

The Dragons Jaw



The Official Voice of VVA Chapter 480 Owego, New York

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In November our Chapter voted on, bought, packaged and mailed 77 lbs of assorted sundry items and goodies to our adopted unit in Iraq, G-6 Headquarters Company of the 1st Cavalry Division. Here is a note sent to our Chapter from a Major Prem of that unit.

Dear Gentlemen,

All of us here in the G6 shop of the 1st Cavalry Division would like to thank you for your generosity and your support. As you well know, it is not just the boots on the ground that wins wars. It is the will of the people at home which has far more impact on the final result. Thanks for making our Christmas a little better than it otherwise would have been and thanks for keeping the flames of patriotism burning for us at home.

Major Edward Prem
DAMO, 1st Cavalry Division

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen, as I told you in our last Newsletter my name is Jack Hartzel and I am a new member. I have just recently

volunteered to be the Catfish Derby chairman this year. Some of you are probably saying, "What did you do that for"?? Well, let's just say I enjoy a challenge. My goal this year is to make the Derby as good as last years but with a few tweaks! I have been reaching out to former chairman and members that have participated in years past. I want to better understand how to run the Derby correctly. That's why I'm asking Chapter members to call me with your thoughts, so that we might have a successful Derby again this year. We also need more Corporate Sponsors to help fund our event. Also, I'm hoping that many of you will volunteer to help out. So please call me at 570-395-0227 or e-mail me at gunsup@cyberquest.com with your ideas.

Thank You!.....Jack



Six or Seven years ago I received an e-mail from a former VietVet Australian Army Soldier by the name of Garry Adams. He read an article I wrote and posted on the Vietnam Veterans Home Page. We have become very good friends! He runs a Vietnam Tour Service in Australia and frequently returns to Nam. I asked him if he could write before and after articles about some of the many places we served. This next article is written by Garry.

On the Route between Dong Ha and the town of Lao Bao which sits on the border of Vietnam and Laos there are many battlefields, some remembered and some forgotten. There are names along this road that would evoke a lot of memories to those who served there. Cam Lo, the Rock Pile, Lang Vei and of course probably the most remembered one of them all....Khe Sanh.

Route 9 is a good road now and the journey through this spectacular countryside does not take all that long before you arrive in the village of Khe Sanh. There are a few two-story buildings; apart from that nothing much else sets it aside from many other Vietnamese villages in the area. There is what you might call an ironmongers shop, only the scrap metal there is somewhat different than you would find elsewhere. A 1,000 lb bomb lies on the edge of the street, explosives gone and waiting to be cut up. Around the side of the shop is a pile of artillery shell casings...amid the casings there are unexploded mortar bombs and other debris of war.



Khe Sanh 37 Years Later!

The road that leads up to the Combat Base is in poor condition and it makes for a rough old ride. It seems to have been left largely unattended since the war and perhaps an armored personnel carrier would have been more suitable than our bus. Eventually we arrive at what was the western end of the runway, after 37 years there is little to see of the base in this area. The runway is visible, only because not much will grow on it and you can see its path in the lower scrub. There are a few piles of unexploded ordnance, from WP grenades to Russian 130 mm artillery shells probably fired from Co Roc Mountain in Laos.

There is a small museum or perhaps a propaganda display would be better, in it are our familiar weapons of war, a M16, M60, M49 and their weapons, AK 47's, RPG's and a battered SKS. There are other pieces from the war, a pilot's helmet and parts of aircraft. The walls of the museum are covered in photos, all showing NVA and VC soldiers supposedly over running Khe Sanh. Our South Vietnamese driver looked at it with disgust muttering "Sau" which means lies. The visitors' book is largely full of drivel, written by mostly European tourists who have no concept of the war. I leave my message applauding those who fought there and view with contempt the raving of others who have no idea of what took place in 1968

The only things that have not changed around Khe Sanh are the hills, 950 and 1015 to the north and the 861 features out to the west. Dominating and giving full understanding to why they were so heavily contested by both sides. The scars from hundreds of air strikes are well hidden by the scrub, but in places if you look carefully you can see the slight depressions of craters that have been filled by soil over the years.

So that is Khe Sanh, 37 years after the siege, not much left but still the name would evoke so many memories for all who served there and for all the others who remember these places where good men fought and died.

Garry Adams alphasix@boztek.com.au

If you would like to read about a place that you served, let me know and I'll see what I can do!

VA INFORMATION!!

If you have a VA Disability rating of 10% or more you are eligible to receive Hearing Aids and Eye Glasses at the VA Hospital. However, in certain circumstances you may still be eligible without a disability rating.



The number one request from **Wounded American Soldiers** recovering at the **Walter Reed Army Medical Center** is for phone cards. The government does not pay long distance phone charges and those wounded soldiers are rationing their calls home. Discount warehouse stores have good prices on phone cards. The soldiers say they need an "endless" supply of these cards-- any amount would be greatly appreciated. Please send phone cards of any amount to the following:

**Medical Family Assistance Center
Walter Reed Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20307-5001
Phone: 1-866-546-1310**



On Sat March 12th from 8am to 5pm our State Council of NY will be meeting at the Owego Treadway Inn. If you would like to see the Council in action please attend. Also, please attend our next Chapter Meeting to nominate your next year's slate of Chapter Officers! Our Next Chapter Meeting is on March 1st at 7pm at VFW Post 1371, 207 Main St. Owego, NY.

Chapter Officers

President-Tom Hooko	607-624-6642
Vice President-Joe Kinney	
Treasurer-Harry Lashiew	607-687-1792
Secretary- Ron Traue	607-699-3464
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