



The Riverine Reporter

A publication of the US Army 458th Trans. Co (PBR)

Sea Tigers Association

Founded 1996 by Lee Helle, US Army, Ret.



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Editor: Mike Hebert

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NEWSLETTER

Greetings to all former 458th members (DUKW's, LARC's, BARC's, PBR's, Whalers, and associated Military Police). This is the January 2016 issue of the newsletter. Subsequent issues published quarterly.



We hope you all enjoyed a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Welcome home. I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year with your families. I would like to extend some special thank you's to several people for their outstanding effort in putting together our Hampton reunion. First I would like to thank Tom Wonsiewicz for all of his efforts in putting together the memorial for Private First Class Michael Glenn Loyd and all of our fallen brothers. Tom worked long and hard on the script and every detail of the ceremony and the results were very impressive. Second I would like to thank Captain Mike Hebert and his lovely wife Virginia for the home cooked food we had on our dinner cruise on Captain Mike's Miss Hampton II as well as the cruise itself. And to our two PBR Captains Dave Pizzaferrato and Dennis Ambruso who rode shotgun for us as

biggest thrills of a life time. Right up there with your wedding day, birth of your kids and the day you came home from Nam. Hats off to all involved.

2016 REUNION

The annual reunion of the 458th Sea Tigers Association will be held Tuesday September 28 thru Saturday October 2, 2016 in San Diego CA at the Crowne Plaza San Diego Hotel. Room rates are \$119 plus taxes per night, including a breakfast buffet for two. This rate is available for 3 days prior to the reunion and 3 days after the reunion for those of you who might like to take some extra time to visit the many area attractions. Reservations can be made by calling 888-233-9257 between 7am-11pm EST

San Diego has beautiful weather and many attractions including the San Diego Zoo, Sea World, The Aircraft Carrier Midway and Naval Base San Diego and many more. We may also be joined by PBR 210 from Napa Valley Ca. Efforts are well underway to make this event happen. More information to come shortly.

We are always seeking ways to improve on the reunions. One request was to have the Friday night banquet in a different room than the meeting room. That we have worked out with the hotel and the banquet will be in another area. If you have any comments or ideas you can email me at tjfarrell458@yahoo.com or call me at 856-562-1797.

**We cannot direct the wind
But we can adjust the sails**

- Chinese Fortune Cookie

Omaha Beach (D-Day) - Cam Ranh Bay - Nha Trang - Phan Rang - Phan Thiet
Cat Lo - Di An - Newport - Qui Nhon - Vung Ro Bay - Vung Tau - Cat Lai - Cogido

MEMBER NEWS:

- In our last issue, we inadvertently forgot to thank the Hampton City Dockmaster, **Jake Zamesnik** for his invaluable assistance in providing dockage for PBR 721 & PBR 6927 during the 2015 Sea Tigers reunion in Hampton, VA. Jake also went out of his way to remove plants and structures from the city pier so that our members could have a clear and unobstructed viewing of the memorial ceremony and other events. Thank you, Jake!

- **Dave and Rita Hunt** sent in a very generous donation to help support the newsletter. Dave also sent two jars of mustard and some gourmet coffee from their company, Door County Mustard. Check out their website at www.doorcountymustard.com. Thanks, Dave & Rita! (BTW - Excellent mustard, haven't tried the coffee yet!)

- The 458th Sea Tigers Association wishes to offer their sincere congratulations to **Chief Pat Doyle**, USN, on his engagement to **Dinah**. Chief Doyle is the "Executive Officer" aboard **Dennis Ambruso's** PBR 721. Don't worry though, **Dennis**. You're not losing a crewman – you're gaining a shipboard cook!

- We have been receiving many positive comments regarding the improved quality of the newsletter, especially the photos. Thanks goes out to **Buddy Malish**, owner of Prestige Press, Inc. of Hampton, VA. Buddy is very graciously providing printing services to the 458th Sea Tigers at a reasonable price.

- **Dennis Ambruso** and **Dave Pizzoferrato** had both PBR 721 and PBR 6927 available for public viewing at Waterfront Park in Elizabeth City, NC for the annual Veteran's Day ceremony on November 11, 2015, sponsored by VFW Post 6060. PBR visitation, supported by members of the Gamewardens, began at 11:00 am and continued until late afternoon. The boats attracted quite a few curious visitors, eager to view the wonderfully restored vessels from the Vietnam War era. Also present were **BMCM T.C. Oneyear**, **SKC Pat Doyle**, **GMG-3 Don Steigal**, **LT. Ron Wolin**, **Gary Grahn**, and **Command Master Chief Jeff Covington**,

who was instrumental in facilitating our reunion event at Fort Eustis. The day's events were heavily attended by the local community, with a special water rescue demonstration performed by a US Coast Guard helicopter crew from the nearby Elizabeth City Coast Guard Air Station.



PBR 6927, Elizabeth City, NC



Veterans Day PBR Demonstration

- **Richard Leibel** and a couple of friends took advantage of the Veterans Day benefits in Cincinnati with a complimentary lunch at Champs, a local restaurant. The table next to them, recognizing that they were veterans, picked up the tab for their drinks. Sounds like Richard had a really nice day!

- *I would like to thank all of those attending the 2015 reunion in Hampton, VA who contributed to the "Pass the Hat" fund. Your very gracious contributions enabled us to cover the expenses for the dinner cruise event aboard the "Miss Hampton II" cruise boat on Thursday afternoon. There was \$100 remaining, which was divided among the crew. I sincerely appreciate your generosity.*

*Thank you all.
Mike Hebert*

OBITUARIES:

None to report!

POINT OF VIEW

by Mike Hebert

I suppose things really do all boil down to your point of view. As a result of the Vietnam War, I've had Tinnitus for as long as I can remember.

The other day my wife and I were sitting in the back yard and she asked me if the noise she heard in the distance was a cat or a bird.

I told her that I had no idea, since I always hear birds, crickets, and all sorts of jungle sounds in my head.

"Oh," she said. "Isn't that nice to be able to listen to those wonderful sounds all the time?"

WHY I LIKE RETIREMENT

Thanks to Rob Hackett, Bundanoon, Australia

- How many days in a week?
6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday
- When is a retiree's bedtime?
Three hours after they fall asleep in the recliner.
- How many retirees does it take to change a lightbulb?
Only one – but it might take all day.
- What's the biggest gripe of retirees?
There's not enough time to get everything done.
- Why don't retirees mind being called seniors?
The term comes with a 10% discount
- What do retirees consider formal attire?
Tied shoes
- Why do retirees count pennies?
They are the only ones who have the time.
- Why are retirees so slow to clean out the basement, attic, or garage?
They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there.

PBR HEROES

SP-4 James E. Brady, 458th Trans. Co.

On January 29 1969, the Army PBR detachment in Qui Nhon received a radio transmission from CPT. L.N. Jenk who was flying aerial observation. Jenk reported what appeared to be camouflaged sampans and junks along the edge of the harbor.

Ten minutes later, three PBR's nosed around through the shallow waters to investigate the dike area. The Canh Sat (national police) confirmed enemy activity.

The MP's on board the PBR's called for the VC to come out and surrender. Several enemy emerged from the bunker, running away, and the PBR's opened fire with their .50 caliber machine guns. Specialist Brady's PBR came under intense enemy return fire. He received a shrapnel wound in his left shoulder but continued to maneuver his boat to advantageous firing positions.

CPT. Jenk reported that "The PBR crews maneuvered their craft, continually exposing themselves so they could place more effective fire on the enemy." All three boats fired on enemy positions radioed to them by CPT. Jenk flying overhead.

Throughout the fight, SP-4 Brady refused medical Attention. At one point, when the gunner's machine gun jammed, Brady left the helm to help the gunner. The boats pulled back for several air strikes. Because Brady effectively blocked the escape routes of the sampans, he sealed the enemy escape routes by water.

When the MP's returned to the area, they found 15 enemy dead, 10 enemy bunkers and 20 sampans.

CPT. Jenk concluded that "The courage and intelligent decisions of these PBR crewmen were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military and reflected highly on themselves, their unit, and the United States Army.

SP-4 Brady earned the Bronze Star Medal with V-Device for his actions.

Reflections by Tom Wonsiewicz**... Continued from Summer 2015**

The arrival drill at Ft. DeRussy was something. The new arrivals were seated in the auditorium, with loved ones lining the perimeter. A JAG Captain hustled out and gave the mandatory spiel: watch out for thieves, don't get arrested, ask for a GI discount and, most importantly, DO NOT miss your return flight. I have yet to hear anyone speak as rapidly as he did.



Lois and Me, December 1969

Once dismissed Lois and I hooked up in a hurry. We found our way to the Royal Hawaiian where we had a room with the biggest bed we had ever seen before or since. It was very—shall we say—comfortable. We spent the week doing the usual Hawaiian things, but mainly just hanging on to each other.

Our day of departure was New Year's Eve 12/31/1970—our flights separated by about an hour or so just as the new decade was rung in. It was another hard goodbye.

Officer of the Day

Someone always had to be on deck at the BN HQ, so nights and weekends the "OD" duty rotated among the junior officers. Not much ever happened, but you were to keep tabs on things and, when a mess developed, decide whether it was worth waking the battalion XO or CO. One night a call came in.

There had been an explosion in the Cholon section of Saigon. There was a bunch of property damage; no one had been injured. The explosive ordnance disposal guys wanted the MP's to come down and look at something. While on the way, another call came in; there

had been a sound like an explosion on the Newport Docks. The strange thing was, nothing seemed out of order.

The EOD guys laid some of the "evidence" out on the table. It looked like scrap metal to me. They had identified it as a standard high explosive round from a US tank. Oh—oh. After a lot of head scratching, we came to no conclusion. The closest US armor unit was too far away to account for the incident.



Typical Saigon Street Scene

We continued on to the Newport docks on the Saigon River. The suspicious sound was reported to have come from the waterside of the dock. A merchant ship was tied up, and there were several barges loaded with ruined armor equipment to be hauled away for scrap. On one barge sat a tank that had been partially blown up. Its gun tube was at an awkward angle pointing into the night sky. We checked a map, and sure enough—the tank was pointing exactly in the direction of the mysterious explosion. We had found the smoking gun—literally.

There was no activity on the dock, only a light guard was posted. I asked that they be assembled. Once they were lined up, it became obvious. One guy looked like he had seen a ghost. He explained that he became bored and went onto the barge to check out the tank. He crawled inside and, in the process of fiddling around, BANG—a round fired. He ran fearing the consequences. I don't remember how I wrote it all up, but I suspect these paragraphs say more than the log book for that night.

...Continued Spring 2016

The 458th Trans. Co in World War II

by *Richard E. Leibel*

... **Continued from Summer 2015**

It was about this time when the lone visitor came into our ward. A young reporter, Herb Caen, did an interview with me. Herb Caen was affiliated with a San Francisco paper. How did he find me? Here's how: My father knew a reporter from one of the Cincinnati newspapers. This reporter made the arrangement for the interview. Herb Caen later became a widely read syndicated columnist. A trimmed down version of this interview appeared in a Cincinnati paper. My family was probably wondering why I was being hospitalized for these many months.

Because I was now in a healing mode I was transferred to the lower level of the surgery wing. To help pass the time away I volunteered to fold all of the linens for this ward. One morning as I entered the linen room I noticed a nice cat had given birth to some kittens on the top of the neatly stacked pile of clean towels. How many kittens, I do not know as they were well above eye level. I do not know how this clever cat knew this was a hospital. I do not know how she gained entry. I do not think she registered herself at the front desk. What to do now? What could I do but share my meals with a clever and lovely mother cat for more than three weeks? One morning, as I entered the linen room, I noticed that as mysteriously as this fine family of cats appeared, they also just as mysteriously disappeared. I do not know if that mother cat decided her hospital stay was long enough and checked her family out voluntarily or, as I suspect, a nurse, in reaching up to get a clean towel grabbed a family of cats. If a nurse did accidentally find the cats I hope she did not get scratched too badly. I was smart enough not to inquire or mention a thing about the animals so I will never find out what happened to my feline friends.

Also at this time, I was one of a few who were selected to visit the Zoo in San Francisco. We traveled in someone's fancy limousine. Since I always enjoyed all animals large and small and of any species, I had a pleasant

afternoon. The only other time I left the hospital for recreational purposes was when a small group went to see a San Francisco Seals baseball game. The Seals were a AAA minor league team owned by the New York Giants. The Seals are now known as the San Francisco Giants. Here are some of the highlights of this excursion: For this occasion we traveled by street car. We went down a very, very wide street that had four sets of street car tracks. Two sets were owned by the city and two sets were owned by the public. I suppose each set served different outlying sections of the city. The street was so wide it would be difficult for a pedestrian to cross it on the green light. We ate dinner at Joe DiMaggio's Restaurant located on Fisherman's Wharf. The wharf reeked of stale fish smells. This was before the days of Fabreeze. At Joe DiMaggio's we survived a super shock. We settled for the lowest price meal, \$8.50 plus a very small tip. In Ohio a meal like we had would have been \$1.00 or less. We considered taking our chairs. We certainly paid for them. However; it would have presented a problem getting them out the front door much less carrying them into the ballpark and the street car, so we just licked our wounds.

At the ballpark, if any of the outfielders from the opposing team got on base via a hit, they would play a very shallow outfield to avoid being bombarded by a barrage of empty beer bottles. Many of these Seal's players were later promoted to the major leagues.

Soon it was time for Thanksgiving. The hospital gave us a professionally printed menu complete with a Thanksgiving themed paper napkin and a nice message from the hospital commanding officer. I still have this menu. The meal consisted of the Thanksgiving format, including salad, dessert, cigars and cigarettes. Tobacco in a hospital? In those days - yes!



... **Continued Spring 2016**

Memories of Serving with the 458th:

by Ted Faurbo

I'm one of the lucky ones.—TF

Greetings from the President of the United States, said the letter. Oh, shit! said I. I was 26 years old at the time and married for six years, had no kids but had recently bought a new home.

My wife Debbie asked me if I wanted to go out and get drunk. No, I said, go get me a carton of cigarettes. I had quit smoking about a year but figured I was going to die anyhow. Well, I got lucky, I didn't die in Vietnam and at 75 I'm still smoking, but much less. Then it was off to Tiger Land at Ft. Polk, LA for basic training.

I left Polk with orders to attend helicopter maintenance school at Ft. Rutger, AL. While home on leave I hurt my back and my thumb. A piece of steel about the size of double O buckshot came off the mushroomed head of chisel and embedded under my skin.

Everything at Rutger was backed up, hundreds of us were waiting to start classes. So, we had the usual make-work duties: KP, policing the area—that kind of thing. My back was still hurting so I asked if I could on sick call and see a doctor about it. I was just hoping for some pain pills. While seeing the Doc I mentioned the piece of steel in my thumb. No problem, he said and set up an appointment for surgery to remove it.

On returning to my Unit, I gave them the paperwork for the surgical appointment. The next morning, the duty sergeant told me I didn't have to do anything, that I could stay in the barracks, even in bed, if I wanted to. He was no doubt thinking the surgery was related to the back problem I originally reported. I didn't volunteer it was for my thumb. With the surgery a week or two off, I thought had it made. I stood the daily formations then returned to the barracks for a relaxing day while the other guys went of on the Mickey-mouse work details.

It didn't last long. One day they called out a bunch of names and told us to pack our stuff. We were going to Ft. Story, VA. We had no

idea where we were headed, or what the duty would be. We were told nothing, which meant there were constant rumors and speculation. Even the name Ft. "Story" seemed like a joke.

On the train we went, and it seemed we were all draftees, all US, no RAs. The train ride was at least one overnight maybe more. The single guys were paying a lot of attention to the girls on the train and enjoying the trip. I was 25 years old and had been married since 19 so it was just a trip for me. It was fun watching the young buck's antics. Some of the stops the guys would get off, run to the nearest liquor store and back to the train. Some of them were half looped most of the trip and constantly chasing the women on the train. Ft. Story here we come!

... Continued Spring 2016

An elderly woman decided to prepare her will and told her preacher that she had two final requests.

The first was she wanted to be cremated.

The second was that she wanted her ashes spread over the local Wal-Mart.

"Wal-Mart?" the preacher exclaimed. "Why Wal-Mart?"

"Then I'll be sure my daughters visit me twice a week".

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PTSD TREATMENT

Disabled American Veterans (Thanks to Lee Helle)

Since 1775, when the Continental Congress established the Army, the United States has relied on brave citizens to fight for its independence and defend the nation against internal and external threats. Americans have fought in the American Revolution, a bitter Civil War, two World Wars, the Cold War, conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the first Gulf War, and now the Global War on Terror.

Over 2.7 million U.S. military service members have served in Afghanistan and Iraq. Those wars are different from previous combat theaters in a number of fundamental ways, including the pace and number of deployments, the short downtime between redeployments, the type of combat, the roles and the numbers of deployed service members who are women, and the all-volunteer military's heavy reliance on its National Guard and Reserve components. Each of these factors has significantly impacted the combat experience and its effects on service members, their families and their communities.

After combat, service members demobilize and put away their weapons, turn in their ammunition and body armor and fold away their camouflage. In returning home, they also need to peel off layers of personal and collective behaviors that have protected them from danger and kept them functional and safe during deployments to theaters of military operation. This is part of normal readjustment to civilian life after the chaos of war. It is a normal and necessary transition, but is neither effortless nor easy.

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) honors the service of veterans from all eras and understands the importance of readjustment and dealing with the stress of combat. It is our mission to assist veterans, especially those who have been wounded in combat or who develop illnesses from toxic exposures or suffer mental health challenges post-deployment. They have produced a guide to ensure that veterans and their families understand the normal reactions to combat and

the need to work on reintegration and readjustment following deployment to a war zone.

The stories and tips in this book will help you identify the normal reactions to combat; how to reintegrate successfully into your family, job and community; how to identify normal difficulties and how to spot the warning signs of illness. It will help you recognize when things are going wrong and identify when to ask for help from family, peers and combat buddies.

Not every problem readjusting is a sign of illness, but veterans and family members need to be able to recognize when professional help is needed. This book acknowledges your strength and will help you maintain that strength to build resilience, so that you may regain your good health and well-being and successfully reintegrate back into your families and communities.

An emotional trauma is an extremely distressful experience that shocks someone emotionally. An emotionally traumatic event can have long-lasting psychological effects. When the threat we faced is severe, or when it was repeated or constant over a period of time, our stress response can actually change our body and our mind. When this happens it takes time to readjust. But this is normal—it is to be expected. For example, when a service member first returns from a combat deployment, he or she may react differently to people and situations back home. This could include feeling tense or sad, having trouble concentrating, having a shorter temper than usual, withdrawing from family or close friends or other common signs of stress.

You can identify early indications that you are having a stress reaction if you know what to look for and monitor yourself carefully. Self-monitoring includes seeking and being receptive to feedback from others around you.

Some symptoms may be clearly related to a traumatic event you experienced. They could include:

- Not being able to get memories of the traumatic event out of your mind

- Dreams about the event
- Becoming anxious, angry or depressed when you are exposed to cues that remind you of the event
- Feeling guilty about the event

Many of the symptoms are more general in nature. Some are emotional reactions, such as:

- Moodiness
- Sadness
- Feeling tense
- Feeling bored all the time, as if nothing lives up to the excitement of the past
- Short temper
- Inability to feel and express emotions

Some may be changes in how you behave, such as:

- Driving too fast
- Drinking or smoking too much
- Gambling excessively
- Road rage

Some may be changes you notice in your body, such as:

- Weight changes
- Lowered sexual interest
- Rashes
- Headaches

Some may be changes in your thinking abilities, such as:

- Forgetting things
- Trouble concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Lowered self-confidence

Symptoms of PTSD include re-experiencing the traumatic event. This can occur in many ways, such as distressing memories, nightmares, flashbacks where you actually feel like you are back in the dangerous situation or feeling intense stress when you are reminded of the event by some external cue.

Early identification of a possible problem and prompt action are critical. Addressing stress-related problems can provide immediate relief and is the best insurance policy against long-term, more serious consequences. The first and often the most important step is to make contact with someone who can help.

If you think you have PTSD, it's important to get treatment. Early treatment can help reduce long-term symptoms.

When To Seek Assistance

- Feeling out of sync
- Jumpiness
- Worry
- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Relationship issues
- Sadness
- Low motivation
- Suicidal thoughts
- Substance abuse
- Work problems
- Isolation

DAV National Service Officers are stationed at locations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico and are available in many other locations through Mobile Service Offices. Locations, local contact numbers and a schedule of Mobile Service Office stops can be found at the Disabled American Veterans website (www.dav.org) or by calling 1-877-I Am A Vet (1-877-426-2838).

Resources:

National Center for PTSD

1-802-296-6300 • www.ptsd.va.gov

NCPTSC does not provide direct clinical care or individual referrals.

Vet Center

Counselors who understand veterans employment assistance, marital/relationship counseling

1-800-905-4675 • www.vetcenter.va.gov

VA Medical Facilities

Professional medical and mental health services www.va.gov

Suicide Prevention: Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

DAV

All services, including benefits assistance, are free to veterans. 1-877-I am a Vet (1-877-426-2838) www.dav.org

To read DAV Brochure in its entirety go to:

http://www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/DAV_PTSDBrochure-2.pdf

Don't forget to visit the following 458th
Transportation Company web sites:

www.458thseatigers.org

www.458pbr-vungrobay.com

We really, really need stories from your experiences in Vietnam! Please send submissions to one of the staff listed below

Back issues of the newsletter are available. Just contact Mike Hebert listed below.

We appreciate your submissions, feature ideas, corrections & criticisms. Please submit info to:

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**Deadline for Spring (April)
issue of newsletter is
March 15. Please submit
materials prior to that
date.
"Letters to Editor"
also welcome.**

458th SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

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Unit: _____ Dates w/Unit: _____ Location: _____ Rank: _____

Please check this box if you **DO NOT** want information on this application shared with other members of our organization.

DUES (check box): 1 year; \$20.00 3 years; \$45.00 Lifetime; \$195.00

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Please submit verification of service with application. We will need any of the following:
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Thank you for your support!