

THE AMERICAN LEGION

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POST 44

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VOLUME MMVIII

A. L. Talks

JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR MEMBERS



ISSUE I

Commander's Desk, Lenny Rosenbaum

Sr. Vice Cmdr - Andy Jaime

Our Post Commander is at home and still recovering. He has made several trips to the Post and really looks good. His Get Well Cards are still coming in.

I want to thank the membership for allowing me to represent Post 44 as Acting Commander at the Fall Conference. Again, lots of new information was presented and I will pass it on at the General Meeting.

With the New Year comes new events for Post 44. One such event is the "High School Oratorical State Finals," that we will be hosting on March 8th, 2008. This is an American Legion sponsored scholarship program and is "A Constitutional Speech Contest" for high school students. All members are invited to attend, and this will be a good time to meet some of our State Officers that will be visiting, for some it will be their first visit to Post 44. Hopefully, your participation will help make our quests and student finalists feel welcome.

January Quote: "You can't turn back the clock, but you can wind it up again." Bonnie Prudden

Jr. Vice Commander: Bob Smith

If you watch the Stock Market and note its drop, you know that it is important to save. There is no better place than at your Post.

You will enjoy the quality and price of your breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The New Year is here and we will continue with our dinner and dance music every Wed., Fri., and Sat. Come and enjoy yourself and save too.

2008 Membership Cards

Starting on January 1, 2008 - you need to have your 2008 Card for service.

"Riverine Warfare on the Rach Nui"

The Article on Page Two was in VFW's magazine Nov/Dec 2005 issue. Jace Johnston, a member of our Post, was in Company C and he lost many of his buddies in this campaign. He donated a plaque to our Post with the names of his buddies killed in action. Jace is a big supporter of our Post and runs a large ad every month in our newsletter.

Adjutant, Andy Jaime - Sr. Vice Cmdr.

Membership Update: As of December 13, 2007, we were at 83.3% on 2008 membership renewals with a total of 971 members that have renewed. We still need 213 more to renew to reach the 100% goal.

Unfortunately, I also must report that Post 44 had 25 members pass in the year 2007. These members names will be published in the Chaplin's article in a future issue of the newsletter, if not this one. Our Chaplin is also recovering from some surgeries.

In closing, let me wish all our members Good Health and A Very Happy 2008, and a thank you to all the new members that made it to their initiation ceremony in November; Welcome to Your New Post. The Department Open House will be January 12th, 2008. See me or call the office for more information.

Auxiliary President - Bunny Hamilton

"A Great Big Thank You" to Ann Sterling for the wonderful job she did shopping for the VA Gift Shop!! Thanks also to the ladies and our Junior Member Miranda for helping to set up and work for the gift shop. I'm sure we helped to make a lot of Veterans holiday much brighter!

My holiday wish and prayer is that each and everyone of you have a **Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy and Healthy New Year.**

I love you all - God Bless

New Years Eve Party and Dancing Monday - December 31



**\$25.00 per person
if not sold out**



**Don't forget to Tip
Your Server**

Cocktails - 6:00 Food Served - 7:00 PM
Chateau Brien or Stuffed Cornish Hen
Dessert

Party and Dancing - 8:00 - 12:00
Band - Dallas Dan

Party Favors - Champagne Toast @ 10:00 our time,
Midnight NY Time (cause some people leave early)
also at 12 Midnight our time for those who stay late.

Riverine Warfare on the Rach Nui - The Army and Navy came together June 19, 1967, for the Mobile Riverine Force's first major operation: A Viet Cong (VC) ambush in a rice paddy claimed 48 American lives. By Shannon Hanson

DEADLIEST VIETNAM BATTLES - In early 1967, the Army's 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, joined forces with the Navy's River Assault Flotilla One to form the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF), a joint operation in which the Navy provided the mobility, and the Army provided the force.

The MRF's first major operation, code-named Operation Concordia /, was launched June 19, 1967. Its objective was to capture a large enemy redoubt that provided local forces with rest and training camps near Can Giuoc, 17 miles south of Saigon, in the Mekong Delta.

That morning, the 2nd Brigade's 4th Bn., 47th Inf. Regt, landed north and east of the objective, while two companies of the 3rd Bn., 47th Inf., landed north and west. Both battalions were to sweep the northern area, then assemble and move south together.

During the troop movements, a call came in that the Viet Gong's 5th Nha Be Battalion had been sighted in the southeast section of the redoubt. C Co., 4th Bn., and C Co., 3rd Bn., secured the site, but found no VC.

The final phase of the operation had A Co., 4th Bn., linking up with C Co., 4th Bn., several kilometers to the south. Instead of hacking through the vegetation along the banks of the Rach Nui River, A Company chose to wade across the rice paddies. Several hours of trudging through 10-inch deep water and thick mud wore on the soldiers; they let their guard down and made the fatal error of bunching up.

Unbeknownst to the soldiers, VC were hidden in well-camouflaged bunkers and spider holes in the area. They had organized an L-shaped ambush within the tree line of spiny green mangrove palms. A Company neared the cluster of thatched huts that sat at the elbow of the L around noon, and the VC opened up, catching the soldiers in a vicious crossfire.

'Nowhere to Go' - Chaplain Lt. Raymond "Padre" Johnson, watching the advancing GIs from the medical aid boat, saw the ambush unfold: "Suddenly, the VC opened up from an L-shaped tree line with machine guns and recoilless rifles—unbelievably accurate fire ... just too unreal to grasp. I had had first-hand experience with the fury of action, but nothing like this."

In his book, *Brown Water, Black Berets*, Lt. Cmdr. Thomas J. Cutler wrote: "In horror he (Johnson) saw men thrown down before him, lacerated by enemy fire. Falling bullets and bodies turned the usually calm pools of paddy water into miniature storm-wracked seas."

Pfc. Frederick Haag recalled, "We had nowhere to go. We just dove into the water." The soldiers tried to stay down, but they had to keep their heads above water to breathe. Snipers began picking them off, one-by-one.

Conditions continued to worsen: Soon the tide came in, immersing the men in neck-deep water. Casualties quickly mounted. "I had approximately 50 men wounded," A Company commander Capt. Robert L. Reeves said. "Some of them died almost instantly." When reinforcements arrived, B Company came up behind A Company to evacuate the wounded. Medical evacuation helicopters made valiant rescue efforts, losing four choppers shot down by nightfall.

The MRF boats maneuvered in to block enemy escape routes. They unleashed 20mm and 40mm cannon fire, as well as .30-caliber and .50-caliber rounds into VC positions. Hand-held weapons were fired from all quarters, aircraft dropped ordnance and Army artillery pounded relentlessly. Men of C Company attacked mid-afternoon, but were forced to back off. They joined a two-company attack when the rest of the 4th Battalion arrived, but failed. After nightfall, they attacked a third time, penetrating the complex, but had to pull back once again.

Chaplain Johnson watched an already wounded soldier get hit again by enemy fire. He ran out onto the paddy to bring the man to safety. "Padre, they're bleeding to death," the young man panted. "Medics are all dead," So Johnson and two others grabbed stretchers and went out to bring the wounded men back to the medical aid boat. Later, after additional rescue parties were operating, Johnson tended to GIs on the paddy. Twice, the men he was helping were hit by fire.

Monitors Save the Day - The only thing that prevented a complete disaster was the arrival of converted WWII landing ships the GIs called "monitors" (after the Civil War vessel). Then described by Time as gunboats "that can slither along like water moccasins in shallow inlets and stand up to direct hits from recoilless rifles," they came in behind the VC position, using 40mm cannon and 81mm mortars to chop the camouflaging trees down and expose the enemy.

"The monitors came right in on top of them," Reeves said. "Their firepower saved us. It was pretty bad." Navy Lt. Augustine Marana, aboard one of the ships, recalled, "We kept laying the fire in, and just chopped the trees down."

Though battle would last into the night, the monitors' arrival turned the tide for the Americans. By morning, the remaining VC were gone; an off-site Navy decision to pull back the gunboats before nightfall allowed them to escape across the Rach Nui River. Regardless, according to Cutler, "The Viet Gong were rendered ineffective in Long An Province for more than a year." Chaplain Johnson, who was awarded the Silver Star for his actions, described June 19 as "the longest day of my life." He was not the only hero that day—Spec. 4 Noel T. West was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

The medic with A Company, according to his citation, completely disregarded his own safety: "As bullets pounded the ground and filled the air around him, West dashed from casualty to casualty, rendering aid that in several cases proved to be of a life-saving nature. Hostile machine-gun fire sprayed the rice paddy, and West, while aiding yet another wounded soldier, was hit and mortally wounded. West gave his life in order that others might live."

The final GI toll: 48 KIA and 150 WIA. A Company sustained the greatest loss with 27 KIA. The remaining deaths were split among six other companies. According to captured VC documents and prisoners, 170 Communists were killed, including the battalion commander. This was a U.S. victory, however, bought dearly with American lives.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Dec.	31	Monday	New Year's Eve Party	
Jan.	7	Monday	SAL Meeting	6:30 PM
	10	Thursday	E-Board Meeting	7:00 PM
	12	Saturday	Euchre Tournament @ Post 44	1:00 PM
	14	Monday	Reach Out With Music - 9 AM meet @ Post to Car Pool	
	21	Monday	Auxiliary 6:00 E-Board - Gen Meeting	7:00 PM
	24	Thursday	Post General Meeting	7:00 PM

Mon. Thur. & Sat. - Euchre (Fun - Fun) - 1:30 PM

Wednesdays - Bridge - 1:00 PM - Call 480-991-4524

Trivia on Sundays @ 3:00 PM

Historian – Sully

Anytime Legion Members would like to stroll down Memory Lane, the Legion History Books are stored in the Music Room bookcases clearly marked by the year. Flip through some pages while enjoying our Menu Offerings.

Trivia Players – our games resume Sunday, January 6, 2008 at 3:00 PM. Come a little early and find a seat at the bar. Give your brain a workout too and refresh your Facts & Fiction.

Tax Tips – Reverse Mortgages (taking equity out of your home) is not taxable. It is paid back when the home is sold by you or your heirs.

EUCHRE

We play Euchre here Mon. Thurs. & Sat. starting at 1:30. It is fun and a great way to meet people.

Also, we have a Euchre Tournament the 2nd Saturday (1:00 PM) every other month. The next one will be here Jan. 12 @ 1 PM.

So on the 2nd Saturday of every month there is no Euchre here at the Post because of the tournaments. Remember the tournaments are here every other month and elsewhere the other months. Come join us for the fun.

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LUNCH SERVED 11:00 TO 2:00
 MONDAY THRU SATURDAY
 SATURDAY BREAKFAST
 SERVED 10:00 AM - NOON
 SOUP SERVED ALL DAY
 MON-SAT

JANUARY 2008
LEGION POST #44 DINNER
AND
SUNDAY BREAKFAST MENU

DINNER SERVED MON 5:00 PM
 TUES, WED, THURS, SAT
 5:00 - 8:30 PM
 FRI FISH FRY 5:00 - 8:00 PM
 SUN BRUNCH 10 AM - 1 PM
 CLUB HOURS MON-SAT
 10 AM - 10 PM
 SUNDAY 10 AM - 6 PM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Dec 31 New Year's Eve Party	1 New Year's Day SIRLOIN STEAK LIVER & ONIONS	2 FILET STUFFED PORKCHOPS SHRIMP ALA VODKA JAZZ	3 BEEF TIPS	4 FISH FRY MIKE	5 PRIME RIB SHRIMP SCAMPI CHICK CORD BLU RODGER
6 EGGS BENNIE	7 LUNCH FOR DINNER	8 SIRLOIN STEAK SHRIMP BASKET	9 FILET LAMB SHANKS SALMON JAZZ	10 PORK ROAST	11 FISH FRY	12 PRIME RIB CHICKEN STIR FRY COCONUT SHRIMP DALLAS
13 PORK CHOPS	14 LUNCH FOR DINNER	15 SIRLOIN STEAK CHICK DUMPLINGS	16 FILET STUFF OSCAR BEEF STIR FRY JAZZ	17 CABBAGE ROLLS	18 FISH FRY MIKE	19 PRIME RIB STUFF PORK CHOPS SALMON CARLOTTA
20 EGGS BENNIE	21 LUNCH FOR DINNER	22 SIRLOIN STEAK CHICK FRIED STEAK	23 FILET CHICK CORD BLU SHRIMP SCAMPI JAZZ	24 ROAST BEEF	25 FISH FRY RODGER	26 PRIME RIB FRIED SHRIMP RASB CHICK DALLAS
27 SEAFOOD OMLETTE	28 LUNCH FOR DINNER	29 SIRLOIN STEAK	30 FILET COCONUT SHRIMP CHICK STIR FRY JAZZ	31 MEAT LOAF		

**JOIN US AT THE LEGION FOR A
 GOOD MEAL AND GREAT FRIENDS**

**MUSIC MOST WED'S,
 FRI'S & SAT'S**

Post 44 Honor Guard

Geno Yorga, Dave Hallman, Larry Burman, Graham Higton, Peter Konjevich, Vaughn Turner, Bob Procknow, Rick Thompson



AZ American Legion Attendees @ Fall Conference - December 7, 8, 9, 2007



Jerry Lennemann, Bob Turner, Lum Houser, Bob Smith,
Neil Sundeen



Dept. Adutant John Aldecoa
Dept. Cmdr. Bruce Conklin



Aux. Pres. Bunny Hamilton - AZ Dept.
Aux. Pres. Barbara Matheson - Historian
Rosa Masson



VA Hospital Volunteer receiving a
donation from Post 44 by
Vice Cmdr Andy Jaime



Matt Switzer - SALS
Christmas Donation to the
"Returning Warriors"
VA Hospital