



Charlie Company
Newsletter



1st Battalion-20th Infantry
11th LIB ~ Americal Div.
www.charlie1-20.org
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FALL EDITION

2009 REUNION

The fourth annual Charlie Company Reunion will be held again in northern Kentucky on the weekend of June 12-13. The Hilton in Florence may host us again but we'll wait and see what the NKYCVB finds for us with another proposal.

SNAKE ~ LEONARD HAROOTUNIAN

September 19, 2008

By Mike Feltes



Harootunian, Leonard B. 58, Vietnam Army Veteran, beloved husband of Lydia (nee Kiesling), devoted father of Victoria (Robert) Gabe, Wendy and Leonard Jr. (Dawn) Harootunian, proud grandfather of six, loving son of May Phillips and the late James Harootunian, also survived by many brothers and sisters. (Viet Nam 1968-1970)

Some thoughts I would like to share about our dear friend Snake. After I was transferred up north from the 1st Infantry Division to the Americal Division in mid March 1970, I arrived at LZ LIZ. It was there that I met our platoon Sgt. Frank Hill and he assigned me to Trace's squad. It would be over 30 years later that several of us would finally meet

again. Dan Malin, Bill Allen, Keith Trace, Snake and I met at the Americal Division reunion held in Cleveland in July 2001. We were all there for one night and it was a great night! I recall that I was the only one who had a hotel reservation for that night, so after the festivities were through, Dan, Trace and Snake just crashed with me in my room. It was just like old times again (except this time we were at a Marriot Hotel and not sleeping on the ground).



Snake and I got to know each other quite well these past few years as we had a lot of "windshield time" together on our trips to and from Chicago to Florence, KY for the reunions. We also roomed together at these events. He and I talked several times during the years about where he was headed, when he would be back, road conditions, the weather, any news from the guys from Charlie Company, etc. On Sundays when he was home, he and his wife Lydia always went to her mother's house where Lydia cooked everyone Sunday dinner.

Snake told me how he enjoyed laying on the couch watching that week's NASCAR race on TV.

Snake was a good and decent man. He was a dedicated family man and he loved them dearly. He and I shared lots of stories and concerns with each other about our families. You know, things like our hopes and dreams... even though our kids were grown and gone, you never really quit being a parent. He was a hard worker. He drove for many years as an over the road truck driver, often being gone for weeks at a time. I met one of his former bosses who owned a small trucking company at the visitation. Snake drove for him some years ago and the man told me Snake always took the tough assignments and he never complained. He worked hard to be a good provider for Lydia and their family. When he was at home, he told me that one of the things he enjoyed was stopping by a local body shop to visit with his buddies and catch up with them.

I saw Snake a few days before he passed away in the hospital. I am very sorry for him and his family. I spoke to Lydia and their children, Wendy and Lenny Jr., at the wake. I told them how very sad we all were for them, that we all loved him very much and that we will miss him. They were very appreciative to know this. I told him how important the Army and his Vietnam experiences and our reunions were to him. They already knew this.

Lydia is grateful for the help from Chuck to get Snake into the VA system. Barb and I received a nice card and note from Lydia expressing gratitude to us, and to everyone from Charlie Company, for all of the love and support they have received these past couple of weeks. She told me she received several cards and phone calls from some of the guys who told her about her husband in RVN, that he was a good soldier and also very brave. She appreciated that. If anyone would still like to contact Lydia to express condolences or just chat, here is her phone number and address:

Mrs. Lydia Harootunian, 8701 S. 82nd Ct. Apt 18,
Hickory Hills, IL 60457 (Cell 708-724-7803)

His funeral was very beautiful. There were lots of people who came to see the family. He had a red, white and blue flower wreath from Charlie Company

with Americal Division ribbon across it. Lydia displayed the pictures of Snake at our C 1/20 group at reunions near the casket for all to see. His brothers rode motorcycles at the funeral and escorted the hearse to Abraham Lincoln National Veteran's Cemetery in Elwood, IL. He had a military honor guard, they fired a 3 round volley for him and an Army officer and a NCO presented the folded flag to Lydia.

Lydia told me that she the family are doing well. It is just hard for them to believe that he is gone now. But it is consolation that he is gone as the level of his pain was increasing. She told me she believes that he is truly with the Lord now.

I am glad we got to know each other so well. I will not forget him. He was a good friend to all of us.

May God Rest His Soul -- Rest In Peace

Benefits of VA & VHA

By Chuck Unterberger

Chuck Unterberger gave a very informative talk at the 2008 reunion about the role of VA and VHA. If you as a Vietnam veteran have never contacted either of them, please read Chuck's advice.

Benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration:

Although eligibility may vary slightly from one VISN (Veterans Integrated System Network) to the next, and generally speaking, veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive special consideration when enrolling for VA medical care.

To enroll, a completed VA form 10-10EZ is required. It is important to indicate on this form that you were exposed to Agent Orange, and being we all served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, we are all considered exposed. This form can be picked up at your local Veterans Service Office, VA Medical Center/Out Patient Clinic, on-line at <http://www.va.gov/10-10ez.htm>, or by calling 1-877-222-8387. To prevent confusion fill out the form in it's entirety including the income and net worth area. The VA will then place you in one of their priority groups and at this stage of the process

is when you decide if you want care from VA or if you want to decline care.

If you have never registered for/taken a VA sponsored Agent Orange exam, you need to have this accomplished. This also takes a 10-10EZ but indicate boldly that the request is for AGENT ORANGE EXAM on the front page of the application.

Benefits available from the Veterans Benefits Administration:

As I indicated at the '08 reunion, we all need to be involved with our CVSO'S (County Veterans Service Officers), if your State does not have CVSO's, each Regional Office, which are generally located in Federal Buildings, have Service Officers associated with all the Veterans Organizations, VFW's, American Legions, Disabled American Veterans, etc. have Claimant's Representatives, generally referred to as POA's (Power of Attorney) available to assist with claims. These are very important contacts and should be used in all contact with VA as their expertise and knowledge is invaluable.

I want to start of with telling everybody, we should all submit claims for hearing loss, tinnitus, (ringing/noise in the ears), it only stands to reason that as infantry, we can be expected to have these two conditions. If a claim is denied due to a discharge hearing exam, have your Claimants Representative appeal using the Hensley Case as reference. They will know is this applicable in your case.

All of us, having earned the Combat Infantry Badge, have the necessary recognized stressor required for a claim for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). All that remains is for a diagnosis. If you are followed by VA medically, ask your Primary Provider to refer you for a PTSD Evaluation and submit the results of that exam with your claim. If not, submit a claim for PTSD, and VA will schedule you for a C & P exam for your claim.

Agent Orange! VA has eleven conditions that are presumed by VA to be service-connected and they

are, Chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma), Hodgkin's disease, Multiple myeloma, Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea), non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Prostate cancer, Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, diabetes mellitus (type II), and Chronic lymphocytic leukemia. You don't have to know a lot about these conditions, just know that they exist and if mentioned during your health care, make certain that a claim is submitted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Do you have comments about the newsletter? Need information about our contacts or do you have information about other vets not on our list? Contact Dan Malin (danielmalin@hotmail.com) - 4136 Kenyon Avenue, Lorain, OH 44053 (440) 242-7664 or Mike Stinnett (mike.stinnett@yahoo.com) - 319 Antioch Road, Clarksville, TN 37040 (931) 647-8917.

We are considering using an on-line search services soon so if you'd like for us to search for someone specific, send us all the information you have about your friend. We are up near the 200 mark now with those Charlie Company vets that have been "found".

If you haven't visited our web site lately you should check out the updates. We have all previous newsletters and past reunion reports under EVENTS. Under PEOPLE we have lists of Charlie Company vets by year, seventeen (soon to be eighteen) photo albums and current contacts. New stories have been added to MEMORIES

EMAIL FROM CARL McCLAFFERTY

Thought you might be interested in a couple of emails and a picture from Carl.

Mike: Sorry I didn't get to the reunion this year, I've been in Afghanistan since November teaching the Afghan Border Police and, health permitting, I will be here till January or February.

Things here in Afghanistan aren't much different than Vietnam. I've got some photos from my recent trip, I'll send when I get back to our ABP Compound.

Our job here is train up the Afghan Border Police to start securing their borders. There are 8 of us attached to the ABP in four regions, training about 100 every 21 days in pretty remote areas, which is never boring. We carry and train the ABP with AMD65s (AKs), which is good as the ammo is abundant in this country. The enemy uses Russian arms, PRGs, AKs, NSV 12.7s and fire 107 Russian rockets and mortars. Things change and they remain the same. The morale among the American, ISAF and Afghan forces is extremely high which is quite gratifying regardless of the political wrangling back Stateside. Sound familiar? I've attached a picture. I'll be the tall one.

Best to everyone, Carl McClafferty
VN - July 1970 to July 1971 with 1st platoon

