

OPHSA



OP Harry Survivors Association Newsletter

July 2003

Issue 30

12th REUNION THE BEST EVER

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE JUNE BATTLES PROMPTS LARGEST ATTENDANCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION

The 12th reunion of the OP Harry Survivors Association took place in Port Wentworth, GA, June 12- 15. There were about 60 members and 67 guests in attendance on this 50th Anniversary of the last large-scale battles fought to hold the Outpost against swarms of fanatical Chinese soldiers. One of the questions frequently heard in conversation was, "Remember where we were 50 years ago today?"

Many of these survivors never expected to see the dawn of the next day, much less live 50 more years.

Registration opened on June 12. The new system worked well as members arrived from all over the country. This year the longest travel route was negotiated by Dan Carson from his home in Hawaii. Jerry Cunningham, our Reunion Chairman, opened the reception with the latest schedule information followed by a fine selection of Hors d'oeuvres. Our hospitality room was set up in the same large meeting room with everyone mixing his own.

The following morning we all boarded buses for a ride to the 3rd Infantry Division NCO Academy near Ft. Stewart. The current student body was formed up into two platoons in front of the headquarters building to greet us with the singing of "Dog Face Soldier".

CSM Albert D. Newton, Academy Commandant, greeted us with a short introduction to the mission of the Academy. In brief their purpose is to manufacture Sergeants from the men and women who are recommended for the 30-day course by their unit commanders.

We had a detailed briefing in the Academy Briefing Center followed by a gathering outside the building for a group photo. The next step was to form into smaller groups and tour the barracks, classrooms and offices in the facility.

Then it was chow time at the Academy dining facility. The menu choices were a little different

than most of us remembered from our time in the Army: grilled steak, fried fish, fried shrimp, baked fish, macaroni & cheese, sautéed mushrooms, baked potatoes, seasoned broccoli, seasoned corn, mushroom gravy or shrimp fried rice, a salad bar, assorted breads, hot rolls, hush puppies, cookies, black forest cake and French cheese cake. Nobody went away hungry.

Upon leaving the NCO Academy the buses continued to the main base at Ft. Stewart where we stopped to visit the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor motor pool to view some military vehicles. Among them were the Humvee, Bradley Fighting Vehicles and the Abrams M1 Tank. TV cameras and reporters were there to cover our visit. Jerry Cunningham, Martin Markley and Sam Buck were interviewed for the Savannah evening news programs. We visited the 3rd Division Museum and then on to the Marne Garden for a special ceremony. The 3rd Division band, just returned from Iraq, played a concert of military music. The color guard moved forward. After the narrator outlined the Defense of OP Harry the garrison Commander, Co. John Kidd, spoke about the achievements of the Survivors. Col. Kidd then awarded the Silver Star for Valor to Sam Buck for his actions on OP Harry 50 years and three days before. Martin Markley, who was in the same bunker with Buck during the battle, delivered a short speech of tribute as did Jerry Cunningham who also presented Col. Kidd a framed piece of rusty barbed wire from a fence along the DMZ in Korea.

The ceremony was ended with the sounding of retreat as the colors were rolled and cased. The customary cannon salute was fired with the empty shell presented to Sam Buck as a memento of the occasion.

The next day Chaplain Ed Hanrahan and Reunion Chairman Jerry Cunningham conducted the solemn memorial service. Members from each

of the units who engaged in the Defense of OP Harry came forward to light a ceremonial candle in memory of those young men who sacrificed all to hold that bloody hill. The ceremony closed with a poem read by Don Chase and the sounding of taps.

Members were invited to speak of their memories of OP Harry. Among several who spoke were new member Lawrence Connors, new member Ralph Smith, member Dan Carson attending his first reunion, Vince Meads and new member Robert Hooker.

Francis X. Riley was elected President of the Association during the business meeting. Floyd Deiwert was elected Vice President.

The Banquet took place the following evening. F. Walden Storie, immediate past President of the Association was the featured speaker. His subject was 'Patriots & Heros'. The talk was a fine look at the history of our country with the focus upon the men who fought to free this country from tyranny and those who came after to fight to keep us free for 227 years.

It was time for awards. Don Chase and Rankin Burchfield were awarded the Medal of St. Maurice from the Infantry Association as were Mark Woods, John Pate, and Jim Steffan. Steffan, along with Paul Gregory, Floyd Deiwert and John Ross received their Distinguished Unit Citation Ribbons 50 years after their units had been incorrectly left off of the original orders in 1953.

A framed Medal of St. Maurice was accepted by Juanita Johnson-Mendez on behalf of her brother Charles Johnson who, though wounded, saved the lives of eight of his comrades before he was killed on OP Harry. Juanita's husband Garry accompanied her. Donald Dingee presented the award. He was one of the eight soldiers whose lives were saved that night by the heroic actions of Charles Johnson.

Richard Martinet was presented a special plaque for his long service to the OP Harry Survivors Association as Editor and Historian.

The following morning saw the farewell breakfast as new friends and old comrades spoke their good wishes to each other for a safe trip home.

We hope to see you all again next June in San Diego, California.

Articles, letters, and emails to the Newsletter are the memories and opinions of the writers. If you disagree with the author please contact the author, not the editor.

To function effectively the Newsletter must remain neutral in the best interest of the Association.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OPHSA does not levy dues. We do have expenses and must ask for your contributions. Please make your checks payable to OP Harry Survivors Association. Mail to:

Sam Buck
1514 West Court Ave.
Winterset, IA 50273-1789

NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

The 12th reunion and the 50th anniversary turned out great. The weather was excellent, the visit to Ft. Stewart outstanding, even the chow was good at the mess hall.

How fortunate we all were to be able to attend that reunion and I know we all privately take time out to give thanks.

Walden Storie did a great job as guest speaker and furnished the one shot candlelighter for the memorial service.

In talking to Rhonda Gloodt I found she was disappointed that she could not make the reunion; however the upside was her [Naval Reserve] unit was not called up and things changed at the last minute. She is still subject to call-up any time in the future.

Rankin Burchfield's brother-in-law, Paul Boshears, had a heart attack while visiting Fort Jackson on the way home to Tennessee with Rankin. He was rushed to the hospital and had a stent installed. We wish Paul a speedy recovery.

Talked to Brooks Fullen and he has now retired from teaching and hopes to be able to attend the reunions every year now.

Jerry Lang is having eye surgery sometime this summer.

We were quite happy to hear that Jerry Cunningham has decided to stay on. Thank you Jerry! Also thanks to Lillie for keeping a sharp eye on the burning candles. She saved the day.

Please remember our military people in your prayers and God Bless America.



Ed Hanrahan

NEW MEMBER TELLS INTENSELY PERSONAL STORY

Dan Carson attended his first OPHSA reunion this year. He was the photo officer of the photo section of the 3rd Signal Company after having served with the 304th Signal Bn. He may be the only Army photographer who had assignments to photograph both Pork Chop Hill and later OP Harry.

The remarks he made during the recollections of OP Harry after the memorial service are printed here for your information.

Dan wants you to know that he will be happy to talk to anyone who would like first hand information about the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD from his personal experience.

Dan assures us that he will keep any contact completely confidential.

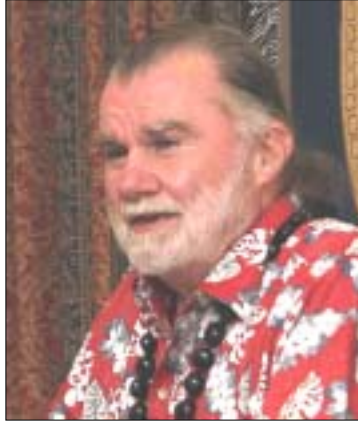
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PTSD-The Invisible Wound

Remarks by Dan Carson at the 'recollections' session of the 2003 reunion of OPHSA

A poem was just read which mentioned those who came back with 'broken bodies' and shattered minds'. I'm one of those whose mind was damaged, if not shattered at OP Harry. About a year after I returned home to New York from Korea in May of '54, I began to have nightmares when sleeping and panic attacks while driving my car.

I also had problems while walking across open spaces like an empty parking lot; feeling shivers of fear when out in the open. I began to feel fear just by walking out of my house. Sometime it was so bad I had to go back home without doing whatever I had set out to do. Sometimes that meant not going to work.

I became very short tempered and this interfered with my relationships both at home and work. I lost several jobs by either quitting or getting fired when I lost my temper. At home my wife and children took the brunt of my angry outbursts.

There were times I thought it might be connected in some way with Korea, but it started almost two years after the action on Harry, and I wasn't even on that hill when it was attacked. I was in the Signal Company photo section. I made aerial photos from an L-19 and some after action photos of damage following the Chinese attacks.

I didn't think my participation at Harry was as bad as the experience the infantrymen had. They fought and died on Harry. I felt guilty about the fact that I didn't do as much as they did. So I didn't believe Harry had anything to do with whatever was wrong with me. Sometimes the guilt was worse than the fears.

These symptoms seemed to come in waves. I had really serious problems for several years, and then I'd get some relief for several years. Then it would come back - usually worse. I dismissed the possibility this had anything to do with Korea. I believed there was something wrong with my mind, but I didn't know what it was.

I found that taking a drink seemed to relieve my feelings and I felt it helped me to function on bad days. Pretty soon everyday was a bad day, and I needed to drink. Around 1959 I saw a doctor and told him a little about what was going on with me. He prescribed tranquilizers. They seemed to help. Pretty soon I was taking tranquilizers in the morning to get through the day and drinking in the evening to get some sleep.

About 20 years after that doctor's visit, things were still getting worse so I saw another doctor. I told him about my drinking and use of pills. He switched me to different tranquilizers and told me to cut down on my drinking. I did use the different tranquilizers but I could not cut down on my drinking. Not much changed. I kept getting worse.

Finally in 1985 I was diagnosed with serious liver trouble. I went to a counselor who insisted I go to AA and stop the drinking and the pills. I did that, and for a while I felt better. I then decided the booze and the pills were my problem and I thought it was solved. Against the counselors advice I stopped seeing her, and I thought everything was fine.

Not everything was fine, though. My drinking and drugging had irreversibly damaged my marriage and I was divorced. Gradually the fears and guilt started creeping back into my life. I didn't start drinking and doing the pills again but I seriously thought about committing suicide some other, quicker way. My mind was in such a mess I couldn't figure out how to do it.

By 1996 I had married for the second time, and moved to Hawaii. By 2001 this second marriage was deteriorating too; I was not easy to get along with. My second wife left me to return to New York, and I was alone and practically destitute in Hawaii. I lived in a furnished room; I had no health insurance and my social security was barely enough to live on.

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A friend who knew I was a Korean War Vet took me to the VA. I was enrolled because I was "below the income threshold". I was asked a lot of questions. One was, are you allergic to anything? I answered, "alcohol". The nurse asked me if I meant I was an alcoholic. I said yes. She told me I should see their Mental Health people. I got angry and said, "What for? I haven't had a drink in over 17 years - it's ancient history."

She smiled sweetly and said, "No it's not, we've learned a lot about PTSD since the Korean War." It was the first time I ever heard of PTSD, and I asked her what it was. She told me Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The VA recognized it as a problem among combat vets in 1985. She said, "You may be eligible for compensation."

That did get my attention, but even so I was reluctant to go see the Mental Health people. Finally my doctor ordered a consult with a Mental Health counselor who was an expert on PTSD. After a couple of sessions with him and several weekly group-therapy sessions, I realized I do indeed have PTSD. I filed a claim with the VA after four months of treatment, and now I am receiving a monthly compensation check. But by now I've found out that the real payoff for going to the VA has been the progress I've made through treatment for my PTSD. My attitudes and my life have changed completely and I'm very grateful.

If you think you or someone you know might have PTSD, please do something about it. It does not go away, it only gets worse. The VA does have treatment programs that work. They know there are many Korea and WW II veterans who have this disorder and don't even know they do. The VA wants to help them. A screening test can be done to decide if the disorder is present. Just do it!

Today I don't think the compensation is as important to me as the treatment and the resulting improvement in my life. But at the beginning, the magic words that got me started were; "You may be eligible for compensation!"

50 YEAR REUNIONS

A letter and picture from Len Godmaire. (Ed.)

Hello Jim,
I talked to you [at the reunion] about this special reunion day of 4 men on June 14 (Flag Day) celebrating walking off Outpost Harry [exactly 50 years after they did it in '53]

We also phoned the 5th guy, Clyde Corsaro at home who could not make the reunion. The OPHSA website brought us all together. Great to see all these men after 50 years.

Len Godmaire



Len Godmaire, Leigh Morton, Jack Lenz, and Chester Fudala

I had the great pleasure of meeting Dan Carson for the first time in 50 years. Dan was the photo officer of the 3rd Signal Company Photo Section and I was a photographer and darkroom guy in that group. We had met a few years before and corresponded on the Internet. It was difficult to catch up on our lives since we had last seen one another, but we gave it a try.

Jim Jarboe

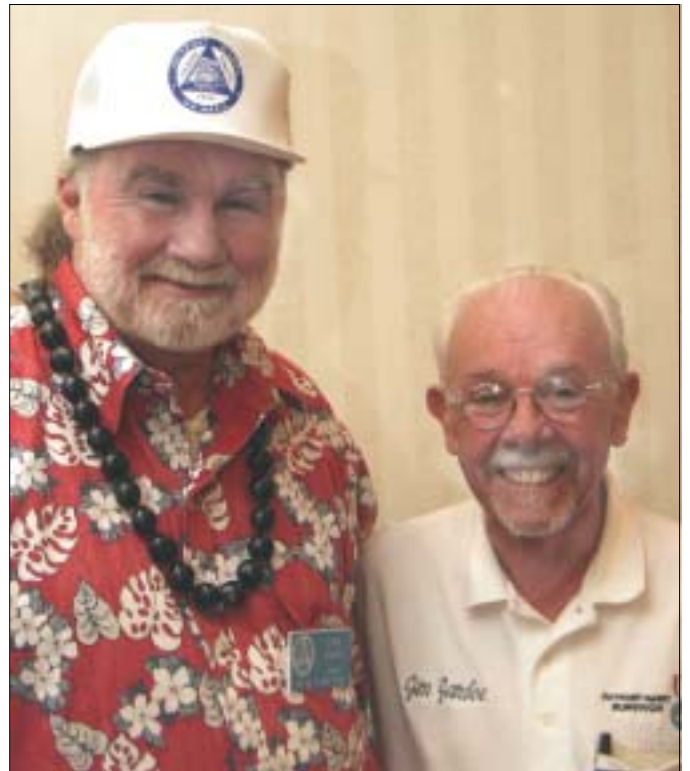


Photo by Freeman Bradford
Dan Carson and Jim Jarboe. Jim is not sitting down.

The following photo was sent via email to Jim Evans with a question asking if this was the first time in 50 years that these men had been together. Jim's answer is printed below. (Ed.)



Yes, this is the first time in 50 years that we were all together again and only together now thanks to Del Tolen. Del picked up "Snake" and brought him to the reunion.

Clyde "Snake" Shinault (center) was First Sergeant for Company A and Del (right) was Executive Officer for Company A. [Jim Evans (left) was Co Commander of Company A 5th RCT.(Ed.)]

Clyde had been a supply sergeant at one time. When I met him I knew that he would make a great First Sergeant and he did not let me down.

"Snake" used his supply experience and kept the stuff coming up the hill. Del led the counter attack each time the Chinese overran us on Harry, June 12/13, killed them all and restored the hill.

We had a good time discussing the good and the bad about Harry and the action.

It was a very emotional experience for me to again be with two of the finest soldiers I have ever known.

There is a bond between comrades in arms who faced death and survived that is hard to explain.

Being together again after all of these years just renewed the bond that has always been there.

These guys made this reunion the best ever.
Look forward to San Diego.

Jim Evans

CHATTER

Rich Kilgen, a Past President of the Association, told the editor that he is putting his degree in history to work. Rich has been lecturing monthly at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania. You couldn't guess the subject of his lectures. The Korean War of course.

oOo

Freeman Bradford, our webmaster, and his wife Pat completed a seven thousand miles plus cross-country road trip from their home in Palo Alto, CA to Florida with lots of stops in between. They adjusted their schedule to include the reunion but were happy to get home. Brad took a large number of pictures which he is trying to organize.

oOo

An article appeared in the Orange County Register describing the presentation of the Bronze Star for Valor to Martin Markley by Rep. Ed Royce at a ceremony in Katella High School in Anaheim, CA.

The OPHSA website has been visited by an average of 7,348 per month since it began in June 2002. By the end of June 2003 the total number of visitors since the inception has been 95,528!

oOo

Here is a note taken off the website guest book on July 17 from a visitor from Baltimore, MD: Fantastic website! Amazing defense of an outpost. Enjoyed the accounts by the survivors. Great to see an association of many units with one thought. "Remembering everyone who was involved." Thanks for your efforts to present the history not just from official documents, but also the stories of the men who participated.

Alan Benton

oOo

Article II of the OPHSA constitution spells out the objectives of the Association in one sentence. "The purpose of the Association is to keep all men who were involved in the battles in Korea to hold Outpost Harry bonded together in common memory of that action and to honor the many sacrifices made by our comrades."

oOo

Korean tour information from Ralph Smith. (Ed.)

Jim: Hope there is still time to get the dates and info into the newsletter. I believe that Roy Montgomery's California Pacific Tours is the way to go, and I have signed up for the 3ID tour. As you probably know, a passport is necessary with the info in hand before you sign up.

The 3rd Inf. Div. tour is 26 Sept-3 Oct. Cost is \$1,990 from San Francisco International to Incheon and return. Domestic Air to San Francisco can be arranged on your own or CPT can provide you with a quote.

The tour includes a visit to Incheon, Wolmi-Do Island landing beaches, Freedom Park, Seoul's War Museum, Itaewon shopping, city tour, Chorwon Valley, "Iron Triangle", "2nd Tunnel of Aggression", White Horse Hill, OP Howe (view OP Harry), Kumhwa, Papasan, Boomerang, Triangle hill Complex, Panmunjom Truce Village, Freedom Bridge, Camp Bonifas, tour Joint Security Area, Bridge of No Return.

The Korea Veterans Association (KVA) sponsors a dinner banquet. The highlight is the presentation of the Korean Government's "Ambassador for Peace" Medal, a civil award given to Veterans of the Korean War.

Blessings, Ranger Ralph--We Held!

For more info:

Roy Montgomery
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Tele: (888) 822-5258
email: rpm@cptours.com

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN
THIS,
THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR
HIS FRIENDS.** John 15:13

The OPHSA reunion in Port Wentworth, GA this year had many memorable moments. One of those moments was the presentation of the National Infantry Association's Medal of St Maurice to the sister of Charles Johnson. Johnson lost his life on OP Harry during the early morning hours of June 12, 1953.



Charles Johnson

As Don tells it, he and Johnson, along with Bob Hooker were in the same bunker when the enemy attacked just after midnight on June 12. By about 3 am Dingee, after getting hit in the arm with a piece of shrapnel, went into a bunker to get more ammunition when a blast hit close by knocking all three soldiers out. Dingee became conscious about 10 minutes later and saw that Johnson and Hooker were unconscious but alive. Dingee tried to find his weapon outside the bunker but saw a Chinese soldier throw a grenade that went into the bunker and knocked him out again. Johnson had recovered from the first blast and told them to play dead. The Chinese came in and bayoneted Hooker. Dingee had been severely wounded in the foot and lower leg.

The Chinese had taken their weapons and left. Johnson though wounded himself said he was going to find some weapons and shortly returned with them. He dragged Dingee to another bunker where he would be more protected, Hooker was able to walk to the same bunker.

The outpost had been overrun but Johnson said he was going out to hold them off. This was the last time his friends saw him alive. Reinforcements arrived, driving the remnants of the enemy soldiers off the hill. It began to rain as Dingee was being carried down the hill. He was looking for Johnson and asked the stretcher-bearers to stop several times as they passed American bodies. The fifth dead American was Charlie Johnson.



Don Dingee and Bob Hooker fifty years later

Dingee and Hooker survived their wounds and met in person for the first time in 50 years at the OPHSA Reunion this year. Dingee had met Johnson's family in the last year or so and became convinced that something had to be done to recognize the incredible heroism exhibited by Charlie Johnson in saving the lives of at least eight American wounded but losing his own life in the effort.

With the OPHSA spirit Jim Evans succeeded in pushing the nomination of Charles R. Johnson through the red tape in time for the Medal to be presented to Juanita (Johnson) Mendez, accompanied by her husband Garry Mendez at the reunion banquet held the evening of June 14, 2003.



Juanita (Johnson) Mendez accepts the National Infantry Association's Medal of St. Maurice in memory of her brother Charles Johnson whose valorous deeds during an enemy attack on OP Harry saved the life of Don Dingee(rt) and at least eight other American soldiers. Mrs. Mendez is accompanied by her husband Garry Mendez.

MINUTES OPHSA BUSINESS MEETING

Port Wentworth, Georgia

6-14-03 E. Douglas Jones, Secretary OPHSA

Here we go again....Meeting was opened at 10.45 A.M. by our devoted President Walden....It was noted that this had the largest attendance of any of our previous reunions....A total of 135 made up of 59 members and 76 guests...If we want more guests next time we have to get Sam another medal...

We had a large number of new members..They were asked to stand and were warmly welcomed...I would like to tell you the exact number but they sat down too quickly....

Rankin was appointed as temporary Sgt. at Arms....He handled the office with utmost dignity...

Sam gave the Treasurers report [his math is greatly improved]...No one made any motion but it was approved anyway...We are definitely way in the black...Sam thanked all for their generous donations this past year...Sam also thanked all for his Silver Star...The thank you wasn't necessary as he earned it....

Ed Hanrahan gave his report on the current sick call list...

Dick [historian] Martinet pleaded for any input we may offer.

NewsLetter Jim also needs any and all info that may be included in his quarterly editions..[I think that he is aiming for "Book of the Month".]The newsletters are excellent...

Now we come to our favorite reunion chairman Jerry...The one who resigned...The one who said "no more"....and finally in one breath said that

he would continue and that we were going to San Diego next year....Talk about getting back on the job in one big hurry....We knew you weren't quitting Jerry....

Saint Patrick Burke was thanked again for his donation of the bar...he is certainly highly qualified and most generous....

By the way there was no Old Business and now we are on New Business....You have to watch carefully as these minutes move along very quickly...I have trouble keeping up myself....

3rd Inf. Secretary Ray Anderson recognized the tremendous Web Site that has been produced by Freeman [Brad] Bradford....Brad talked about the future expenses of the web site...Martin moved to authorize \$100 per year...This was immediately amended to \$150 and 2nd by Warren...Jim Evans only concern was that these costs could escalate over the years...Motion passed....There have been many compliments on this site....

Floyd Deiwert mentioned the availability of shirt and or windbreakers....Dick [still the historian] mentioned the availability of caps and Sam the medals....These guys may just open their own PX....

The founding Fathers [in attendance] [the guys to blame for all this] were given a great applause...Sam Buck, Martin Markley, Jim Evans, Jerry Cunningham and Charles Scott....

John Ferrara was thanked for his donations this year consisting of mounted ammo and last but not least a P38 can opener....Now I don't want to mess anymore with our electric one....

New slate of officers: President..Francis Riley
V.P.....Floyd Diewert

The rest of us had no choice.

Dick M. Moved to accept by acclamation...everybody seconded and nobody left to vote. Passedwe adjourned.



The 2003 OPHSA business meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Port Wentworth, GA

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Customarily this space would be devoted to the "President's Corner" containing words of wisdom and inspiration for the Association from our new President Francis X. Riley.

Unfortunately I have to report that Francis was struck by lightning a few weeks ago.....Well that is not exactly what happened but it came close!

It seems that a big electrical storm was approaching Manassas, VA which prompted Francis to go about his home turning off all the electrical devices. Apparently a nearby lightning strike zapped the one thing he forgot to turn off, his new computer. It's been in the shop for about three weeks having fried components replaced.

The last thing we heard during the reunion was that Francis was facing surgery this summer for a knee replacement. It looked like the computer and the boss were both going to be in the shop at the same time. It appears now that the surgery has been postponed until later this year.

Here are a few facts from Francis' experience in the Korean War. On his first tour he was with a Port Construction Battalion in the Inchon Invasion. His unit's job was to reconstruct huge tidal gates that were used to counteract the tidal extremes by being closed at high tide to keep ships in the port afloat. The gates had been blown up by the North Koreans.

Later in his first tour Francis was wounded and after recuperation was assigned to a training job that he must have hated because he asked to go back to Korea for a second tour. He was assigned to the 10th Engineers which led him to not a few interesting experiences on and around OP Harry.

In conversation at the reunion he mentioned that his late wife, Demetra, was a first generation Greek American. I asked him if he had seen the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding". He not only had seen the movie, but said, "Hell! I lived it!"



Past President F. Walden Storie and newly elected President Francis X. Riley pictured at the close of the OPHSA annual business meeting.



Reunion Pictures



Bus trip to Ft. Stewart

Photo by Freeman Bradford



Ellen, Don Chase, Rankin Burchfield and Rella



Lavonne and Mark Woods with presenter Pat Burke



Jim and Minnie Steffan with presenter John Ross

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Sam Buck with Silver Star, flanked by Garrison CSM Carl Smith (left) and Garrison Commander Col. John Kidd

Photo by Freeman Bradford

Martin Markley speaks of Sam Buck and OP Harry at the Marne Garden Award Cremony



Miss XiaoDong Wei plays 'Amazing Grace' on the Erhu, at the banquet.

If we had a contest for the most magnificent handlebar moustache Del Tolen would have won for sure. The editor thinks he may be wearing a hat from a different war.



The Enemy Wanted This Hill-----



**With Courage, Tenacity and Faith.....
WE HELD!**

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