

ANIMAL DEN OCCASIONAL BULLETIN #6  
23 October 12012

From: Hitemor@aol.com

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Sent: 10/23/2012 5:39:39 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

Subj: ANIMAL DEN OCCASIONAL BULLETIN #6

TO ALL:

Happy whatever the hell time of year it is! It's Possum Time down South. Nobody but me observes Possum Time, based on the poem by Maria Howard Weeden.

I'll bet everybody has been waiting with baited breath to learn how the Animal Den got it's name! Here's the tail --- I mean tale:

According to Rich Moyle, the Animal Den got its name in the spring of 1968 when a refrigerator was being installed in the dayroom. Water from the water-cooler next to the refrigerator had been spilled onto the concrete floor, making a little pond, and one of the men working with the refrigerator's wiring stepped into the water and received an electrical shock that bound him helplessly in place, unable to move. Rich saw what was happening and realized the serious danger to the man, so Rich quickly tackled him, in football style, throwing them both out the door of the dayroom. One of two troops passing by outside, not knowing what had really happened, assumed that there was a fight, whereupon he said to his companion: "Bunch of damn animals in that hut!" In very short order, as if by magic, a sign appeared above the outside dayroom door proclaiming Hut 351 to be the "Animal Den."

Add to our Memorial List:

Larry Witanek

It was not until 2012 that I learned Ron Mahar had lost his lifelong friend, Chester Lawrence "Larry" Witanek, Jr. (7 April 1947-25 July 1968), from Cheshire, Massachusetts. Larry was a Spec. 4 in A Company, 506th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, US Army, headquartered in the 101st Airborne compound at Bien Hoa. Larry was killed in action on 25 July 1969 [1968] at Hua Nghia in III Corps. The cause of his death was given as "multi-fragment wounds." (These statements are drawn from Ancestry.com Vietnam War: U.S. Military Casualties, 1956-1998, for Chester Lawrence Witanek, Jr. [two pages], and U.S. Army Personnel and Dependent Casualties, 1961-1981, for Chester L. Witanek, Jr.)

Larry and Ron had an arrangement so that whenever Larry came in from the field, he had the use of Ron's bunk for whatever time he wanted it. Larry was therefore known to the hut residents generally and was a friend of the hut. After Ron went home in September 1968, his bunk became mine.

DD 124s

Yup, I got that one wrong. They don't reveal the dates of foreign service, so if you want to know your Nam dates, pull out your MAC boarding passes. I'm sure you all kept them, right? I mean, we were told to hang onto them at all costs because if we lost them we couldn't board the Freedom Bird.

Comments

I've been rereading a bunch of books I got back in 1985-86 written mostly by Marine and Army enlisted ground troops in Nam, and refreshing my memory on a lot of things. It blows my mind to remember what was going on back then, how we got into that war and how it was handled (mishandled). It's difficult to be clear in making people understand that a person can think a war was wrong, yet stand by our men who were fighting it, and even go fight it ourselves. In recent years, it's almost become treason to question the politicians who make our wars, yet in reality, it happens nowadays that the politicians who make wars are committing treason themselves, and to question their actions

is the duty of good citizens, especially when the lives of thousands of young men (and women) are at stake. I have lived long enough to see that no lessons at all were learned from the American experience in Viet Nam because the same errors have involved us in two wars in the Middle East; maybe three, if we count Pakistan, and of course we haven't invaded Iran yet, but some of our politicians are trying to make us do that, too.

If we had learned anything from Nam, these later wars would not have occurred. Preemptive strikes? Reckon that's why Hitler invaded Poland in 1938, right? And the "Slavias" and France and Austria, and every other country he was close enough to reach, including finally Russia. The standard term for preemptive invasion is "hostile invasion" and it used to be what the bad guys did. Now it's us. I remember what another great Southerner said, and appropriate to bring him up in this season of Possum Time --- Pogo Possum of the Okefenokee Swamp back in the 1950s, referring to the so-called "Red Menace" and the persecutions of innocent Americans by Senator McCarthy: "I have seen the enemy and he is us."

The men who made our present wars spent the Viet Nam years avoiding service or seeing to it that they avoided Nam at all costs. They know nothing whatever of war, but they can send others off to fight and die without a qualm. Ever notice that no Nam Vet will ever be president of the US? This is unique among American war vets. The two likely prospects, McCain and Kerry, were discredited for their very strengths --- their war records. It's one thing to dislike a candidate, or oppose him politically, but to turn his strongest points around and make them into lethal political weapons is unconscionable. Even if McCain's and Kerry's war service had been as disreputable as their political opponent said it was, it was a damned sight better than his war service!

Anybody wanna fight?

Joe

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In a message dated 10/23/2012 5:58:27 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Jrush4211@aol.com writes:

great to hear from you joe. while john mccain is truly a war hero in the strongest term its not the same for john forbes kerry. do you remember anyone with a movie camera in nam? and do you remember anybody who had someone follow him around with a movie camera taking pictures of him? john kerry has used everybody in climbing the steps to become president. heck he is disappointed in becoming a us senator where he had to play second banana to ted kennedy. a recent story had him at 5% voting across the isle in wash. he has been called one of the most ineffective senators in wash. he is a BUM. only because mass. is the bluest of blue states and that he is a democrat has he been able to keep getting reelected. reports have him spending all his money he has raised as he may be replacing hillary clinton as sec. of state. and if his wife were not the heinz ketchup lady he would never give her a second look. the guys a regular gigalo. joe thanks for letting me vent. whip!!!

oct.31 will be one year since our friend john munger passed.

Thats richie for you. I do believe thats how the animal den got its name

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In a message dated 10/23/2012 6:32:07 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, rkmoyle@yahoo.com writes:

Holy mackerel! You OK? Have you been storing that up? Whew! My week thus far hasn't been all that good, but your latest note made think that I am not bad after all.

Yes, you are correct about the den name, you have basically stated it as it happened. Of course that excludes the part about how stupid my efforts were. As we all know now if you knock someone out of the current line you will indubitably get nailed by the electrical current as you release the man you hit. That fraction of a second releases the current holding the other guy to you as well as voltage that passes through. Many times it leaves you worse off than the originator. I do recall having the shakes and nerves for a few hours after! The guy outside was one of our cooks in our

sister hut. The guys name was, are you readyfor this?! Vinny! The same guy I saved during a rocket/mortar attack. Some guys have all the luck!

[My guess is that Rich hit the other man in mid air so that both were airborne long enough to break their connection to the circuit. Rich can do anything!!!]

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In a message dated 10/23/2012 8:22:07 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, rodo48@adelphia.net writes:

Whoa, Mojoe, what have you been drinking brother, southern moonshine? You are one fired up puppy tonight. I notice that you have Larry's kia date as 1969 vice 68. Ron

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In a message dated 10/24/2012 12:57:46 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Hitemor@aol.com writes:

For anyone interested, here is my Nam reading list, in no particular order and all nonfiction:

Johnnie M. Clark: "Guns Up! Vietnam as it was lived and fought: A Marine machine gunner's own exciting true story" (1984)

John H. Shook: "One Soldier: A True Vietnam Story Too Many Young Men Have Never Lived to Tell" (1986)

John Wheeler: "Touched With Fire: The Future of the Vietnam Generation" (1984)

Myra MacPherson: "Long Time Passing: Vietnam & The Haunted Generation" (1984)

John Sack: "M," about M Company, 1st Advanced Infantry Training Brigade, (1966)

James R. McDonough: "Platoon Leader: A Front Line Personal Report of Vietnam Battle Action" (1985)

Al Santoli: "Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It" (1981)

Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller: "Charlie Company: What Vietnam Did to Us" (1983)

Frederick Downs, Jr.: "Aftermath: A True Story" (1984). This same author wrote "The Killing Zone," which I have not read.

Lynda Van Devanter: "Home Before Morning: TheTrue Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam" (1983)

Mark Baker: "Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Soldiers Who Fought There" (1981)

Philip Caputo: "A Rumor of War" (1977)

Michael Herr: "Dispatches: A War Correspondent's National Bestseller of Soldiers at the Front" (1968)

Colonel Jack Broughton: "Thud Ridge: Air Battle Action Against the Heart of North Vietnam" (1969)

Gloria Emerson: "Winners & Losers: Battles, Retreats, Gains, Losses and Ruins from the Vietnam War" (1972)

Zalin Grant: "Survivors: American POWs in Vietnam in their own words" (1975)

David Butler: "The Fall of Saigon: Scenes from the Sudden End of a Long War" (1985)

Marvin E. Gettleman, ed: "Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions" (1970)

Bernard Edelman, ed: "Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam" (1985). This one will tear you up and leave you in shreds. I think there is a film version, but I've never seen it and don't think I could.

These books don't even scratch the surface of soldiers' accounts of Viet Nam. There must be hundreds of books by vets telling their story, and a great many of them were enlisted men.

You can't read these books without seeing parallels with the present generation and understanding that our men now are repeating our own history and it did not need repeating, but people always repeat their history when ignorance prevails over information and knowledge. But I'll leave the politically-charged present alone and just stay in the past. We were lied into Nam. That's a plain fact and I think most of us who were over there know it, and knew it at the time. God knows, we discussed it often enough over there.

Now how does that last line go? "Tomorrow is another day?" Or as the squib said to the scollop: "Frankly, Scollop, I don't give a clam!"

Joe

[See later correction ~~â€~~ ~~â€~~escallop~~â€~~in place of ~~â€~~scollop.~~â€~~]

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