Cullen
Christian Culleton*
Doug Cullis
David Cunningham

Frank De Angelo
 Ron Del Orefice
 Jim DeLuco
 Ed Domaleski
 John Durcholz
 Kenneth Eising
 Dennis Foerster
 Thomas Gajowski
 John Geraghty
 Jane Glock
 Bonnie Grauer*
 Charles Guffey
 George Hanna
 Pat Hanna*
 Dennis Harford
 Jeanne Harvey*
 Lemar Haselden
 James Heys
 Dan Hollister
 Corrie Huizing*
 Richard Janson
 Ernest Jarvis
 Joseph Kasmedo
 Steve Kawczak
 Kathleen Kelley*
 Ted Lawlor
 John Lehman
 Roy Letta

John Lingar
 Bob Livingston
 Jose Lopez
 Tony LoPresti
 Asfred Maldonado
 Paul Manske II*
 John Marrs
 Benny Martin
 Lynne Martin*
 Roger Masten
 Susan May*
 Jerry W. McClary
 Ronald L. McKnight
 Glen McNeely
 David B. Mendez
 Norman E. Minnier
 Fred Moffatt
 Ron Mosley
 Brian Neal
 Charlie Neyman
 Fred Nicholson
 Thomas Noel *
 John Ogan
 James Olafson
 Joyce O'Neil*
 Henry Osowiecki
 Sandy Palmer
 Don Paul

Brenda Lee Peckham*
 Jerry Peterson
 Gary Pratt
 Linda Propatier*
 Burnet R. Quick
 Peggy Ramey*
 Howard Renker
 Ron Rich
 Larry Savage
 Marilyn Shulsky*
 Ed Smith
 Jim Smith
 Norman W. Smith
 Richard Smith
 Rober L. Smith
 Sam Spinuzzi
 John Stone
 Carl Swon
 Jim Tamash
 Dave Todd
 Marion L. Vallery
 Fred Van Amburgh
 Jerry Virzi
 Dean Walker
 Larry Walter
 Roys Willenbring
 Ron Woycehoski
 Thomas Zarlenga

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN THE JUNGLE



Anyone who has ever had to carry a radio in the jungle will recognize this radio that was adapted for jungle use in Vietnam. It was called the PRC 25 (or affectionately called the Prick25), shown here with ST-138 Carry Harness.

It replaced the PRC 10 and was the first military radio to be made with solid state components. It was superior in performance, yet still had its limitations in the jungle. It's range was 5 miles but at times the jungle limited that range. Luckily, us RTOs all carried a much longer antenna that could double that range.

Still, it was adequate, trustworthy and durable. It was easy to maintain and it's power source was a non-rechargeable BA-4386 dry cell battery which had an average life of 20 hours. A spare was carried in a metal container that clipped on the bottom of the radio.

Batteries customarily were changed daily with fresh supplies arriving daily in the jungle by helicopters. There was always some life in the batteries, so we buried the old batteries deep in a hole we dug to prevent the enemy using them to detonate mines or booby traps.



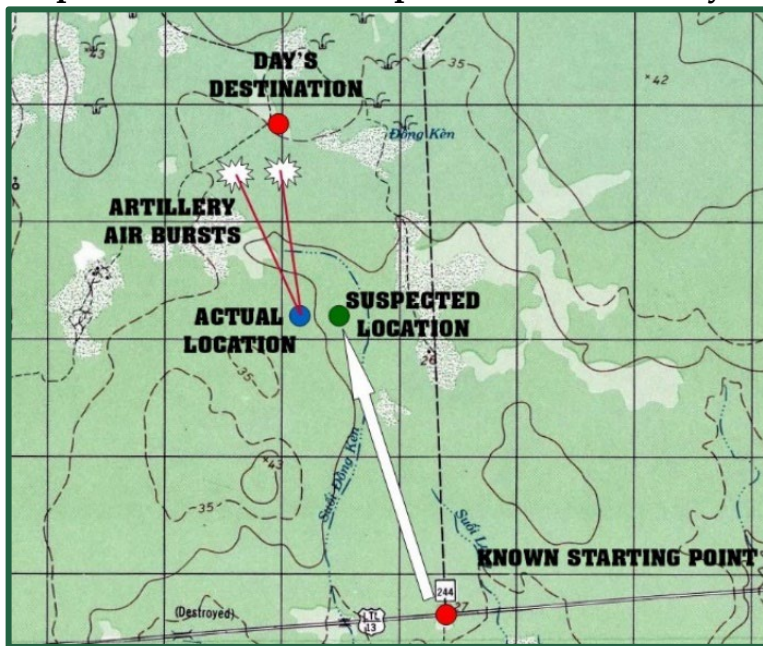
The handset had a push button on the side of it to transmit to other radios. Each unit had a distinct call sign on a network (in my case, the Company net to communicate with other members of the company). Each platoon had their own Platoon Leader radiomen carrying the PRC25. The Company Commander was 'Alpha6'. His radioman was called 'Alpha6xray' (that was me). The Executive Officer of the Company's call sign was 'Alpha5'. The Company First Sergeant's call sign was Alpha7 (make of it what you will).

Each of the four platoons leaders were designated with the 6 with a dash and numeral which designated which platoon they led. Example, the First Platoon Leader was designated Alpha 6-1. The Second Platoon Leader was Alpha6-2, etc.

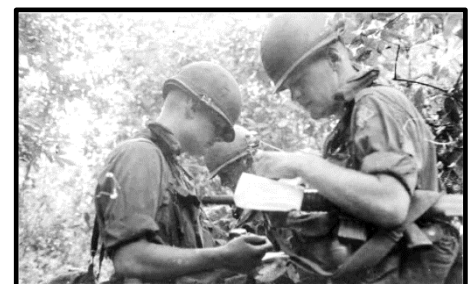
Each Squad leader in the platoons had their own much smaller radio called the PRC6. It's range was shorter, but sufficient for platoon communications.

The handset was sensitive to the weather so we RTOs paid special attention to keeping it dry. We did so by covering the handset up in the plastic bags that the batteries came in. Stick the handset in the plastic battery case, seal it with a rubber band and as the saying goes, you're good to go. You would think that maybe that would impede communications talking through that bag, but there was no difference in the quality of the transmissions.

One important feature of our radios was the power to locate us whenever we got confused in the jungle. Generally, we determined our position by knowing on a map where we were at the outset. We then were told what the destination of our objective was for the day. We laid out a map, oriented the map to magnetic north shown on the map. We then located our destination on the map, placed our compass on the map known location and where we were going, and we had an azimuth to follow and how far away we had to travel. Ahead of the unit and directly behind the point man was the compass man who actually navigated the move.



Using pace and compass got us in the ballpark, but at times, we missed a landmark that we should have reached, and we missed and needed to reorient ourselves. At other times we were rerouted to a different destination mid-travel. I'll let Ed Smith our past Company Commander recount a real-life incident to explain how we corrected for a wrong suspected location:



Burnie Quick left, and Ed Smith, determining the company location in the jungle

"No GPS for us. No terrain features to help us navigate. We had to use compass and pace to help us navigate, and, as you say, use artillery air burst and compass resection to compute our location. We even used our Air Force Forward Air Controllers to help us navigate, popped smoke and the FAC would give us a reading.



Roy Willenbring,
Artillery Officer,
A/2/12

Roy Willenbring was our main map reader and helped us keep track of our location.

With no terrain features to help us determine location, we would have the artillery fire white phosphorus rounds at two different locations, 200 meters height of burst. We would take a back azimuth from the two randomly selected points and where the back azimuths intersected, that was our location. (see map on page 11). We were usually ballpark, maybe 100 - 200 meters from where we thought we were. We would usually go through that procedure when we were getting ready to make a turn.

I recall on one occasion; we were 500 meters off (even worse than what is shows on the earlier map). That was when we asked a FAC to give us a location from our smoke grenade. We were ready to make a turn, and wanted to verify our location before we made our turn. We also used the FACs spot, verified location with the resection. The problem we determined was when we started the day, and we marked our map incorrectly. As it turned out, we had a change in our route for the day and didn't make the change on our map. We were lucky that we did not have any contact that day. Don't want to start throwing artillery or air strikes around and not know where we were. That was our mistake in not correctly posting our change.

Charles Ed Smith
Alpha6Xray"

I never thought much about where or how they were developed, but I always recalled that the manufacturers name was attached on a nameplate on the radio; Motorola, (which made radios for Ford Motor Company). Which leads me to some research on that iconic brand of radio and what I came up with this interesting history about its formation.

MOTOROLA

HISTORY OF MOTOROLA

This is a most interesting story of two brilliant men!
Some interesting HISTORY and TRIVIA here...
I'm sure some of you will like this.

HISTORY OF THE CAR RADIO

Seems like cars have always had radios, but they didn't.



Here's the story:

One evening, in 1929, two young men named William Lear and Elmer Wavering drove their girlfriends to a lookout point high above the Mississippi River town of Quincy, Illinois, to watch the sunset. It was a romantic night to be sure,



but one of the women observed that it would be even nicer if they could listen to music in the car.

Lear and Wavering liked the idea. Both men had tinkered with radios (*Lear served as a radio operator in the U.S. Navy during World War I*) and it wasn't long before they were taking apart a home radio and trying to get it to work in a car.

But it wasn't easy: automobiles have ignition switches, generators, spark plugs, and other electrical equipment that generate noisy static interference, making it nearly impossible to listen to the radio when the engine was running.

One by one, Lear and Wavering identified and eliminated each source of electrical interference. When they finally got their radio to work, they took it to a radio convention in Chicago.

There they met Paul Galvin, owner of Galvin Manufacturing Corporation. He made a product called a "battery eliminator", a device that allowed battery-powered radios to run on household AC current. But as more homes were wired for electricity, more radio manufacturers made AC-powered radios.

Galvin needed a new product to manufacture. When he met Lear and Wavering at the radio convention, he found it. He believed that mass-produced, affordable car radios had the potential to become a huge business.

Lear and Wavering set up shop in Galvin's factory, and when they perfected their first radio, they installed it in his Studebaker.

Then Galvin went to a local banker to apply for a loan. Thinking it might sweeten the deal, he had his men install a radio in the banker's Packard.

Good idea, but it didn't work. Half an hour after the installation, the banker's Packard caught on fire. (They didn't get the loan.)

Galvin didn't give up. He drove his Studebaker nearly 800 miles to Atlantic City to show off the radio at the 1930 Radio Manufacturers Association convention. Too broke to afford a booth, he parked the car outside the convention hall and cranked up the radio so that passing conventioners could hear it.

That idea worked -- He got enough orders to put the radio into production.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

That first production model was called the 5T71. Galvin decided he needed to come up with something a little catchier.

In those days many companies in the phonograph and radio businesses used the suffix "ola" for their names - Radiola, Columbiola, and Victrola were three of the biggest.

Galvin decided to do the same thing, and since his radio was intended for use in a motor vehicle, he decided to call it the Motorola.

But even with the name change, the radio still had problems:

When Motorola went on sale in 1930, it cost about \$110 uninstalled, at a time when you could buy a brand-new car for \$650, and the country was sliding into the Great Depression.

(By that measure, a radio for a new car would cost about \$3,000 today.)

In 1930, it took two men several days to put in a car radio. The dashboard had to be taken apart so that the receiver and a single speaker could be installed, and the ceiling had to be cut open to install the antenna.

These early radios ran on their own batteries, not on the car battery, so holes had to be cut into the floorboard to accommodate them.

The installation manual had eight complete diagrams and 28 pages of instructions. Selling complicated car radios that cost 20 percent of the price of a brand-new car wouldn't have been easy in the best of times, let alone during the Great Depression.

Galvin lost money in 1930 and struggled for a couple of years after that. But things picked up in 1933 when Ford began offering Motorola's pre-installed at the factory. In 1934 they got another boost when Galvin struck a deal with B.F. Goodrich tire company to sell and install them in its chain of tire stores.

By then the price of the radio, with installation included, had dropped to \$55. The Motorola car radio was off and running.

(The name of the company would be officially changed from Galvin Manufacturing to "Motorola" in 1947.)

In the meantime, Galvin continued to develop new uses for car radios. In 1936, the same year that it introduced push-button tuning, it also introduced the Motorola Police Cruiser, a standard car radio that was factory preset to a single frequency to pick up police broadcasts.

In 1940 he developed the first handheld two-way radio -- The Handy-Talkie (sometimes called the walkie talkie) for the U. S. Army.

A lot of the communications technologies that we take for granted today were born in Motorola labs in the years that followed World War II.

In 1947 they came out with the first television for under \$200.

In 1956 the company introduced the world's first pager; in 1969 came the radio and television equipment that was used to televise Neil Armstrong's first steps on the Moon.

In 1973 it invented the world's first handheld cellular phone.

Today Motorola is one of the largest cell phone manufacturers in the world.

And it all started with the car radio.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO

the two men who installed the first radio in Paul Galvin's car.

Elmer Wavering and William Lear ended up taking very different paths in life.

Wavering stayed with Motorola. In the 1950's he helped change the automobile experience again when he developed the first automotive alternator, replacing inefficient and unreliable generators. The invention led to such luxuries as power windows, power seats, and, eventually, air-conditioning.

Lear also continued inventing. He holds more than 150 patents. Remember eight-track tape players? Lear invented that.

But what he's really famous for are his contributions to the field of aviation. He invented radio direction finders for planes, aided in the invention of the autopilot, designed the first fully automatic aircraft landing system, and in 1963 introduced his most famous invention of all, the Lear Jet, the world's first mass-produced, affordable business jet.

(Not bad for a guy who dropped out of school after the eighth grade.)

Sometimes it is fun to find out how some of the many things that we take for granted actually came into being!

AND

It all started with a woman's suggestion!



STAYBRIDGE SUITES ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY
1000 Genesee Street Rochester, NY 14611

REUNION DATES: Arrive: Thursday, June 13, 2024 Leave: Sunday, June 16th

Booking Instructions:

Your guests will have two options to book these rooms between 3/12/2024 and 5/13/2024.

(be sure to book by May 13th to receive this discounted rate offer)

Our rooms have queen size beds and are being sold online for \$250/night. We are getting them for \$139/night.

1. By using this [link](#), we will automatically receive the discounted rates that is outlined above, and you will be able to book this reservation yourselves.

2. By calling this number [585-613-3400] or emailing me [jpscitelli@hamisterhospitality.com]. Since they are such a small property, they do not typically do blocks of rooms. By going through this main contact, it will ensure that there is no confusion for us when booking.

BE AWARE THAT YOU CAN BOOK NOW AND SHOULD YOU HAVE TO CANCEL YOUR ROOM FOR ANY REASON, YOU CAN CANCEL UP TO A DAY BEFORE YOUR STAY AND YOU WILL NOT BE CHARGED FOR YOUR STAY.

REALLY IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO THINK A MEDICAL CONDITION AT THE LAST-MINUTE MAY PREVENT THEM FROM ATTENDING THE REUNION.

Wheelchair Accessible Rooms are available

Other bits of information which may be useful:

- There is an Amtrak station 5 miles from the hotel for those who may want to get there by train. We can pick you up at the station.
- On-Site Parking is available.
- Free Parking Lot adjacent to hotel, in front of building.
- Free breakfast for all hotel guests (Trip Advisor rates this breakfast as excellent)



FRIDAY LOCAL ATTRACTION TOURS 9-5

A motorcoach will be transporting us to these attractions:

The association will be providing motorcoach transportation to local attractions in Rochester.

There are four interesting attractions that we will be visiting:

- ROCHESTER MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER (first destination)

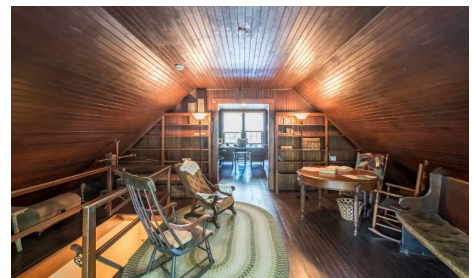


The Municipal Museum in Rochester, New York, the Rochester Museum & Science Center was Established in 1912.

You can learn more about this museum by going to this webpage:

<https://rmsc>.

- Susan B. Anthony Museum and House (second destination)



The National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, New York, features the National Historic Landmark home of the legendary civil rights leader, and the site of her famous arrest for voting in 1872. This home was the headquarters of the National American Woman Suffrage Association when she was its president. This is also where

she died in 1906 at age 86, following her "Failure is Impossible" speech in Baltimore.

The first floor of the museum is accessible for those who have difficulty climbing stairs. This includes access to the front parlor where Susan B. Anthony was arrested for voting in 1872, the back parlor, her sister Mary's study, the dining room, and a photo exhibit.

Then we will head to the Museum of Play where we will eat lunch and tour that museum

- THE STRONG MUSEUM OF PLAY (third destination)



I'll give you a chance to stop laughing. That's what I did, at first, but investigating the attraction further I learned that this museum is not only focused on kids, but everyone. There are many items in the museum that are on display containing playthings going all the way back to the 1920s. You will see many of the playthings we had as children on display. Some you may have forgotten about. It's seeming quite fascinating.

Margaret Woodbury Strong was the originator of this interesting museum that began with her huge collections of toys and plaything items. You can read her story here:

[Margaret Woodbury Strong - The Strong National Museum of Play](#)

• **THE GEORGE EASTMAN MUSEUM AND ESTATE (final destination)**



CRASHING INTO THE 60S: FILM POSTERS FROM THE COLLECTION

February 2, 2024–September 8, 2024, Main Galleries



Among its many collections at the museum are posters from the 1960s, an era of political, cultural, and sexual revolution, the 1960s was a decade of great changes and great tragedies determined by such world-impacting events as The Space Race, the Cold War, Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech, the JFK assassination, but also by the cultural influences of The Beatles, James Bond, and even fashions, including the popularity of jeans and bikinis. This was also one of the greatest decades in film history.

Founded in 1947 as an independent nonprofit institution, the Eastman Museum is the world's oldest photography museum and

one of the oldest film archives. The museum holds unparalleled collections – encompassing several million objects – in the fields of photography, cinema, photographic and cinematographic technology, and photographically illustrated books.

You can read more and see pictures about the museum here:

<https://www.eastman.org/about>

SATURDAY AFTERNOON WITH MARGARET AND ROY LETTA

Roy and Margaret Leta will be hosting a Saturday luncheon and meeting at their home. They live 15 minutes from our hotel. Transportation will be provided. Refreshments, soft and hard, will be supplied by Margaret and Roy Leta.

FINAL THOUGHTS



MARCH 2000 MEETING IN CT

It hardly seems 24 years since we first established Alpha Association. We started with a group of nine A/2/12 veterans who met in upstate Connecticut. It grew into an organization of over 240 veterans who served in our company during the 1966-1968 period.

We had no idea if we could continue to grow and be pay all our bills with an annual membership dues collection. It was touch and go at first, but with the financial backing of Henry Osowiecki and Peter Filous, we became self-sustaining after the first two years.

We never did get all of the members to kick in, but we understood that it would be difficult for some members to come up with the \$50 fee each year. Still the members contributed what they could. Many others shared wonderful stories, which enriched our association newsletters and were the envy of everyone who saw our publications.

Soon we became recognized, and our stories were archived at the United States Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle Pennsylvania. There, future Historians will be able to learn firsthand stories of our exploits in Vietnam recorded by our men.

Eventually, we were able to publish a well-received book where we could share our stories with the world (*yes, it's true, our book is sold in countries around the world*).

As it was becoming apparent that our numbers were diminishing and we survivors would need to step up to keep our association alive, the response was amazing. Contributions increased and we are in good shape to continue for a while. I thank all of you who appreciated the efforts of Alpha Association and wanted it to continue on for the foreseeable future.

Below are pictures of the men and women who attended the largest reunion we held in 2016. Between the men and women, there were 105 people in attendance. This year, that number is 34. Sad, but predictable. Let's count our blessings.



Bill Comeau
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Email; Alpha6xray@comcast.net
President, Historian
Alpha Association
Historian for the 12th Infantry Regiment
Monument Project, National Infantry Museum