

The Dragons Jaw



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Our 10th Annual Catfish Derby was a great success. We registered 819 Adults and Children this year. We had an excellent crew of members and volunteers working this year's derby. We owe every bit of our success to these fine people. There were some new additions to the Derby this year. One of the new additions was "Sammy" the Catfish Tee-shirts. Thank you to Past President Chet Harding for sending me the Catfish picture and also for doing the "Kids Cast-Off. Chapter Vice President Bob Spawn came up with the great idea to give Trophies to the Kids this year plus still give them money. We had the "Sammy" the catfish's picture put on top of the Trophies. They really looked great! I'd also like to thank VP Bob Spawn for all of the many jobs he did during the whole Catfish Derby process. We couldn't have done it without him. I'd also like to thank Bob's two sons Wayne and Patrick and his daughter Anna. I'd especially like to thank Aux. member Jeff Rudler for weighing our fish again this year. He has been a loyal friend and mentor to our Chapter for many years. We are all very grateful for everything that he has done for our Chapter. I'd also like to thank the other dedicated members that helped put our Derby together this year. I'd like to thank Vince Trawinski for taking over the Treasurer's job and for taking care of all of the food. The workers ate pretty well this year. Vince believes in feeding the troops well. Thanks to Secretary Ron Traue and his excellent work on our new catfish slide and also for doing the "Kids Cast-Off". I'd also like to thank Past President Joe Kinney for his great Emcee work and for all of his great incite. I believe Joe has worked all ten Catfish Derby's now. I'd also like to thank my wife Susan for all of her help throughout the whole Derby process. I'd like to thank Suz McManus for all of the many jobs she did! Don't forget about recruiting your son for us Suz! Thanks to new members Johnny Sims and

Burt Baldwin who worked very hard both days. I would also like to thank Burt's wife Betsy for helping out Sunday. Thanks to new member Joe Buttacavoli for helping to put the Boat Trailer together. I'd like to thank my Brother and Sister-In-Law Ron & Linda Birdsall for all that they did to help. I would like to thank member Tom Clifford for checking boats and helping with the Kid's Cast-Off. Thanks to Past President James Hooko for donating merchandize and for helping out again this year. Thanks to member Gary Rogers for helping us set up on Friday. Thanks to Past Treasurer Harry Lashiew. I'd like to thank Courtney and John Strange for their help. Many thanks to Jeff and Nathan Barnes for cooking some great chicken of which we sold every single piece! I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Owego Fire Co, Water Rescue Squad for all of their help. Thanks to new member and Fireman Bill Perkins for taking care of us and joining our Chapter too. I'd like to thank new member Dean Morgan who helped with registration and also joined our Chapter. Thank you to Nelson Gee for all he did. I would like to thank our main sponsor and benefactor VFW Post 1371 for their generous donation and also to member Jack Kalb and the Bartenders for all of their help with registrations! I would also like to thank our other sponsors for their generous donations. I know I said thank you a lot of times but everyone needed to be told again!
[Grand Prize Winner Randy Outman and his Boat, Motor, Trailer, Trolling Motor & Fish Finder](#)



You our chapter members need to attend meetings to help find worthy legitimate charitable organizations to donate the money we raised. If you don't attend and vote, you have no say!

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.

Coming Events

Chapter Roadside Clean-Up will meet August 2nd at 5pm at the McDonalds by Hickories Park.

Our next Chapter meeting will be on August 2nd at 7pm at VFW Post 1371 in the Upstairs Hall! Our

Chapter Clam Bake will be on August 14th 12:00 noon at Hickories Park Pavilion II. If you would like to attend please call Vince Trawinski at 607-589-6935 and leave a message! We need a count, to know how much food to buy.

A place called Dong Ha.

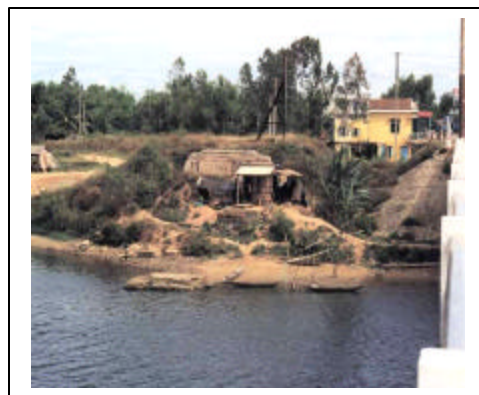
Just below the old DMZ is a small town called Dong Ha, once a military town it is now the capitol of Quang Tri Province and assumed that title after the city of Quang Tri was flattened during the heavy fighting of the 1972 Easter Offensive when the NVA launched a full scale attack across a wide front, backed by heavy artillery and tanks. Being the provincial capitol has not done all that much for the place over the years. It is a quiet place where there are a few small hotels, which cater to the occasional tourist but not much else and has little to offer.

It is a town with a history however, and during the war was a major military base and indeed was eyed as a prize for the NVA who made a number of unsuccessful attempts to seize it. There is still some evidence of the US occupation if you know where to look. On a rise a few hundred meters back from Route 9 there is a two-story building that was once the US headquarters for the area. These days it is a seedy and very decrepit hotel in which I stayed, only once. I had been heading up to Khe Sanh and had decided to use this particular hotel as my base. A bad move! It had no power when I checked in and I had to give my passport to the receptionist, no safe, just into her handbag. After my day at Khe Sanh I headed back, still no power but around 15 massage girls were there. When I went up to my room in the gathering darkness I was confronted by some of the largest rats I have seen anywhere in Asia. It was obvious they wanted the room much more than I did so I headed downstairs, past the gathering of massage girls and retrieved my passport out of the receptionist's handbag, she was sound asleep, then

headed back to Hue with my driver who seemed only too happy to be getting out of the place.

There is a part of Dong Ha that has a place in American military history and that is the bridge, which crosses the Song Mieu Giang River. During the Easter Offensive the NVA had crossed the DMZ in force and the whole ARVN front was in danger of collapse. One of the main points of interest to the NVA was the bridge at Dong Ha. If they could capture it intact they had every chance of sweeping all the way down Highway 1 to Hue. Orders had been given that the bridge should not be blown, typical of orders given by commanders far from the front line. With the NVA approaching fast a USMC advisor, Captain John W. Ripley knew it had to be destroyed and set out to do just that. A NVA T54 tank sat partly disabled at the northern end of the bridge, damaged by an ARVN soldier with an M 72 LAW. The far banks were swarming with NVA infantrymen and under intense enemy fire Ripley climbed out under the bridge framework to set the demolition charges five times before they were ready to be set off. The bridge was destroyed and for his heroism under fire John Ripley was awarded the Navy Cross. The NVA advance was temporarily halted and many lives were certainly saved.

The buttress of the bridge can still be seen today but I doubt if anyone is really aware what happened there on April 2nd, 1972. Certainly not the locals or the tourists and back packers who pass through. No one perhaps but the occasional visiting veteran who knew of the events on that day long ago.



Bridge buttress, Dong Ha Destroyed April 2nd 1972.

And that is what Dong Ha is like today, a small nondescript Vietnamese town but there is still that little bit of history to be seen if you know where to look.

Garry Adams alphasix@boztek.com.au

Chapter Officers

President-Jack T. Hartzel	570-395-0227
Vice President-Bob Spawn	607-642-5260
Treasurer-Vince Trawinski	607-589-6935
Secretary- Ron Traue	607-699-3464
VFW Post 1371	607-687-1371