

...remembering to honor and thank American men and women who have honored us with their service



Thanks and honor be for those who served...

Austin, Veteran's Day Weekend, 2016. Nov. 11th this year came up a beautiful, cool, fall morning with a foggyish start. And it passed on to be a perfect hill country sweet breeze blue day ... even had pink clouds all strung out across a burnt orange sunset. Woulda looked totally fake on canvas. And right now it's flat nippy. The fireplace is working it's warmth while I frame up our gratitude for the veterans in our extended class family, especially for the privilege of looking through stories and pictures. And since it's November, it's appropriate to let this be our Thanksgiving tribute. Thanks be for the shared warmth of loyal forever classmates as sons and daughters of veterans, and as veterans ourselves...thanksgiving all around ...for those who sent things in, and for those silent ones who didn't but wanted to. We heard that. You're covered with thanksgiving and honor for your service to our country side by side with the beloved honor we have for our parents and ancestors on this Veterans Day Weekend, and beyond.

—Terry Hobbs Heller, daughter of Capt. Carl Alfred Hobbs, U.S. Army, 29th Division, D-Day+1 veteran, 1941-1945, and AHS graduating class of 1931. Thanks be and Loyal Forever, Dad.



First of all, thank you Eddie Dudley...for your service and for sending in your pictures the old-fashioned way. What a treat. The handsome young officer on the left is 2nd Lieutenant Dudley, 1967 ... and the handsome somewhat-middling-older version on the right is Major Dudley, 1988.



Rich Adams sent in a snap of his dad, Col. Ernest C. Adams as District Engineer for the Kansas City District in 1956...following his combat service in WWII and Korea. Thanks also to you, Rich, for your service in the Army - Field Artillery (later Corps of Engineers); Vietnam; Saudi Arabia; Germany (1967-1974).



Jimmy Raup sent this one in of Mable and Cal Raup circa 1942. And then he quipped "Mother's 'uniform' is Army Wife. Dad was somewhere along the way to being discharged as a Captain in the US Army. He was a basic training instructor for infantrymen at Camp Pontchartrain in New Orleans. I was born there 9/26/45 before his discharge. We returned here soon after." We are grateful for your dad's *and your mom's* service, and thanks be for reminding us of that very fact ... that they also served who maintained the homefront.

**wo ...a native cajun...who knew? ..'splains soooo many things :) **



"Kelly" Luedeke sent in pics of her mom and dad, and wrote: "My dad graduated from Austin High School in 1934. He was working in the oil fields of Odessa, TX when he met my mother who was teaching art at Odessa High School."



When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Dad and Mom married, Dad enlisted in the Army and went to Officer Training School. He was stationed in the Philippines and gained the rank of Captain when he separated from the Army in 1945. In 1946 our family moved to Austin and lived in a little rock house on Bonnie Rd. in the quiet Tarrytown neighborhood. Mom taught at Austin High School from 1956 to 1965. So both Dad and Mom were connected to our great school!"

aha. the source of PKM's loyal foreverness perfection at last revealed—a double legacy!

And Kelly had another pic, and a story...



Dad came home with a Japanese flag, sword and rifle. He did not explain how he acquired them but they were "trophies" normally taken from fallen Japanese soldiers. It was a common practice at that time, now strictly prohibited by the military. Dad did not share too much about his experiences in the war.

I saw a documentary on the Japanese during WWII and learned that soldiers carried a personal flag with them and the writing on flags was often personal messages from family members. That photo was taken in the Philippines.

—Marguerite “Kelly” Jarrell Luedeke

Thanks, Kelly, for sending these in...we are grateful for your dad's service on our behalf and in the cause of freedom.

We actually went over to Marcy Howard's to get this story and pics...what a haul. There were boxes all over the dining room table. We couldn't stop taking pictures of all the treasures, but here is a gleaning of just three: a letter from her dad to her mom with a couple of pictures of Gene Howard and service buddies.

Darwin, N.T.
27 Aug 45

Darling:

Just a note to accompany +
explain the photos.

The one of the guy holding the bomb
over his head is Capt. Dywad. He
has sent a bunch more home to
have prints made. So you should
get some of them from his wife soon.

The one of the 3 of us around the
APO sign is me + the two guys
that work in the APO. It is taken
out in front of the bldg where we have
our offices.

Love
Gene



Marcy also had a several handfuls of colorful money from her dad's war years in the Philippines...enough to start her own monopoly game with serious funding excitement just for passing Go.



Thanks, Marcy, for a wealth of memorabilia shared, and we are grateful for your dad's service for all of us.

We hoped for at least one person in the class to give voice to memories of veterans who served the cause of freedom in Vietnam. Franklin Mendez was that one, and we are deeply grateful for his response. Here are his reflections on his last day in Vietnam. We wouldn't change even one comma.

MY LAST WAKE UP

August 27, 1965 Republic of Vietnam

My last day in country was the worst day of my entire tour of duty. I just knew that my luck would run out on this day, by some strange miracle I made it to the “as we called it back then”....”Your Last Wake Up”.

Anticipation abounds, nobody likes you today, I felt like nobody was in a big hurry to process my orders to get going. It also felt like the time was running away from me and nobody really cared if I left or stayed. The sound of war was all around me, business as usual for everyone else. My two sea bags were all packed, but I still had all my 782 gear and my M14 Rifle.

It's getting to be mid morning I have yet to be called to the First Sergeants command tent to get my orders to leave this place. It's the waiting around that gives you the willies. You have that macabre feeling that something is going to happen that will cancel your departure.

Just before noon I hear my name hollered out from the direction of the command tent, along with 5 others that I cannot recognize because the blood in my ears is pounding like a drum.

All I can think about is getting on that Six By Six Truck and going somewhere to leave this place. I am not sure how I'm getting out of here today. No one to date had rotated back to the real world. We were the first group of many that would follow to rotate back to the world. This whole rotation process was a new invention that was not familiar to anyone in Vietnam. Especially the enlisted in the field.

I ran to the command tent to get my orders. We lined up facing the Sergeant holding a

clipboard. Anxiously we waited for the good news. What he said was not the news I was waiting for on this day.

“ Get your rifles, helmets and cartridge belts and load up on that truck over there” he pointed to a Six-By parked near by.

I could not believe what I was hearing. None of us could, we just stood there and looked at him in shock. That was only the beginning of a very stressful afternoon.

We did as we were ordered and loaded on the truck. They drove us to a nearby river south of DaNang Air Base. As I recall our base camp sat on a bluff above a river but I don't remember the name of that river -- it was in the vicinity of the airbase. We unloaded the truck and were given the following instructions:

“We have information that the VC have tunnels on the river bank. Fix bayonets, lock and load your weapons and proceed along the river bank, stab the bank every 5 feet or so to see if you can locate the tunnels, let us know if you find one”. Three of us went one direction and the other three went the opposite direction.

We walked the grassy bank stabbing it with our M14 bayonets for about 300 yards. Every stab I made into the sandy bank was like falling through the gallows trap door. My heart was pounding and all I could think about was “that I was not leaving today”.

I knew I was going to die, I knew that I would make a stab into the bank and fall into a tunnel full of VC who would cut me to pieces before I could say a word. It was the most stressful hour I spent in Vietnam.

I felt helpless, you can't refuse an order on your last day, or any day for that matter, this one just did not fit in with my plan of the day. I was rudely reminded that my plan had no relevance in the Corps. We follow orders, simple as that.

I have re-lived that hour over and over wanting to convince myself that it had to be a joke. To this day I am still wondering about that order. Was it a real need or was it a joke to make us sweat one last time.

After we finished they drove us back to base camp and had us start processing out. There was no mention of it having been a joke. I want to think they were serious about having us do what we did. Thank God we found no tunnels on the riverbank.

The day was moving so fast I lost track of time. At about 1600 we boarded the truck with our two sea bags. The ride to Danang Air Base was not one without peril. Along the way we drove through Dog Patch, and the Ammo dump. The dump had been hit a few weeks earlier with rockets. We knew we were still in Indian country.

Arriving at the Base we were trucked across the Tarmac to an open field on the opposite side of the main air terminal. We unloaded and lined up in formation with the other group that was already there. It was a staging area of sorts for the "Short Timer's".

Shortly after our arrival the last truck crossed the Tarmac and unloaded the final group that would be departing to the real World. As soon as they unloaded we were ordered to dump our two sea bags on our Poncho for inspection. The bag inspection went pretty fast, it was over in about an hour.

The Continental Airline's 737 Jet arrived at the airfield at about 1800. It was a beautiful sight to behold knowing I just might be going home after all. I don't know where the strength comes from but when the word was given to board the plane, those two sea bags full of all I owned were as light as two bags full of feathers. Single file we loaded from where we had been inspected. The line was long and moving very slow. As the ladder got closer the talking stopped, cigarettes were put out and field stripped.

My heart rate got more intense as the line seemed as though it was not moving at all. Walking up the steps of the ladder felt like a transformation was occurring in me, I couldn't quite put my finger on it. It just felt strange. I was not sure if I would see any of my buddies that were staying behind ever again. I felt like I was abandoning them but at the same time I was glad to be on that ladder very close to leaving that place.

As I entered the plane the first thing I noticed were the seats, they were facing to the rear. I remember a lot of moving around as everyone was trying to get a seat. At that moment in time I knew no one and wanted to talk to no one. I was afraid they would wake me up and laugh in my face and tell me it was all a joke.

As soon as all were boarded we heard the hatch close and the lock bar fall in place.

I started praying as I had done on many a night. It was still too good to be true. It was surreal and nerve wracking knowing we could still be hit with rockets.

The engines revved up to a high pitch and the plane moved backward very slow at first then picking up speed we felt every separation of concrete on the Tarmac. As the plane gained altitude we could see the hills and the mountains fade away. The sun was setting behind the mountains somewhere in Laos. The entire plane was so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

When the Capitan announced that we were out of rocket range we exploded in screams of joy, hollering all kinds of happy noises that went on for about an hour. We finally got all the joy out and realized that we could actually get some sleep. So we slept many

undisturbed hours. Dreaming of a tomorrow that would be very different from yesterday. Sleep was a luxury we were denied for many months.

This rotation took place in August 1965, I was assigned to Bravo Company 4th Platoon First Amtrac Battalion, 3rd Marine Division as a Lance Corporal Crew Chief, I was 20 years old.

That was my "Last Wake Up" as I recall.

Semper Fi to all of you that were there that day.

Sgt. Franklin Mendez

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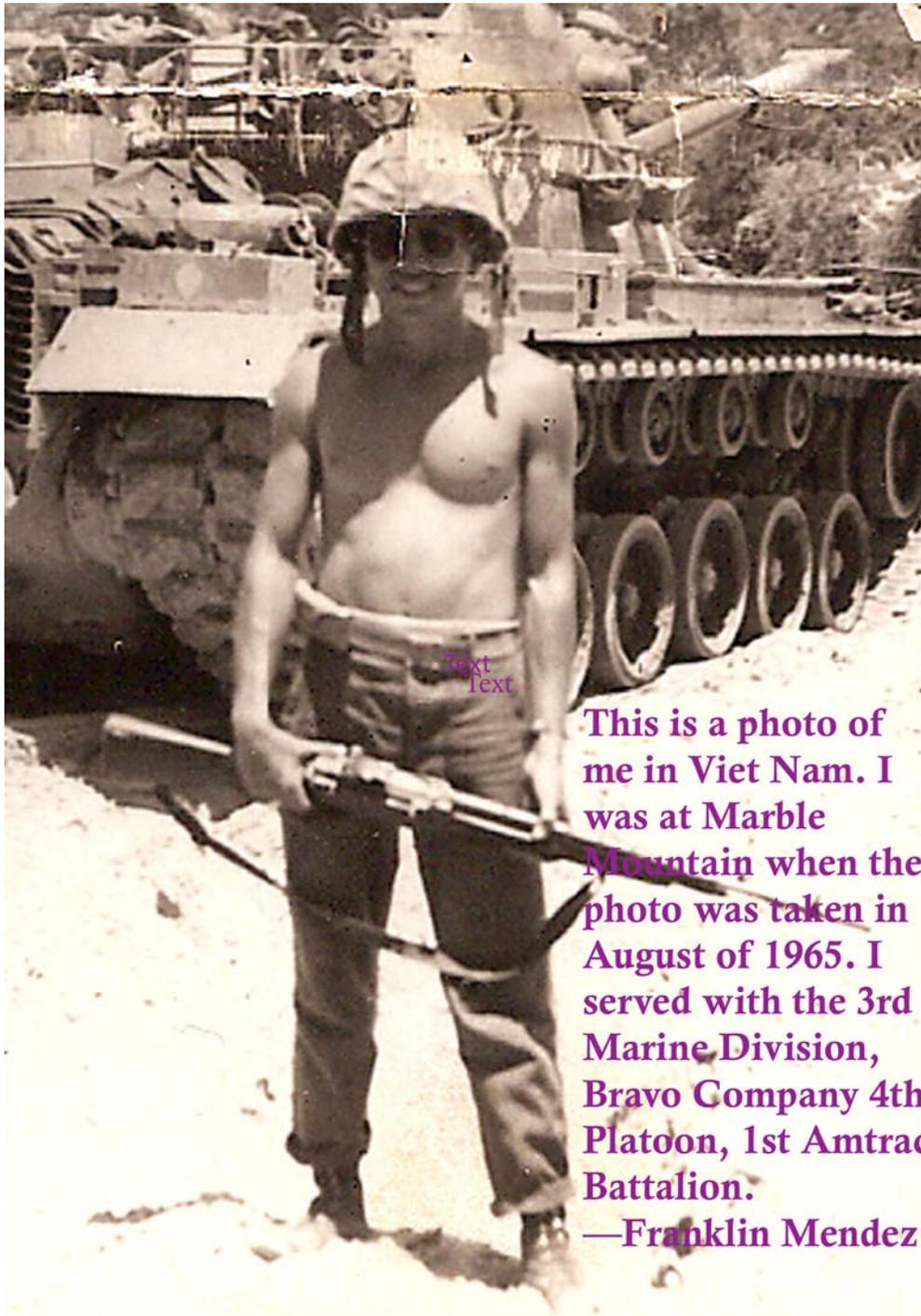
USMC

'63-'67

N.B. Below is a historical note on tunnels being found two years later near Saigon, 368 miles to the south of Da Nang. There was a highly publicized incident on August 3, 1965 of "Indians" killing seven marines close to the Da Nang air base. So, yes Franklin, on August 27, your superior officer may have been intuitive in suspecting tunnels near Da Nang air base. I couldn't find any entry on tunnels eventually being found there, but your search was most likely very real. —THH [See "The Jungle War, 1965-68" TheHistoryPlace.com]:

"January 8-26, 1967 - Operation Cedar Falls occurs. It is the largest combined offensive to date and involves 16,000 American and 14,000 South Vietnamese soldiers clearing out Viet Cong from the 'Iron Triangle' area 25 miles northwest of Saigon. The Viet Cong choose not to fight and instead melt away into the jungle. Americans then uncover an extensive network of tunnels

..."



This is a photo of me in Viet Nam. I was at Marble Mountain when the photo was taken in August of 1965. I served with the 3rd Marine Division, Bravo Company 4th Platoon, 1st Amtrac Battalion.

—Franklin Mendez

Marble Mountains (Vietnamese: Ngũ Hành Sơn; lit. "five elements mountains") a cluster of five marble and limestone hills located in Ngũ Hành Sơn District, south of Da Nang city in Vietnam.

We gratefully honor your service, Lance Corporal Franklin Mendez. Thanks from the heart for your contribution to this Veterans Day Weekend Edition, and to the richness of being Loyal Forever.

Loyal Forever, Y'all



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You are on this list because you are brilliant & still drink from the fountain of youth known as Loyal Forever
- the AHS Class of 63

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