

# The VietNam Triple Deuce, Inc.

An Association of 2<sup>Bn</sup> (Mech) 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment VietNam Veterans

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The Vietnam Triple Deuce  
Website  
www.vietnamtripledeuce.org

*Please Visit Today!*

**Mario Salazar**  
Webmaster  
HQ/2/22 65-67  
P\*\*\*\*\*

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## President's Message

Here wishing you all a Happy New Year.

My major message is for you to make your plans now for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Reunion in Kansas City. The reunion is schedule for the Memorial Day weekend, and it will be a great time for all. Just sitting around with a drink in your hand talking to your fellow brothers is enough, but there are many other activities in Kansas City to make it worth your time.

At the San Antonio Reunion, I said that I was hoping to have Microsoft Power Point Presentation on the Triple Deuce in Vietnam. I have been working on this project, and still need additional pictures to be included. If you have any pictures, please e-mail them to me at [eqf15@aol.com](mailto:eqf15@aol.com).

We will also be having the election to our Board of Directors. If you would like to serve, or

know someone that you would like to serve on the board, please let us know. We will have several openings for new board members this year.

I want to thank Dan Streit, with a lot of help from his wife Vera for stepping forward as the editor of our Newsletter. As always, Dan and Vera will be in need of stories for the newsletter, so draw back on your memory, before it goes, and get those stories to Dan and Vera. I also want to thank Lynn Dalpez for his work on the past newsletters.

Again, Happy New Year, and see you in Kansas City.

**E. Q. Skip Fahel**  
B-2/22, '67-'68  
President

**22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regimental Society Reunion**

**May 26-29, 2005**

**Kansas City, Missouri**

For details see page 3

## NEW FINDS

**Jerry Birmingham.**

1st Platoon, .  
C/ 2-22, 1968 – 1969  
807 Sweetwater Ave.  
Florence, AL 25530  
(256) 760-9489

**Russell J. Sandstrom Jr.**

B/2-22, 07-67 to 03-68  
P.O. Box 475  
Farmington, AZ. 72730

**Ron Robinson**

C/2-22 1969-1970  
211 Terry Lane  
Heath Tx 75032  
(972) 226-9830

## Seeking Contact

**George B. Gonzales**

810-687-0166

**Lloyd McGrath**

508-747-9367

**Clark L. Lohmann**

4883 So. 50th Ave.  
Omaha, NE 68117-1915  
[clark222@cox.net](mailto:clark222@cox.net)

## A Note from the Former Editor

*Lynn W. Dalpez, C/2/22*

Due to a rather large decrease in my spare time to do the VN2-22 Newsletter, Dan Streit has volunteered to become your Editor. I will continue to support the NL by helping Dan to get started on the venture, and by contributing articles in the future.

I would like to thank my son Justin Dalpez for helping me with the technical/ computer issues during the year I was your Editor, as his father is quite the klutz on such matters. He also helped me with the mailing. Justin is going for his Masters degree in accounting and has little time to help old dad out anymore. So I lost my employee to boot!

Dan and his wife Vera will need the support of the VN-22 members. Please send your articles, notes, etc. to Dan in the future. Anyone needing help with writing your story can still contact me, as I will still be behind the scenes of the NL, as well as a proud Director of the VN222. Articles

need not be long, or written in perfect English...hey! ... We are a bunch of old Grunts after all. Hahaha-haha! Personally, I prefer stories told your way, with your words, not all gussied up with an English professor's touch. If you want to say, "ain't", then do so. Cuss words are to be avoided due to children reading our NL, but we can get around that to some degree...without getting into some deep fecal matter. (Hahahaha!)

Dan is a veteran of D/2/22, and has been tagged "Delta Dan". He plans on getting some pictures in future VN2-22 newsletters, and is purchasing a program to allow him to do that and make other improvements to the NL as time goes by.

So, get those articles, short stories, notes,pictures... anything you wish to see in the NL into Dan. Please remember that this is your NL and it can only be as good as the contributors...and Triple Deuce contributors are as good as they come. Your story is a top-notch story and a part of the Vietnam Triple Deuce story. We all want to read about your part...the things that you saw, and felt, for we were right with you Brother, walk'n the walk right along with you, but probably look-

ing in a different direction at the time.

Each man has a very important part of the Vietnam Triple Deuce story. We want to read yours in our Newsletter. Thank you,

**Lynn "The Kool-Aid Kid" Dalpez**  
C/2/22 65-67

**A Note from the Current Editor**

As Lynn noted he has passed the torch to me. Being in the spotlight is not my thing. The success of the newsletter depends on you. I will be happy to collect and compile stories, articles, and news sent to me. I will attempt to get the newsletter to you in a timely manner **BUT**. . . Do you remember the old pop (aka soda) bottles—before plastic? The inscription was "No deposit, no return" So it is with the newsletter. The more information you contribute, the better it will be for all of us.

Please send your memories of how it was then, who you were with, what you did and how you felt about it. Also, being a band of brothers, we care very much about what is going on in your life now.

The format is not rigid. I would be the last one to

correct grammar. I will try to screen any submission to be sure it is not offensive and the language is appropriate.

The rest is up to you.

**Dan Streit 2/22D**



The editor as he was in 1969

**If you have not paid your dues yet—please do so!**

**Reunion to be in Kansas City**

The reunion committee extends an invitation to all members to attend the 2005, 22nd Infantry Regiment Society Reunion May 26, 27, 28, and 29<sup>th</sup>. This is over the Memorial Day weekend and is going back to the dates when the reunion used to be held in May.

The reunion is in the Westin Crown Center, One Pershing Road, Kansas City, Mo. The hotel rate is \$96.50 a night and they waived the parking fee.

The hotel features an outdoor heated pool with large surrounding sun deck, 24-hour fitness facility with outdoor tennis and jogging track, sauna and indoor whirlpool.

The hotel is located within Hallmark Crown Center, featuring Hall's Department Store and the Hallmark Cards Visitor Center. Also within the center is a three level shopping mall complete with movie and stage theatre, restaurants and many specialty stores.

The hotel and the center are connected with a covered walkway to the renovated Union Station. The station has an I-Max theatre, Science City and numerous shops. Across the street and to the west is the only dedicated WWI monument in the United States, Liberty Memorial. The memorial is undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation. The reunion committee is also preparing a list of places to go and see in Kansas City, St. Joseph area, including the Steamship Arabia Museum, Pony Express Stables and Museum, The Plaza shopping center (which is less than two miles away) Kansas City Royals, etc.

The reunion committee has scheduled a golf tournament for Thursday morning at the Adam's Point

Golf Club in Blue Springs, Mo. The golf tournament will start at 9 a.m., (please note it is a 40 minute drive to the course).

Friday morning there will be a women's buffet brunch at the Top of the Crown restaurant on the top floor of the hotel. Also Friday the committee has set up a bus trip to Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. Hopefully the first stop at the fort will be to dedicate the newly installed plaque to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry soldiers who fought in the Indian Wars. The next stop will be the Frontier History Museum. The Buffalo Soldier Monument is a short walk from the museum as is the Command and General Staff School. Friday will be a training holiday on post so we should have it to ourselves. It takes a photo ID to get on post and a photo ID to get into the school. If the plaque is not ready there will be bus tour of the post before going to the museum.

That evening a Kansas City style barbecue buffet will be served. The Triple Deuce Society will have a raffle. There will actually be two different raffles, the first will be a regular raffle while the second will be for a quilted wall

hangings made with scenes from Vietnam and the Triple Deuce.

Saturday the annual banquet will have Kansas City strip steak as the main entrée. Also at the dinner a 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Society will have its annual raffle and a special raffle for a quilt made especially for the reunion. Tickets will be available for the raffle throughout the reunion.

**All members are requested to bring items they would like to donate for the raffles**

Entertainment is still being planned for after the banquet.

For those flying into KCI the Westin Crown Center is a 25-minute drive from the airport. In each terminal there is a booth for KCI Express, which is a shuttle service to the hotel. A roundtrip ticket is available for \$23.00. AVIS is giving us a special rate if you want to rent a car. You have to give them the number J900992 and state you are with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regimental Society.

To get the special rate for any vehicle

**Ival Lawhon A/2-22  
Reunion Coordinator**

## Dues Payment Clarified

It seems that every year as the reunion approaches the question regarding payment of dues comes up. It can be confusing because of the terms used, so I'll explain how to go about paying dues to both the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society, 22 IRS and the Vietnam Triple Deuce, VN 2-22. Since the confusion usually comes up when someone is trying to fill out the Reunion Registration Form I'll begin there.

If you plan on attending the Reunion in Kansas City you **must** be a member of 22 IRS. No exceptions. If you have not paid your 22 IRS dues for 2005 you may include them when you complete the registration form. The third block under Dues on the registration form asks that you include \$10.00 or "*Double Deucer*" dues of \$22.00. Your choice, if you want to donate funds to the 22 IRS and be a "*Double Deucer*," then do so. However, UNDERSTAND that none of the money you send to 22 IRS goes to pay your VN 222 dues. "*Double Deucer*" is not Triple Deucer. Your VN 222 dues are due on January

1st of every year. If you recently joined VN 2=22 and paid your dues after October 1st, 2004, then you have been credited with paying 2005 dues. If you haven't paid, then please do so. Dues are \$15.00 per year payable to **The Vietnam Triple Deuce**; the address is on the Membership & Renewal Form that accompanies every newsletter. I would like to note that you are not required to belong to VN 2-22 in order to attend the reunion. Joining VN 2-22 is voluntary. I would also like to restate our policy regarding those who can't pay their dues. They don't have to. All they need to do is let someone know that they would like to receive the Newsletter but can't pay their dues and they will be carried as an active member and continue to receive the Newsletter. **NO QUESTION ASKED, NO LIST IS PUBLISHED.** It is a private matter.

Well, I hope this clears the dues concerns from the table, but if anyone has a question, please contact me at [jlmay@tds.net](mailto:jlmay@tds.net) or call me at (207) 634-3355. One more point. If you paid money to 22 IRS thinking you were paying your VN 222 dues, please

let me know. You will be credited as having paid your VN 222 dues. I don't need to see a cancelled check; your word is all I need.

**Jim May**, Treasurer

## A Brother's Loss

Please remember Mike Ochoa in your prayers. Mike Ochoa was drafted on Dec 7, 1965 with 33 other Long Island guys and did basic with A/2/22. After basis he was transferred to HHC 2/22 in the Fire direction Center of the 4.2 mortars section and as a draftee made E-6 before his 2 year tour was up.

Mike's 2nd wife Barbara had been sick with cancer for the last 2 years at least. Per below she died Sunday Jan 2, 2005. Those wishing to send a card, Mike's Florida address is below.

Please keep Mike in your prayers for the next couple of months, as he will need help getting through his deep loss.

**GARY HARTT** A/2/22  
12/65-9/67

## TROOPS TO EQUAL ANY

***One of the saddest legacies of the Vietnam War is the cruel misperception that the American fighting men there did not measure up to their predecessors in World War II and Korea. Nothing could be further from the truth.***

*As told by General Frederick C. Weyand, U.S. Army (ret.)*

*The following interview by Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., of General Frederick C. Weyand originally appeared in our premier issue. This reprint of their discussion marks the 10th anniversary of Vietnam's publication.*

*Their comments remain as thought provoking as they were a decade ago. That the Vietnam War was one of the most complex wars in our history was little understood at the time, and it is even less understood today. Many still believe, for example, that the war was lost to black-pajama-clad VC guerrillas, armed only with primitive weapons and revolutionary fervor. Their attitudes evidently fixed in the early 1960s, when the VC were at their height, such critics fail to appreciate--as the North Vietnamese now freely*

admit--that the VC guerrillas were virtually annihilated during their abortive 1968 Tet Offensive, and from that time on the war was primarily a North Vietnamese regular army affair. It was a NVA 22-division, cross-border blitzkrieg, supported by tanks, missiles and heavy artillery--not VC guerrillas--that finally overwhelmed South Vietnam in the spring of 1975. Then there is the notion that the war was lost because of the failure of American arms. Again, there is little realization that American ground combat forces began to withdraw from Vietnam in 1969--not because of enemy pressure but because of political decisions made in Washington. By the end of 1971, most of the Army and Marine combat divisions had left, and in August 1972 the last American ground-combat unit, the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, departed Vietnam. With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in March 1973 (more than two years before the fall of Saigon), all remaining American naval, air and logistics support forces were withdrawn. The 1975 North Vietnamese spring offensive, which finally conquered

South Vietnam, did not defeat the American military for the simple reason that by that time there was no American military there to defeat. Not only had American forces been withdrawn years earlier, Congress had categorically and unequivocally prohibited their reintervention. Vietnam was a defeat for American foreign policy and for its political goals of containing Communist expansion and maintaining a free and independent South Vietnam. And it was a defeat for the ill-conceived plans and strategies of the Pentagon's senior military and civilian leaders. But America's fighting forces did not fail us. "You know, you never beat us on the battlefield," I told my North Vietnamese counterpart during negotiations in Hanoi a week before the fall of Saigon. He pondered that remark a moment and then replied, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant." In a narrow strategic sense, he was right. Whether they defeated us on the battlefield or not, they did win the war. But in another sense he was dead wrong, for that fact was

relevant indeed to the almost 3 1/2 million Americans who served in Southeast Asia during the war. Many of them still bear a burden they do not deserve and blame themselves for what went wrong there. No one is better qualified to set that record straight and put the fighting abilities of American combat forces in Vietnam in historical perspective than General Frederick C. Weyand. A 1938 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, he entered military service in 1940 and served as an Intelligence officer in the China-Burma-India theater in World War II. During the Korean War he received the Combat Infantry Badge and Silver Star for gallantry in action while commanding the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment. Under his leadership the battalion received a Presidential Unit Citation for its part in turning back the 1951 Chinese spring offensive. In March 1966, then a major general, he brought his 25th Infantry Division to Vietnam. Headquartered at Cu Chi in War Zone C, his "Tropic Lightning" division saw hard fighting in areas west and northwest of Saigon and along the Cambodian border. His battlefield successes led to command of II Field Force, a corps-level headquarters respon-

sible for military operations in III and IV Corps (i.e., the southern third of South Vietnam from the southern boundary of the Central Highlands through the Mekong Delta).

During the Viet Cong's 1968 Tet Offensive, General Weyand's timely and effective maneuver of II Field Force's combat elements--including the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, 9th Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and the Australian Task Force--was instrumental in saving Saigon from capture and in the subsequent rout of the VC attackers.

Later that year, after 21/2 years in-country, General Weyand was reassigned to Washington as chief of the Army's Reserve components, then to Paris as an observer at the Paris peace talks. Returning to Vietnam in 1970, first as deputy commander and then commander of MACV, he supervised the U.S. military withdrawal and was America's last military commander in Vietnam.

In 1975, by then Army chief of staff, General Weyand was sent back to Vietnam by President Ge-

rald Ford to assess the military situation there. Although his recommendations fell on deaf ears in the administration and in Congress, he did not allow himself--or the Army--to become embittered. Named "Man of the Year" at the University of California at Berkeley in 1976, he left office later that year and returned to civilian life, but not before being credited by Congress for his leadership role in preventing a "stab-in-the-back" syndrome from developing in the American Army after Vietnam.

Today General Weyand lives in Honolulu, where he is active in several civilian business enterprises.

**Vietnam:** If you had to pick one thing that disturbs you most about the Vietnam War, what would that be?

**Weyand:** What particularly haunts me, what I think is one of the saddest legacies of the Vietnam War, is the cruel misperception that the American fighting men there did not measure up to their predecessors in World War II and Korea. Nothing could be further from the truth.

**VN:** You saw firsthand the combat soldiers in World War II?

**Weyand:** Yes, as a young officer I went into Burma in June 1944 to serve as an Intelligence officer on General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell's staff. And I watched Merrill's Marauders go into the battle for Myitkyina. Now here was an outfit that had been organized for one mission and ended up taking part in five. By that time they were pretty badly beat up, but those soldiers left hospital beds to rejoin their outfit to take part in the battle. One could not help but be impressed. They set a pretty high standard for others to follow.

**VN:** You're saying that others did?

**Weyand:** They did. As a lieutenant colonel I went into Korea in August 1950 with the advance party for the 3rd Infantry Division, then staging in Japan. In January 1951, I took command of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the "Cottonbalers" for their defense of New Orleans under Andy Jackson during the War of 1812. They had just come back from blocking for the 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division during the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir, and the battalion only had 162 Americans. The rest were KATUSAs

[Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army-- South Korean civilians press-ganged into military service and used to round out understrength U.S. units], most of who could not speak English. But the battalion was all that a commander could wish for. Three months after I took over, the Chinese hit the Eighth Army front with nine field armies--some 250,000 men organized into 27 infantry divisions. We were blocking on the Uijongbu-Seoul road and the Chinese hit us head-on. The battalion put up one hell of a fight, especially Captain Harley Mooney's Able Company and Ray Blandin's Baker Company. Two soldiers-- Corporal John Essebager and Corporal Clair Goodblood--won the Medal of Honor posthumously, and for that rear-guard action the battalion, officially credited with "killing over 3,000 enemy troops and wounding an estimated 5,500," won a Presidential Unit Citation. The point of all this is that my earlier experiences provided a personal standard with which to measure battlefield performance. And by those standards the soldiers I served with in Vietnam fully measured up to those of Merrill's Marauders in World War

II or the Cottonbalers in Korea. In many ways, they even went them one better.

**VN:** How did they do that?

**Weyand:** Well, in World War II and Korea an infantryman's task was straightforward: Close with the enemy and destroy him with fire and maneuver. After a while on the line a kind of numbness took over. I can still remember going up and down those ridges in Korea. A few days of that and it became simply a matter of putting one foot in front of the other until you hit the enemy, and then it was pretty much conventional ground combat. But in Vietnam it was another story. I recall one week where one element of the Wolfhounds [the nickname of the 27th Infantry, two battalions of which served in Weyand's 25th Infantry Division] was in hard fighting in the Boi Loi woods, where they took 15 killed and an even greater number wounded. Another element was conducting a division-training program in long-range patrolling. Yet another was conducting training classes for the 25th

ARVN Division. Still another was providing security for a medical team in a local village. And finally some were at a local Catholic school the men had adopted, where their donations had bought textbooks, paid teachers' salaries and provided school lunches for the children. Ten days later the unit that had been in the Boi Loi was conducting training programs, and the unit that had been at the school was beating the bush. One day they were safe, watching little children at school; the next they were in mortal danger, watching for someone to pop out of the ground and try to kill them. It's hard to put in words what a terrible burden that imposed. You had to go through it to fully understand the incredible psychological strain they were under. It was a hell of a burden our soldiers in Vietnam had to bear. They really had to have their heads screwed on right to survive. Yet throughout it all they performed magnificently. They did everything that was asked of them and more. I have every reason to be proud of their service. And America should be equally proud and grateful to them.

**VN:** You mentioned the local school sponsored by American soldiers. The

common perception is that American forces in Vietnam did more to abuse the local population than it did to assist them.

**Weyand:** I guess that during my five years in Vietnam I paid more than a thousand visits to U.S. units in the field. And in almost every case they would begin their briefing with an account of what they had been doing to help the villagers in their area--medical team visits; help to local churches, schools and orphanages; road building, construction assistance and the like. For every terrible aberration like My Lai, there were thousands of acts of charity and compassion. Yet you would never know that from what was reported here at home.

**VN:** Although the American people may be unaware of those facts, the South Vietnamese people certainly know the truth. When Marine veteran Bill Broyles returned to Vietnam in 1984, he found an enormous reservoir of goodwill toward Americans. So perhaps we planted some seeds there that may someday take root. And speaking of the way things were reported here at home, one of the worst cases has to be the news coverage of the

VC's Tet Offensive of 1968. You commanded II Field Force then and have been credited with frustrating the VC's plans to capture Saigon. Did you have advance warning of the attack?

**Weyand:** Not as such. We did know that something was coming, but our intelligence was not good enough to pinpoint exactly what they were up to. And as a former Intelligence officer, I have to admit that lack of proper intelligence has been a grievous inadequacy in our military forces for years. In Korea I'd get orders to attack at 0500, but not a word about what was out there. In fact, I don't believe I ever went into battle knowing what I was going to run into. To the armchair analysts years after the event, everything looks neat, orderly and predictable. But that's certainly not the case at the time. Anyway, our radio intercepts began picking up the movement of units toward Saigon, which caused us to cancel a major multidivision operation we had planned to launch in the northern part of III Corps, about 100 miles north of Sai-

gon. That really proved to be a stroke of good fortune, for if those units had gone north, the VC would have had a field day in Saigon.

**VN:** What other actions did you take?

**Weyand:** On the basis of this sketchy intelligence I did reposition some units and moved the forces into blocking positions covering the approaches to Saigon. Although all II Field Force units were put on full alert several hours before the VC launched their attack, we really had no precise information on exactly where they would strike. We certainly didn't know they'd get inside the U.S. Embassy grounds in the heart of Saigon. Although that made for some sensational news photos, from a military viewpoint it really didn't do them much good. Seizing a position and holding it are two different things. And the VC was unable to hold. They were repulsed everywhere with staggering losses--so much so that, as the North Vietnamese now freely admit, they ceased to be an effective fighting force. The last seven years of the war--from 1968 to 1975--were almost exclusively a North Vietnamese regular army affair.

**VN:** How did the VC fail?

**Weyand:** I think the VC made two major mistakes.

First, by attacking everywhere at once, they fragmented their forces and laid themselves open to defeat in detail. Second, and most important, they believed their own propaganda and thought there would be a "great general uprising" wherein the South Vietnamese people would flock to their banner. There was a great general uprising all right, but it was against them rather than for them. The vast majority of the South Vietnamese people wanted nothing to do with the VC. During the entire course of the war there were never any mass defections by the South Vietnamese. But it is interesting to note that in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive, more than 150,000 VC deserters came over to our side.

**VN:** But that's not the way it was reported here at home. The news media--and especially the television news media--portrayed it as a major defeat. President Lyndon Johnson reportedly said that when the CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite came out against the war, he knew that it was all over and decided not to run for reelection.

**Weyand:** I can understand the initial reporting.

After all the glowing reports that the war was about to wind down, the Tet Offensive came as a terrible shock. But the Battle of the Bulge in 1944 was also a terrible shock. Like the VC's Tet Offensive, it was a desperate gamble to win the war in a single stroke. And it, too, initially provoked some sensationalist headlines as the U.S. forces reeled back and entire units surrendered to the enemy. But as it progressed, the news media finally got the story straight.

**VN:** I think you're saying that unlike the Battle of the Bulge, with Tet the initial impression became the accepted wisdom. But there were some balanced accounts. It was Peter Braestrup, once the Saigon bureau chief for *The Washington Post*, who exposed such shoddy reporting in his book, *The Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington*. It was Vietnam War correspondent Don Oberdorfer who wrote *Tet: The Turning Point of the Vietnam War*, which

also set the record straight. And it was another former war correspondent, Stanley Karnow, author of *Vietnam: A History*, who got the VC to admit how badly they had been mauled.

**Weyand:** True. But unfortunately those books were written long after the event, and long after the damage had been done. Don't get me wrong. I believe strongly that a free press is essential to our democracy. And I've never subscribed to the simple-minded notion that the media lost the Vietnam War. I think most of the war correspondents in Vietnam were competent and capable professionals. But I also think--and the reporting of Tet is a prime example--that the media wields such great influence in shaping public opinion that it must be especially careful to get the story straight. The American people deserve at least that.

**VN:** Your comment about public opinion raises another issue. Several years ago Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger laid out six preconditions for the commitment of U.S. military forces to combat abroad. One of the most controversial was his conviction that there must be some reasonable assurance of public and congressional sup-

port. Do you agree with that assessment?

**Weyand:** I think he had it exactly right, and the Vietnam War proved his point. In 1976, in a message to the Army, I laid out some of my observations on the Vietnam War. "Vietnam was a reaffirmation of the peculiar relationship between the American Army and the American people," I said. "The American Army really is a people's army in the sense that it belongs to the American people, who take a jealous and proprietary interest in its involvement. When the Army is committed, the American people are committed; when the American people lose their commitment, it is futile to try to keep the Army committed." When the American people lost their commitment after the Tet Offensive of 1968, for all intents and purposes the war was lost. I think President Nixon realized that fact, and that's why soon after he entered office he ordered a gradual withdrawal of American combat forces and the "Vietnamization" of the war.

**VN:** Why did they lose their commitment? Was it just because of the perceived defeat in Tet?

**Weyand:** No, it was much more than that. Tet was just the final straw. The fundamental reason, as you pointed out in your book *On Strategy*, was the lack of clear-cut and understandable political and military objectives. That was true from top to bottom. When Clark Clifford took over as secretary of defense after Tet 1968, he found that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had no concept of victory and no plan to end the war. And that was the case in Saigon as well. As you know, a Letter of Instruction is the means by which the president, as commander in chief, issues orders to his commanders in the field for the conduct of military operations. For example, President Roosevelt's Letter of Instruction to General Eisenhower in World War II began, "You will invade the continent of Europe...." But during our quarter-century involvement in Vietnam, no president--not Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon or Ford--ever issued such clear-cut instructions to their military commanders in Vietnam. In 1974, Brigadier General

Douglas Kinnard did a survey and found that "almost 70 percent of the Army generals who managed the war were uncertain of its objectives." As he concluded, that "mirrors a deep-seated strategic failure: the failure of policymakers to frame tangible, obtainable goals." It was this lack of a sense of purpose that finally turned the American people against the war. The anti-war movement likes to take credit for it--why anyone would want to take "credit" for the resulting massacre of some three million Cambodians, the consignment of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese to forced-labor camps, and the suffering of over a million Indochinese boat people is beyond me--but I believe they're wrong. The turnaround was more pragmatic than ideological. It was the fall of 1967 when polls showed that for the first time more Americans were against the war than in support of it. And I think that shift took place because of public suspicion that the government didn't know what it was doing. When the Tet Offensive hit several months later it merely confirmed that suspicion--especially when President Lyndon B. Johnson gave up on the war.

**VN:** Such a misreading of events could have led to the development of a "stab-in-the-back syndrome" within the American military. The feeling among German army veterans after World War I was that their political leaders had betrayed them, and that led to the destruction of the Weimar Republic and brought Adolf Hitler to power. The same type of reaction led to open military revolt in France after Algeria, and to a military coup in Portugal after Angola. But it never happened here, and when you retired from active in duty in 1976, the House of Representatives and the Senate gave you credit for preventing such a reaction in the American Army. How did you bring it about?

**Weyand:** Well, for one thing I thought the whole notion of a stab-in-the-back syndrome was overblown. All military officers take an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution without any reservation, and to defer to the civilian command of the president. I took that responsibility very seriously, as do virtually all of the members of our armed services. In any event, I was fortunate to have a solid foundation on which to

build. It had been laid by my predecessor as Army chief of staff, General Creighton Abrams, who turned the Army away from its Vietnam troubles and reoriented it to its vital security interests in Europe and northeast Asia. He persuaded the Congress to stabilize the Army's manpower and obtained its approval to activate three new divisions rounded out with brigades from the National Guard. Most importantly, he gave the Army a sense of mission and a sense of self-worth. After his tragic death in office, I saw it as my responsibility to continue the work he had begun. It is General Abrams who should get the lion's share of credit.

**VN:** It's now 15 years since all American combat forces were withdrawn from Vietnam. Do you see an improvement in public attitudes toward Vietnam veterans?

**Weyand:** As I said earlier, America should have been proud of them from the start, for they were a remarkable group of young men and women. Now they're finally beginning to get their due, and it's

gratifying to see the increased public recognition of the dedication, bravery and compassion the overwhelming majority of these men and women displayed while they were serving in Vietnam.

Submitted for printing by **Gary Hartt** from *Vietnam* magazine

*For additional reading, Vietnam editor Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., recommends: The Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington, by Peter Braestrup; Vietnam: A History, by Stanley Karnow; and Tet: The Turning Point of the Vietnam War, by Don Oberdorfer.*

## **OPERATION HOMECOMING, USA**

A very special event will take place in Branson, MO during mid June 2005. The city of Branson will be holding a week of events directed at honoring Vietnam Veterans. In essence it is a long over due *Welcome Home* for all of us. Full details concerning the week-long event are way too numerous to put into this article so just the highlights are listed as a teaser.

The scheduled events are:

**06-13)** Registration Opens.

**06-14)** Opening Ceremony & Reception. Dignity Memorial® Vendor Village Opens.

**06-15)** Golf Tournament. Military Demonstrations. Unit Activities.

**06-16)** Fishing Tournament.

**06-17)** Welcome Home Parade. Afternoon VIP Reception. Evening American Spirit Awards. Unit Association Banquets.

**06-18)** Morning Memorial Service. Grand Finale Concert.

**06-19)** Farewells & Departures.

I have been told that the city of Branson is going all out for this event and that any Vietnam Vet who attends will be treated as the 'Hero' he or she is. Various discounts from vendors and restaurants will be afforded to any registered Vet or registered guest of a regis-

tered Vet in attendance. Anyone interested in attending this event can secure complete information about it by calling 888-265-8387 or by going to the Web at: [info@operationhomecomingusa.com](mailto:info@operationhomecomingusa.com).

If you are interested in attending I recommend that you start the process of securing information about it now. Over 100,000 people are expected to participate in it. Therefore, in order to ensure you can receive 'choice' lodging during the event the earlier you start to secure it the better off you are.

Later Friends,

**Magnet, C/2-22 VN**

#### **Bunker Demo OJT**

The location was base camp, C- Company's Berm Line. The date I can't recall for sure, I think it was May or June '68. It was morning and berm line security had just ended. I was checking out the bunkers in our sector. The check out was for adequate ammo supply and communication equipment. I was just starting the process of checking out our fourth bunker when I noticed that a few of the star

cluster flares had been left out next to the 50 emplacement. I secured them, put their cap/firing pins back on and put them in the ammo footlocker. If one recalls the interior of a berm line bunker is rather dark. Well I did not see a star cluster flare in the footlocker which was ready for firing. I went out to the perimeter road where Kelley's jeep was parked to get some 16 ammo. I threw the ammo into the locker, lifted the lid, and let it fall shut. Then I heard a flair go off. I knew instantly what had happened.

I told the man who was with me to get into the jeep; we were getting the 'H' out of there. We went to bunker 3 and for the next 5 minutes watched and heard everything exploding inside bunker 4. I think a claymore going off lifted the roof about an inch or two. Man what an awesome sight. After the explosions stopped ORD went in and secured what ammo was left. Top and I went in after that to see how damaged the bunker was. It had some torn sandbags, a vertical support was fractured, one of the upper main roof supports had surface blemishes and the racks were off kilter. It was still usable. It is amazing those bunkers are that strong. The next morning Top, a few of the

men in base camp, and I repaired the damage. Bunker 4's non-destruction is not to be taken to mean that I lack the knowledge applicable to bunker demolition. I now know where to place the harges.(smile)

**Norm Nishikubo, 2/22**  
VN

### Freedom's Colors

By Roger W Hancock  
Used by permission ©  
2002 Poet-  
Patriot@foolbay.net  
Red is for Bravery;  
blood shed in sacrifice.  
Freedom came with lives  
the price.  
White is for Liberty;  
freedom's purity.  
Life be free from God's  
decree.  
Blue is for Justice;  
as vast as the sky.  
Over freedom's land to  
occupy

### The Inside Track

The Kool-Aid Kid is very happy to report that the new Newsletter Editor, **Dan Streit**, D/2/22, wants me to continue *The Inside Track* column in future issues. I would like nothing better than to hear from the members about any unusual or funny antidotes that hap-

pened to you in Vietnam while serving with The Triple Deuce. The idea behind this column is tell the more sunny side of our Vietnam experience, and as hard as it is for many people to understand, we did have some great times together. So, if your antidote is not a full articles worth of info, drop me a line and I'll put it in this column.

Of course, I will still be looking to steal info and stories off the web, phone calls, my spies, and info from old girl friends to print in this column. Current humorous events and antidotes will be covered as well in The Inside Track. Nothing is sacred.

### Reunion Stuff

Well, The Kool-Aid Kid is pack'n his bags and getting ready to go to the big 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Reunion in Kansas City Missouri. I'll start right away. That way I'll get to do the 'hurry up and wait, duffle bag shuffle" again...just like the old days! That was the life, wasn't it? Hurry up and wait...hurry up and wait, over and over again. Then we got to Vietnam and it was wait and wait, THEN--hurry the

heck up!

Mark your calendars for May 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. Print off the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS Reunion registration form on our website and mail it, along with your fees, to **Mike Groves** our 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS Treasurer. All the information is on the forms. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society website is at [www.22ndinfantry.org](http://www.22ndinfantry.org) Make your hotel reservations early for your room at The Westin Crown Center Hotel. Old K.A.K. hears that the hotel is right in the heart of "what's happening" in KC. That's the Triple Deuce way ...right in the middle of it. Some things never change. Hahaha-haha!

As I mentioned last issue, there will be new awards of the O.R.A. given out at the reunion--swelling the ranks of the most special honorees K.A.K. has ever been associated with. The Order of the Red Ant. The Triple Deuce Cultural Committee (Hey! We gots culture! Wasamatter with you?!) **Bill, "Mad Doc" Matz, Jim, "Peaches" May, Gary, "Alpha AWOL" Hartt**, and yours truly, **The Kool-Aid Kid**, will be passing out the ORA's, ( A very prestigious...uh...pristidge... uh...a really cool award.) to all those that qualify. Nuff said for now.

So get your tired old s...

uh...behinds...  
out of that rocker and pretend you're a kid again. Join us in KC. Our mission? Our objective? To have some FUN! (I plan on finding out if a man can live on strip steaks, fries, and beer for four days. Ha Ha See you there!

### **Closing Thoughts**

That's it for this quarter. Watch what you say, or you may see it printed here one day.

Later My Brothers!

### **The Kool-Aid Kid**

## **Jim Nelson – Military Painter**

by Terry Bailey

Jim is a person of wide and varied interests. He doesn't hesitate to repair a motor of a farm tractor. Those same hands become gentle and delicate in order to create superlative oil paintings.

Jim's parents met and were married in 1942. Soon, his dad was sent to the European Theatre to prepare for the D-Day invasion on the beaches of Normandy. Jim was born in the Mitchell County Hospital in Beloit on December 21, 1943.

When World War II ended, Jim's parents

were reunited and looked about for a place to call home. In 1950, Jim's father was given consideration for one of two jobs in the United States for which his doctorate in Philosophy qualified him. He accepted a position as an assistant professor at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Jim grew up and attended school there, but spent many summers in Kansas, plowing wheat fields on his grandparent's farm.

When Jim graduated from high school, he traveled to Kansas to help plow his grandparents' wheat fields. He then went to Belleville and boarded a train headed for New York City. He wasn't exactly sure of where he was going or exactly what he would do when he got there. However, he was seventeen years young and optimistic.

Jim polished his art skills at the National Academy of Art for two years. He went to work for the highly regarded Raymond Loewy Industrial Design Firm. He settled into a studio on Fifth Avenue and painted superlative murals for Mr. Loewy.

He became so well known that the president of the United States requested his assistance. In February of 1967, President Lyndon Johnson sent him a letter that said: *Greetings: You have been conscripted into the United States Army.* We all know the rest. He had been given an all expenses paid trip to that well-known paradise in Southeast Asia – Vietnam.

Jim completed basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas. He then completed A.I.T. and jungle schooling at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Jim was then dispatched to Vietnam. He landed about sixty miles north of Saigon at Dau Tieng in September of 1967. Uncle Sam gave him a machine gun and sent him into the jungle on patrols.

So...into the jungle they went. During the monsoon season, they often waded knee deep through tropical mud. On rare occasions, they would return to base camp. Most of the time, their assignment was a long-range patrol. On some missions, they would "push jungle" as far as they could go in a day. When they stopped for the night, they would arrange the tracks in a circle and set up their defensive perimeter. When this was done, some would go into the jungle to search out the enemy.

Most of the time, day and night, it was raining. The soldiers dealt with leaches, snakes, spiders, ants and other creepy crawly inhabitants of the jungle. The mosquitoes plagued them with no relief everywhere they went. They were re-supplied by helicopter. This meant they would stay in the jungle for months before returning to base camp. Like the jungle vermin, Jim and his comrades experienced ambushes, fire-fights, booby traps, and trip wires. These were the facts of life.

However, after a particularly brutal clash known as the Seven Day Battle of the Trapezoid, he was sent to investigate underground bunkers. In one of those bunkers, he discovered a watercolor paint set used by the North Vietnamese to draw maps. He liberated that communist watercolor paint set and it became a loyal American paint set.

Always the painter, Jim first used the watercolors to do simple sketches and battlefield paintings, trying to record this piece of his life. Jim had kept his art background a secret, but his sergeant noticed his work and asked him to draw maps on the

backs of envelopes for use at headquarters. When an opening for the brigade draftsman became available, Jim was able to trade in his machine gun for drafting equipment. He drew sketches of battles, maps and operational overlays.

When the TET Offensive exploded all across Vietnam in January of 1968, he was drawing maps that changed minute by minute. Jim said, "The work was extremely precise. I knew if I made a mistake, Americans soldiers could die or become seriously wounded."

General Glession recommend-ended Jim for the Combat Art Program. He spent his time doing maps, paintings, and daily action sketches and reports. During his last two months in he war zone, he painted forty oil paintings. These paintings were sent for permanent display at the 25<sup>th</sup> Division Museum at Honolulu, Hawaii. Unfortunately, most of them have been stolen from the museum. All in all, Jim Nelson spent 14 months in South Vietnam.

Upon his return to the states and his discharge from the Army, Jim delayed returning to a "normal" life. He took a tramp steamer to Europe. He spent six months copying the artwork of the Grand Masters in Spain, England, and France. He took an even slower boat home through some very bad Atlantic storms. He had lived very sparsely on the trip. Fresh from the jungle in Vietnam, even the most ordinary items seemed like luxuries. The entire trip, including, transportation, cost him nine hundred dollars.

Jim had hoped the trip to Europe would help him re-orient to a "normal life." It hadn't. New York was a hotbed of antiwar sentiment. This negative attitude of the New Yorkers toward Vietnam Veterans made it clear he would not feel welcome there. Where was home?

Home to him, was the wheat fields of North Central Kansas. He returned to his grandparents' farm in Jewell County Kansas. He operated their farm and attended school at the Vocational Technical School in Beloit where he studied Farm Mechanics.

The roar of Vietnam became dimmer and dimmer. So did the memories of painting murals in New York.

Jim's life took a different course when an injury at work made it impossible to continue the physical demands of a farm mechanic's job. During his rehabilitation period, the owner of the local funeral home approached Jim. He had heard that Jim had once trained as an artist. He commissioned Jim to create a painting for the foyer of his funeral home. Having few other viable options, Jim took the job.

Jim's work found widespread appeal in North Central Kansas. He began getting offers from other funeral homes seeking his work. After a while, banks began to show interest in his work. In these early years, western scenes were his most popular topic. Next came the churches, seeking biblical scenes. Not wanting to be pigeon-holed as a "funeral home-church-bank" painter, Jim sought commissions to do portraits. He found them and they soon occupied the bulk of his efforts. He painted a 33-foot mural for Frank Shorter, the gold medalist at the Munich Olympics in 1972. He was commissioned to paint a portrait of the former first lady, Barbara Bush. Medal of Honor recipient,

Gary Beikirch, was the subject of one of his portraits. Jim points to the painting of Governor George Pataki as perhaps his best. It is on display at the New York state capitol in Albany. For 18 years, Jim spent his winters in Vancouver, British Columbia painting commission portraits. Working through the Hudson Bay Department Stores, he completed over 3,000 works during his time in Canada.

A lifelong dream for Jim was realized in 2003 with the publishing of a book containing his Vietnam War paintings. This effort is a compilation of 66 paintings that he completed while in Vietnam and over the years since the end of the war. Jim asked his friends to tell their stories by sending their biographies for inclusion in the book. He said that it is his wish that every reader of his book come away with the feeling that our Vietnam Veterans are worthy men and women, deserving of the honors that all previous Veterans enjoyed after returning from America's wars. To Jim, it is all about the veterans; a

way to honor their service to the country. A recent book *Dog Soldier Justice; The Ordeal of Susana Alderdice On The Kansas Indian War* contains Jim Nelson's work on both the front and back covers.

Jim got married in 1992. He and Sharon reside today in his grandparents' home in rural Jewell County Kansas.

You might stop by and see Jim and Sharon if you are in the area. However, if it is raining you may possibly bypass the trip to their house. You would have to travel one half mile of dirt road which becomes heavily rutted during rainy periods. On the other hand, if it is a nice cheerful day, they may be on the golf course in nearby Mankato enjoying an afternoon in the sun together.

In August 2005, Jim and Dave Demauro will have a yearlong show at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. (Saratoga Springs is where New York State's horse racing takes place. The show will be dedicated to his comrades in arms



Gov. Pataki, Jim Nelson, and the

Editors' note:

Please send us your comments and suggestions for future newsletters.

The greatest expenses of the newsletter is printing and mailing. If you have an e-mail address that you haven't given us, please send it to us at

[dvstreit@cebridge.net](mailto:dvstreit@cebridge.net). Please include your name. Then you will receive future newsletters electronically.

Remember---your contributions are what make the newsletter meaningful.

Thanks to Jim, Skip and Lynn for coaching us through this first edition.

Dan & Vera Streit  
D/2-22 1969

## THE VIETNAM WAR VET

By [Rita J. Lammers](#)

Men and women died in honor  
In a land so far away  
How do we explain the conflict  
To the children of today  
When they look at us with wonder  
"Tell us did we win the war  
All these lives are gone forever  
What was all the fighting for"  
Drop down on a knee and tell them  
All the Vets of Vietnam  
Fought this fight for others freedom  
No regard for their own harm  
All the names upon this wall  
These people did not die in vain  
For freedom's price throughout the  
world

Is living on in each one's name  
Valiantly they fought the fight  
In that place across the sea  
Sacrificed their lives so bravely  
Trying to make others free  
They did not question should I go  
They served with willingness and  
grace  
To try and bring a taste of freedom  
To another land and place  
We know from all their sacrifice  
It takes a special kind of heart  
To fight and help their fellow man  
To care that much and do their part  
And if you do not understand  
The price we paid for freedom yet  
You'll find the answer living still  
Within a Vietnam War Vet

## **Kansas City Highlights and the Steamboat Arabia Museum Tour**

**Saturday, May 28, 2005  
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

*Everything's up-to-date in Kansas City!* A driving tour of Downtown Kansas City Missouri will acquaint guests with the historic buildings, the new skyscrapers, the newly erected Federal Courthouse and the recently completed Government Square. A stop at the Lewis and Clark Point offers guests a vista of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers and the magnificent new monument to the famous explorers and companions.

One of the most delightful surprises this city holds for you is the unique and exciting ***Steamboat Arabia Museum***. A "one of a kind" museum, the *Arabia* will amaze guests beginning with the tales of its recovery and continuing with the unusual exhibits. The *Arabia* sank just north of Kansas City in 1856 and rested under 40 feet of sand, silt and mud until excavated in 1988. Over 200 tons of the original cargo was recovered, and after hundreds of hours of restoration and preservation, many of the items are on display in the Museum. This collection of pre-Civil War artifacts is the largest in the country and features china, perfume, jewelry, leather goods, hardware, textiles, preserved food products, a rare Indian bead collection and much more. Guests will view the recreated 171-foot deck and 28-foot paddle wheel, as well as several recovered items used on the original steamboat. A 15-minute video presentation tells the story of the "Great White *Arabia*" from her last voyage on the Missouri River to the presentation of her treasures in the Museum.

Our driving tour will now continue on to the Crown Center area where guests will have an opportunity to view the beautifully restored Union Station where over 80% of the service men and women from World War II passed through. Located to the south of Union Station is the magnificent Liberty Memorial, which was also recently restored. This monument was dedicated to those who lost their lives in World War I.

Another area on our tour will include historic Westport once a trading post for wagon trains headed west on the Oregon, Santa Fe and California Trails and today the area features the hottest nightspots in the city along with several great restaurants and unique boutiques.

The famous Country Club Plaza is much more than a suburban shopping center - it is an outdoor museum. When J.C. Nichols built this shopping area in the early 1920's, he created an architectural masterpiece fashioned after beautiful Seville Spain. This 14-square block outdoor shopping center features mores that 170 shops, boutiques, restaurants, lounges, theaters and outdoor gallery of art. The tree-lined streets of this delightful area serve as a backdrop for the many fountains and imported statuary that are found on the Plaza (as locals often call it).

Lastly, a drive along Ward Parkway, the city's most beautiful boulevard will acquaint guests with the homes and estates of several of the city's most prominent citizens.

### **THIS TOUR INCLUDES:**

**Motorcoach Transportation**  
**Driving Tour of Kansas City**  
**Tour of the Steamboat Arabia Museum**  
**Lunch at Ryan's Family Restaurant**  
**Professional Tour Guide**