



The Riverine Reporter

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

Sea Tigers Association

Founded 1996 by Lee Helle, US Army, Ret.



Summer 2017

Vol. 8 #3

Editor: Mike Hebert

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NEWSLETTER

Greetings to all former Sea Tiger members (DUKW's, LARC's, BARC's, PBR's, Whalers, and associated Military Police). This is the July 2017 issue of the newsletter. Subsequent issues published quarterly.

2017 Sea Tigers reunion in Covington, KY (Cincinnati) will be held Tuesday Sept. 5 thru Saturday Sept. 9
Cut-off date for registration at hotel is AUGUST 15!
Call Holiday Inn Airport at 888-294-5067, and mention 458th Sea Tigers Reunion.
Rate is \$98 a night + taxes.

It's time to plan for the upcoming reunion in Covington, KY, just across the river from Cincinnati. If you haven't yet done so, please complete the registration form on page 5 and mail with your payment to Bob Ness.

These reunions are a great way to reconnect with old friends and new friends who share our common bond of being Army sailors.

We anticipate having Dave Pizzoferrato's PBR 6927 and Ken & Anna Adams World War II era DUKW at this reunion, as we did in 2014.

If anyone has any suggestions on how to make our reunions better, please contact Tom Farrell at (856) 562-1797 or tjfarrell@yahoo.com

Why Come to a Sea Tiger Reunion?

by Tom Wonsiewicz

If you've never been to a 458th reunion, it's a legitimate question. Our Army days are well behind us in our rearview mirrors, and it has been said that you can never go back. All true.

But some things remain undiminished by time: the experience of doing something important, time well spent with friends you could count on no matter what, the smell of salt water and diesel exhaust, times you laughed or feared deeply.

A reunion is a way to revive and refresh those important memories. The simple act of coming together with others who shared the same experience is never to be forgotten. A map, a photo, a word or two, and the flood gates are opened. Add a little beer, a few photo albums, and the hours pass in minutes.

Will you know anyone else there? Maybe, maybe not - but that doesn't matter. Without a doubt someone will be there from Cat Lai, Newport, Vung Ro, Qui Nhon, or the place you served. In fact, it's quite revealing to learn how different things were before you arrived and after you left. You will have spent time with your brothers.

And the wives - what will they do? They will meet others, watch, listen and learn about a part of your life that you don't talk much about. They will be more proud of you than ever. And they'll probably be doing some shopping too.

Check out the info on the reunion, save the dates, and make your travel plans. Now!

MEMBER NEWS:

- Just a reminder – the beer that is provided in the hospitality room during our reunion is NOT paid for by the 458th Sea Tigers. It is a donation system, so please remember to help out by dropping a few dollars in the tub. It will be very much appreciated by those who purchase the beer out of their own pockets.
- The cutoff date for making reservations for the reunion is August 15. If you have not reserved your room please do so today!
- **Mike Hebert** and wife **Virginia** and spent a very enjoyable weekend in March visiting the President himself! (Not Trump – **Farrell**). **Tom** and wife **Sheila** hosted us in their beautiful home and graciously showed us the sights of Wilmington, NC and Topsail Island.



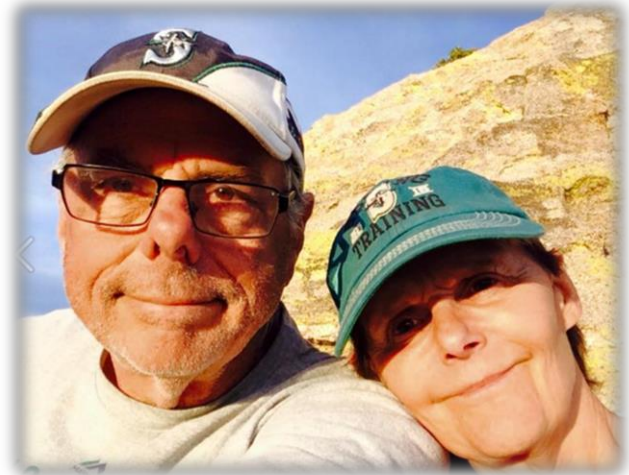
Tom Farrell & Mike Hebert

- **Richard Leibel's** wonderful memoir "The 458th Transportation Company in World War II" and **Ted Faurbo's** outstanding "Serving With The 458th" are both now available in the 458th Sea Tigers store. To order contact Ray Simpson at (512) 415-6966 or raynos@flash.net.

- We desperately need people to step up and nominate either themselves or someone who would be willing to serve in a Sea Tigers elected office. We currently need a Vice-President to replace Denny Hull who wishes to retire after many years of service to our organization. Please contact Bob Ness if you would be willing to help out.

OBITUARY

We are very saddened to report the passing on April 18 of **Eric Frolich** of Coupeville, WA. Eric was one of the Vung Ro Bay gang and will be very sorely missed. He was diagnosed with a rare type of Leukemia, possibly from Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. He was married to his high school sweetheart, Cindy Powell.



From his Vung Ro Bay friends:

"He was the most gentle soul I have ever met"
– **Bob McCabe**

"Eric was a good friend. Always had a smile"
– **Mike Hebert**

"So sorry to hear about Eric. I'll always remember him reminding me every day for about 3 months that I was the new guy there. He'd call me "Cherry Boy". I came about a week after him thus relieving him of the title. No one came after me for about 3 months, so he kept it up for 3 months." – **Lou Baumann**

- Both the PBR and DUKW are being brought to our reunion in Cincinatti for the price of transportation and fuel, which will amount to around \$2000. Donations would be very much appreciated and can be sent in with your registration. Both will be moored at the Ludlow-Bromley Yacht Club which is just a few minutes from the hotel, but still requiring car-pooling. The yacht club is a CASH ONLY establishment, but there is an ATM machine on board.

458th Whaler Mission

By James McGuigan

In early February of 1968 I arrived at the 458th In Cam Ranh Bay. (excellent timing T.E.T) Larc's were still moving on and off the beach. The P.B.R.'s had not yet arrived and a new CO. by the name of Ginsberg had us doing PT and climbing around a few mountains for terrain familiarization. Heat related sick calls soon put the kibosh on this and we gathered around for weapons classes on the 50's, 60, grenade launcher and a few other odd's and end's. Safety with grenades should have been paramount. It wasn't. I noticed a couple of outboard runabouts which were tied up out on the floating dock. Hmmm. There was a small hooch hut at the end of this dock which doubled as a office and stored cases of beverages. This was subsequently run into and sunk by some dunce who thought you could step on the brake pedal in a LARC and it would slow down while underway in the water. (That's another story). The P.B.R.'s arrived all brand new, right out of the box, in their cradles. The planning was now underway for our move to Vung Tau via LST. The 458th was loaded aboard along with the boats for the Cat Lo detachment. On the scenic cruise down a 2LT shared some information that the 458th was primarily going to be providing port security at numerous coastal locations which I was already aware of but what I didn't know was this decision was done with the stroke of a pen and not a lot of detailed thinking. The same stroke of a pen could change our mission to support the 9th down in the Delta. Hmmm. Rumor had it there were up to 75 % plus casualty's on some of these Navy P.B.R. missions. As each P.B.R. boat was outfitted and made ready for duty the biggest pile of beat up run about boats were brought into the 458th compound via duce and a half. What the ????. I can't recall how many 8or 10 maybe. On a morning formation someone asked if anybody had experience with outboard motors. Dumbo me raises his hand. I used to tear around the inlets, canals, and bay waterways of Pt. Pleasant NJ in a 17ft 40HP Evinrude. When your 16 and have access to a family boat you become aware--chicks dig

boats. Gotta keep that baby running. Anyway, back to the 458th compound. I think there were three 75 HP Johnson's of which one supposedly ran, one partially ran and back fired. As I recall the other didn't have a cover and seemed to be missing a few parts. (Parts motor?) And, oh yeah, a couple 9 1/2 HP for ER back up. This would be a superior challenge for the few who would dare to take on the mental and physical abuse of higher ups. It was time to ponder and swig some cold ones to figure out how the hell are we going to do this. Now, I have to give credit to s fellow soldier in the 458th named Jim Frazee. Jim knew a lot about outboards and was instrumental in sharing mechanical and technical knowledge with me. There was another trooper named Warren Whipple who did all the fiberglass repairs. I think he had been at Nhe Be for OJT fiberglass school. Jim rotated out (ETS) shortly thereafter but not until we went on a few missions together one of which I will share with you later on in this story. Now, directly adjacent to our compound was a "Special Services" compound. I was told they provided some sort of entertainment for the troops. In their compound I noticed some long wooden crates of 20 ft or so. Curiosity had a hold of me so I took a peek in a damaged corner of plywood. Lo and behold, the Lord showed me a beautiful Boston Whaler with mirror white finish hull and sky blue interior with a OMG is that a 80 HP Johnson still in the box. Some inquiring revealed these were water skiing boats for the officers on Back Beach in Vung Tau who would be enjoying some in country R&R. Now the diff between the 75 and 80 HP were mainly electronic ignitions. No more distributors, coils, etc. But, many interchangeable parts. A couple of days went by and it was brought to my attention that a re-allocation of appropriated assets had taken place. (You CPA types surely can find this somewhere on your "chart of accounts". Seems some officers had a hissy fit and the C.I.D. was brought in. They never did find what they were looking for. Heard some scuttlebutt that one our outposts had finally gotten a new motor that had been on requisition. Whaler operational. **Cont. Fall '17**

VISIT FROM HUGH KENNEDY

by Jean (Leibel) Walpole

Rufus Kennedy served with the 458th Amphibious Truck Co. in World War II.

One of Rufus' wishes was to be able to ride in a DUKW again. Sadly, Rufus passed away many years ago as a result of being exposed to chemicals during WWII. His first assignment was to help the Chinese learn about chemical warfare which was when he was exposed. His next assignment was the 458th.

Rufus' son Hugh made it a mission to locate and restore a WWII DUKW in honor of his Dad. Hugh was successful in that mission. It was when he was looking for DUKW parts on the internet that he happened on Dick Leibel's book. Hugh ordered the book and as he read it he realized that his Dad and Dick had to have known each other. Hugh then contacted Dick and made arrangements to travel from Williamston, NC to Cincinnati, OH on April 1st, 2017.

Accompanied by Dick's daughter and granddaughter, Hugh and Dick spent several hours comparing stories of the 458th. It would seem that Dick and Rufus weren't always side-by-side during the war, but they were definitely in the same vicinity. Hugh has a 1936 Olympic pin with Berlin stamped on it. His Dad brought it back from Germany along with a pair of leather goggles that his Dad had taken off a female German spy who was riding a motorcycle through the town they were in. Someone killed the spy and that was when Rufus removed the goggles she was wearing. Hugh said the story went on to include that they kept the motorcycle, painted a red cross on it and hauled it around in their DUKW for future use.

Hugh and Dick both think that the 458th spent some time in Joseph Goebbel's house, or some other high ranking German official. It was in this house that Rufus found the pin and Dick found a pocket watch and Fred Borders' Dad found a German dress sword with the Nazi insignia engraved on the handle.

Hugh shared pictures of his restored DUKW with Dick. He did an amazing job. No detail was overlooked. Hugh was able to have it licensed to be driven on the road and he and family and friends take it out into the water. Hugh also said it has been in several parades. Dick and Hugh talked about some of the amazing features of a DUKW and also some of the design flaws.

One of the more ironic stories they shared was a story that Dick has told many times over the years. When VE was declared some of the men did not have enough [points to qualify for discharge, and since the war in Japan was still active, those men without enough points were sent by ship from Europe to the Pacific Theater. Dick had enough points but Rufus did not. It was during that transfer that Japan surrendered and Rufus' ship was rerouted home. While Dick and others remained stuck in France the men sent to Japan were back in the States. Dick's story told about how he knew that the war was over as he noticed he was getting letters that had US postage on them.

Rufus Kennedy was the man writing to Dick.

Richard Leibel's *The 458th Transportation Company in World War II* will not be featured in this issue due to space constraints. It will continue in October issue.

Ted Faurbo's *Serving With The 458th, Memories of Vietnam* will not be featured in this issue due to space constraints. It will continue in October issue.

"Buy a bunch of flowers to take home to your wife" says the street vendor to a man walking by his booth.

"I don't have a wife" the man replies.

"Well then, buy a bunch for your girl-friend."

"I don't have one those either" the man says.

"Well then," the vendor smiles "Buy two bunches to celebrate your good luck!"

Reunion 5 Sept. 2017 – 9 Sept. 2017, Cincinnati OH

The annual reunion of the 458th Sea Tigers Association will be held Tues. September 5 thru Sat. September 9 2017 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Lodging has been arranged at the Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport, Erlanger, Ky. Room rates are \$98.00 per night plus 11.3% tax, 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 **1-888-294-5067** between 7am-11pm EST. Inform Operator you are part of the "458th Sea Tigers Reunion. Check in time is 2:00 pm, check out time is 11:00 noon. **Cut-off date for reservations is August 15, 2017.** Cancellations can be made up to 72 hours before intended arrival. There may be exceptions in case of an emergency.

458th Sea Tigers Association Reunion 2017 Registration Form Sign-Up Sheet

Please feel free to bring as many guests as you like!

Please print your name(s) as you want them to appear on your name tag(s).

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State _____

Spouse/Guest Name(s) _____

CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Prices below are **Per Person** taxes and gratuity included. **Unit:** US Army Sea Tigers _____ US Navy _____

Registration Fee \$20.00 (Onetime fee not per person) = \$ **20.00**

Tuesday, Sept. 5 TH

7:00 pm Informal buffet dinner at hotel. \$28 x ____ = \$ _____

Wednesday 6th

Dinner on a River Boat

6:00 pm -9:30 pm Dinner *plus* transportation \$65 x ____ = \$ _____
Dinner only \$50 x ____ = \$ _____

Thursday 7th

9:00 am - 10:30 am Business meeting for members
9:00am-? Sightseeing for ladies \$20 x ____ = \$ _____

Friday 8th

6:00-9:00pm Banquet at hotel \$34 x ____ = \$ _____

Saturday 9th

Goodbyes – Travel Home
PBR/DUKW Fuel donation \$ _____

REGISTRATION DEADLINE is Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2017 **Grand Total** = \$ _____

Make check to: 458th Sea Tigers Association

Send This Copy and Payment to:

Robert L. Ness, Secretary
108 Tewa Dr., Security, CO 80911

Questions: Please call Bob @ 719-390-3283 Home or 719-201-3526 Cell

*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*

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2017 Soldier of the Year

Thanks to Jean (Leibel) Walpole

A very good friend of Dad's, Bob Bruns, asked Dad to speak at his grandson's school for Veteran's Day. Dad of course brought some books with him to give to the teacher, principal, and school secretary. From what I understand, one of those individuals passed the book on to a friend to read. I believe that person was Casey Thomas whose son Connor Thomas is the CEO of My GI Foundation. Keep in mind that Connor has just graduated high school this spring. Casey was so impressed with the book he gave it to Connor to read and that was when Connor decided to honor Dad with Soldier of the Year 2017.

The story is fuzzy at this point as the details were sketchy as to the origin of the organization and the award ceremony. Communication was lacking. But, ultimately there was a banquet held on May 15 attended by Dad, JROTC members, other members of various branches of the military and a State Senator from Clermont County where the banquet was held and I think the Thomas' reside.

Dad received a statue of a GI with a plaque attached to the front stating his award and he also received a letter of gratitude for service from the Senator. The Senator is Joe Uecker.

I was able to locate the website for My GI. From what I can determine. Connor's grandfathers were both in the military which spurred Connor to come up with an organization to honor vets. He has developed several fundraising activities and funding sites to secure money for vets who need home enhancements like ramps and any other needs a vet may have that they can't afford and can't get assistance from anywhere else. Connor will be attending the Citadel this fall.

Sadly, I did not attend the banquet. The timing prevented me from going. But I was able to put together some photos, copies of documents, and a shadow box with Dad's WWII medals for use as a display as well as copies of the book. At Bob's suggestion I wrote

up a summary of Dad's war experience for Connor to use as an outline for Dad's introduction. Bob and my cousin Jim took Dad to the banquet.

As I mentioned the details for all of this were lacking and Dad, nor any of us, really knew what to expect but Dad enjoyed himself. He commented on how many young people were in attendance. And that the banquet consisted of sandwiches. He got a chuckle out of that.

From www.mygivets.com:

Mr. Richard Leibel, age 97, is The My GI 2017 Soldier of The Year. He is pictured here receiving a second award, a Senatorial Proclamation from State Senator Joe Uecker. Mr. Leibel entered the United States Army in 1941. Tech Corporal Leibel was an amphibious DUKW driver with the famous 485th Amphibious Assault Team. He was supposed to arrive at Normandy Beach four hours after our initial D-Day landing. A terrible storm caused his landing party to change course and they arrived after the initial invasion. Shortly after enlisting, he was involved in an accident where his troop transport veered off course and rolled down a hill. He spent eleven months in the hospital and qualified for a medical discharge, but volunteered to stay. He eventually did end up at Normandy where he fought in the Rhineland and other parts of central Europe.

Tech Corporal Leibel received a European Ribbon with four bronze stars and an AmEuro Ribbon with four bronze stars. He has authored a book, [Memoir of a DUKW Driver](#), which you can find on Amazon.com.



Richard Leibel and Senator Joe Uecker

McGUIRK VA CENTER

By [Julia Bergman](#) *The Day* staff writer

New London — The whole family licked stamps, Pete McGuirk recalled. And there were lots of them, as stacks of letters were sent not just to U.S. lawmakers representing Connecticut, but to representatives across the country.

That was just one facet of the work of the late John McGuirk, Pete McGuirk's father, to get a Department of Veterans Affairs clinic in southeastern Connecticut so that veterans would not have to make the long trip to VA facilities in Providence, Newington or West Haven.

John McGuirk, a World War II veteran, was successful in his effort, so much so that the clinic was renamed after him in 2004. He died in November 2000.

Today, Pete McGuirk, one of John McGuirk's six children, is a longtime patient of the John J. McGuirk VA Outpatient Clinic, which offers primary health care services to veterans. Pete McGuirk has received care at the clinic since its humble beginnings in the late '90s on the grounds of the Coast Guard Academy, where it first operated on a temporary and irregular basis before operating full time.

Now it's the busiest VA clinic in the state, serving 4,600 veterans last year alone. The clinic was relocated in 2007 to its current location in Shaw's Cove, but is again experiencing growing pains. The VA is looking to nearly double its size in order to serve more veterans.

While the staff is great and accommodating, a bigger space would allow more veterans to receive primary care services closer to home, and could enable the clinic to offer more services, Pete McGuirk said.

He said he feels a sense of pride walking through the clinic's doors knowing that "it was my dad that caused that to happen." The staff, he said, will often introduce new patients to him, telling them "you're here because of his dad."



Pete McGuirk stands in the living room of his home in Quaker Hill on Thursday, March 9, 2017, holding the proclamation from Congress dedicating the VA outpatient clinic in New London as the John J. McGuirk VA Outpatient Clinic in honor of his father. (Dana Jensen/The Day)

Pete McGuirk has helped to spread the word about the clinic. He frequently chats up veterans at the West Haven VA when he's there for specialty appointments, and tells them about the services at the New London clinic.

Pete McGuirk joined the Army in 1966, serving as a patrol boat river captain in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969, before getting out. He is a 100 percent disabled veteran who was exposed to Agent Orange and has post-traumatic stress disorder and a host of health issues such as diabetes and high blood pressure, he said.

While he struggled for many years, abusing alcohol and "doing a real good job of scaring everyone around me," he finally realized he needed to get help. A counselor at the Vet Center in Norwich — which he frequents often and recommends to other veterans, particularly those suffering from mental health issues — helped connect him with a program for those struggling with PTSD.

He worked as a merchant marine and then as a millwright before retiring several years ago. He and his wife, Anna, a retired nurse, now live in a log cabin that they built in Quaker Hill.

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

www.458thseatigers.org

www.458pbr-vungrobay.com

We need stories from your experiences in Vietnam! This is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute to it. A very special "thank you" to those who have already shared their stories with us.

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:

Tom Farrell: tjfarrell458@yahoo.com

Phone: (856) 562-1797

Bob Ness: robertness458@q.com

Mike Hebert: michaelhebert@cox.net

Phone: (804) 694-0415

Bill Northrop: norwill6@sio.midco.net

458th SeaTigers Officers

President: Tom Farrell

Vice President: Denny Hull

Secretary: Robert L. Ness

Treasurer: Jerry Wallace

Chaplin: Scott Fultz

Historian: Bob Brower

Membership Chairman: Tom Farrell

**Deadline for Fall (October)
issue of newsletter is
Sept. 15. Please submit
materials prior to that
date.
"Letters to Editor"
also welcome.**

458th SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

Robert L. Ness, Secretary • 108 Tewa Drive • Colorado Springs, CO 80911-1922

Email: robertness458@q.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

email: _____

Military Info:

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

DONATION TO NEWSLETTER FUND \$5 \$10 \$20 Other: \$ _____

Please submit verification of service with application. We will need any of the following:
copy of orders, copy of 201, photos, or a member who can vouch for you.

Thank you for your support!

*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*