

The Riverine Reporter



**458TH TRANSPORTATION CO.
SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION**



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010 Vol #1

Editors; Don Cook & Mike Hebert

Greetings to all former 458th members, DUKW's, LARC-V's, PBR's, WHALERS, and associated Military Police. This is the March 2010 issue of the newsletter and subsequent issues will be published quarterly.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone is surviving the winter OK. It seems there is no getting away from it this year! Even you members down South have had some snow and colder than normal temperatures. Hang in there, we should be on the down side of winter soon!

I have talked to a lot of you (458) members and have found that a lot of you are not into the V.A.'s Health Care System. You should be, you earned it. Take advantage of it, it's easy. To get started just visit your local V.A. Rep (usually in your county courthouse). Take along a copy of your DD214. You may find out that you qualify for some type of Disability benefit.

I would also like to ask you, the members, that if you have anything that you would like to see the Association do, or have some ideas for us, please contact myself or one of the officers.

Also, we are looking for missing members. If you know of former 458th members, please let them know that we exist. At last year's reunion we actually found a former 458th member while on our Dinner Cruise. He had no idea that we existed.

Regards,
Denny Hull, Pres.

MEMBER NEWS

- As you are all aware, our organization depends heavily on membership dues. At the present time only about 40% of those on our contact list are paying dues. It is vital that we have as many participants as possible in order to keep the organization alive.

Everyone on our contact list will receive this newsletter and the June issue. After that, newsletters will only be sent to those in good standing (dues-paying members). We hope that those of you who are not members will enjoy this newsletter and send in your membership dues in order to continue receiving it.

- Bob Brower participated in the Auburn, WA parade on November 7, 2009. He marched with the Navy Swifty's Group headed up by CW3 Joe LaVoye, USN Ret. Bob says it was a great group of guys and offered a special thanks to Joe and his bride Martha for bringing their RV to shelter them from the driving rain. They had coffee and rolls to keep everyone in good spirits. Bob said that, as far as the course with parades, this one started out wet, but when they began the parade the rain stopped. A special thanks to Bob for keeping the 458th in the public eye whenever possible!

- This newsletter belongs to all of the members, so we'd like some input on a name for it! *Riverine Reporter* was thrown up there on a whim. We need some suggestions! The current ones are *Riverine Reporter*, *Tiger Meat*, *Ship's Log*, and *Patrol Report*. Please send suggestions to one of the officers.

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)

THE LAST ARMY PBR

Restoration Project

By Bob Brower

Many of our Sea Tiger's have heard about the exciting news of the last Army PBR in restoration under the watchful eyes of the NW Chapter of Gamewardens. Our Navy brethren have been a part and parcel of our history then and now. To demonstrate how we in the NW have melded together, would you be surprised to know that a retired Army FSG runs the Navy Museum at the Bremerton Naval Base and that the film shot here for the History Channel was accomplished using all Army volunteers about RivDiv 593's rescue of a 1st Div LRRP patrol.

Our extended PBR family here in the NW has grown over the last few years with Army and Navy volunteers along with those who never served but feel the need to keep the history alive of the men who faithfully served aboard the PBR's. This is a great opportunity for current and former service members to rally about in service together. We brought them a past, they bring us a future. It creates a better life for everyone.

The Restoration is coming along slowly, nonetheless, it is continuing to move forward. To date I now have acquired through several sources 2 operational VRC-46's, O/S speakers, mike & hand set, antenna's and matching mounts. I also have the cables to match. We have reinstalled the 8 inch bronze inspection plates and will be putting the canopy on soon. I have also just finished rebuilding the ID Mast. Both the mast and antennas will be going into the boat during the next work party, March 6th.

Special thanks to Richard Starks, Bruce McGowan and Tom Restemayer for their help at the last couple work parties. I hope to have

a couple of our other 458 brothers help soon also... Scott Fultz and Robey Robichaux.

The boat has been invited to appear at the Arlington Air show this year. It will be her 1st showing to the public and I'm really jazzed by the idea. I'm hoping to have her forward deck repaired and gun tub in by then. This event will be the 2nd week of July. Anyone within shouting distance who might attend let me know so I can get a pass for you.

All My Best Cheers!
Bob Brower

◆◆◆

REUNION UPDATE

The 2010 reunion in Philadelphia is right around the corner.

There will be a professionally-built PBR Model to be raffled off at this year's reunion. It is being built by a couple from Florida, who, incidentally, will have a display table set up in the Hospitality Room at the reunion hotel. The model is constructed entirely of wood and measures 20" long by 8" wide.



Tickets for the raffle are \$5 each or 5 tickets for \$20. While it is anticipated that the model will be completed by the reunion date, there is a possibility that it may have to be shipped to the winner if it is not finished in time.

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)

(Reunion Update - Con't)

For those of you flying in to Philadelphia Airport, Taxis are located at Zone 5 on the Commercial Transportation Roadway. Fares are based per trip, not per person, and most taxis can accommodate 3 passengers. Rate is \$2.30 per mile (\$10 min) plus \$1.50 airport fee. Airport to Days Inn - Cherry Hill is about 15 miles. Notify the dispatcher at the Taxi Area if you plan on paying with a credit card.

Don't forget to return your Reunion Cards to Bill Northrop. If you plan on attending, we really need to know how many are going to be there. Remember that you can always cancel up to 24 hours prior to the event if you later decide you can't make it.

◆◆◆

LARC'S (Lighter, Amphibious Re-Supply Cargo

There were three types of vehicles capable of traveling over land or sea. The 5-ton LARC-V, the smallest of the three, was capable of transporting items such as CONEX's or palletized cargo, usually from ship to shore. The 15-ton LARC-XV served the same purpose, but could carry more cargo. At 60-tons, the behemoth LARC-LX carried two 20-foot containers, one 40-foot container, or military assault vehicles.

In 1956 the head of the Transportation Corps, MG Paul Yount, directed the US Army Research Command to develop a vessel with the ability to drive on land. The prototype of the LARC-V was launched in July 1959 with mass production commencing in 1963.

The first active duty Transportation Corps companies to receive the new LARC's were the 165th, 305th, 344th, 458th, and the 461st.

LARC-V's were a single-screw, four-wheeled,

self-propelled diesel-powered amphibian producing 295 HP from an 8-cylinder Cummins V-903. Cargo capacity was 10,000 pounds and a troop capacity of 20.

The craft are capable of operating in temperate, tropic, and arctic climates, of traversing sand and coral beaches, unimproved roads, off-road terrain, and maneuvering through 10-foot breakers. The engine was located in the stern over the propeller. A forward transfer case provided power to all four wheels.

The only shock absorption provided on these vessels was from the massive 18.00 X 12-ply off-road tubeless tires. There was no suspension! Top speed was 9 mph in water and 30 mph on land with a full load of 5 tons.

These vessels saw extensive service in Vietnam with 968 manufactured. Over 600 of them were sunk, merely as a means of disposal, when the US Army departed Vietnam in the '70's.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

My Dad (SFC Hebert, 519th M.I. Bn. USA) always liked to tell me:

*'Tis better to remain silent and thought a fool,
Than to speak up and remove all doubt!*

...wonder if he was trying to tell me something!

◆◆◆

Cat-Lo ◆ Dian ◆ Newport ◆ Qui Nhon ◆ Vung Ro Bay ◆ Cam Rahn ◆ Vung Tau ◆ Cat Lai ◆ Coqido

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)



ORIGIN OF THE BLACK BERET

by Fred McDavitt, USN (article provided courtesy of Gamewardens Association. Reprinted with permission)

It was born out of necessity. I was the first CO of River Section 531 out of My Tho, Vietnam. We arrived in country in the March/April 1966 time frame, and had to train with the Swift Boats and USCG WPB's because the first PBR's had not yet arrived in country. (Think about this - the first time the original PBR sailors saw a PBR is when they went into combat. But that's another story)

The Navy sent us to Vietnam with no jungle uniforms. The first RIVSEC CO's spent a good deal of time scrounging around Saigon trying to get jungle uniforms, boots, and hats. I got the first uniform issue for the members of my section from the USAF and jungle boots from the Army. But I could never find 60 of the same type of hat. When we arrived in My Tho in late May 1966, several of my boat crews started wearing black berets that they had purchased in town. I had the boat captains take me to the shop, where I was able to buy 60 berets, one for everyone in the Section. I thought I had solved a problem. But I had really just traded one problem for another.

My immediate boss, LCDR Jim Toole, Commander River Division 53, said he thought it was a good idea, but he had little hope that his boss, Captain Kronander, CTF 116, would support the idea. He was right. Captain Kronander said that there was nothing in Uniform Regs about black berets. But, Captain Kronander was relieved shortly thereafter by Captain Burt Witham as CTF 116, and I took up the black beret issue with him. Captain Witham's initial reaction was predictable, not only no, but hell no.

As other River Sections came up the Mekong, enroute to their bases, they stopped in My Tho for fuel, provisions, and intelligence. They also saw my boat crews wearing black berets. By the time they left My Tho, their crews were also wearing black berets.

To make a long story short, by the time Captain Witham made his first tour of the PBR bases in the Mekong Delta, everywhere he went the boat crews were wearing black berets.

I'm sure that all the other River Section CO's and Boat Captains made their case for black berets to Captain Witham too. The end result was that he sent out a message in 1967 stating that PBR sailors could wear the black beret - but with a long list of restrictions that most folks ignored. One restriction was that it could not be worn in Saigon. However, when the crews went to Saigon on convoy duty, they left My Tho wearing their green jungle uniform ball cap. As soon as they were out of sight - out came the black berets and off went the ball caps!

◆◆◆

Coming in June: PBR Heroes, LARC Tours, Vietnam by Train, Confessions of the 458, "Reflections" by Tom Wonsiewicz, and more!

Cat-Lo◆Dian◆Newport◆Qui Nhon◆Vung Ro Bay◆Cam Rahn◆Vung Tau◆Cat Lai◆Coqido

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)

PBR'S ON DISPLAY

There are several restored PBR's on public display at various locations around the country. If you're interested in having a look and showing the grandchildren what you used to do, here is a partial listing of some of the locations (to date):

Mare Island Historic Park

328 Seawind Drive
Vallejo, CA 94590
www.mareislandhpf.org

Bellingham International Maritime Museum

800 Cornwall Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225
www.bimm.us

National Vietnam War Museum

3400 North Tanner Road
Orlando, FL 32826
www.nwmvocf.org

Battleship Memorial Park

2703 battleship Parkway
Mobile, AL 36601
www.ussalabama.com

Submarine Memorial Association

78 River Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601
www.njnm.com

Little Creek Amphibious Base

(Mark I PBR)
Active Military Installation, ID Required
Special Boat Squadron Two
Norfolk, VA

Patriot's Point Naval Museum

(Mark I PBR)
40 Patriot's Point Road
Mount Pleasant, SC
www.patriotspoint.org

MP Corps Regimental Museum

495 South Dakota Avenue
Fort Leonard Wood, MO

LARC & PBR PRINTS

Looking for a wall decoration? There are a few web sites where very nice LARC & PBR prints are available for purchase. My favorite is the Naval Institute Press. I have purchased two PBR prints from them and have been very satisfied.

The web site is www.gallery.pictopia.com.

- On the right side of home page, (under photo), click "shop now".

- In red search box type in "PBR".

There are 13 PBR prints on 2 pages. Prices range from \$24.00 for a 10" unframed photo to \$400.00 for a 30" framed.

- For LARC photos, type "LARC" into red search box. There are three available at the same prices as above.

A very nice 458th PBR print is available from www.windjammer-arts.com. It is a full-color print and prices (including shipping) range from \$35.00 to \$90.00. From their home page, open "Brown Water Navy".

Stick-on PBR window decals are available from www.military-graphics.com. They have two types: black silhouette or full-color.

- From their home page, click on "More Decals" box, then click on "Ship Silhouettes". Decals cost \$6.00 for a 6-inch decal and \$10.00 for a 10-inch.

- For color decals, click on "More Decals" box, then open "Color Ships & Aircraft". Then scroll down to "Patrol Craft". Decals are \$9.00 for a 9-inch and \$12.00 for a 12-inch.

at-Lo ♦ Dian ♦ Newport ♦ Qui Nhon ♦ Vung Ro Bay ♦ Cam Rahn ♦ Vung Tau ♦ Cat Lai ♦ Coqido

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)

REVISITING VIETNAM

It's been 40 years since we left Vietnam! A lot has changed. An interesting way to re-visit and see the old haunts is aboard a Mekong River Cruise from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) to Angor Wat, Cambodia. Pandaw Cruises and Bassac Cruises offer several types of tours, ranging from 2 days to 14 days. Access both through www.mekong-river-cruise.com

Another interesting concept is offered by Vespa Tours. This company offers 1/2-Day Motor Scooter tours of Saigon for \$37 per person. (Sorry, Denny, no Harleys!).

- For the more adventurous, a 3-day Vespa tour to the secluded beach town of Mui Ne is available for \$450 for one rider, or \$ \$775 for two.
- An 8-day adventure is also offered. This takes you through Mui Ne and on to the mountainous former French retreat of Dalat, then down into the central highlands and ending at oceanside Nha Trang. This trip is \$1200 for one person, \$2000 for two. Prices for both the 3-day and 8-day tours include: Australian tour guide, hotel/resort stays, all meals, and a support van. For info visit www.vietnamvespaadventures.com

◆◆◆

PBR BOOKS

(Thanks to Denny Hull)

- **Man of The River** by Jimmy Bryant, USN
- **PBR, The Making of a Warrior** by Bill Quinn
- **Riverine** by Jim Mesko
- **Brown Water, Black Berets** by Thomas J. Cutler
- **River Rats** by Ralph Christopher

◆◆◆

LARC/PBR WEB LINKS

For further information on the 458th, LARC's, PBR's and U.S. Naval Units please visit the following web sites (partial listing):

www.458thseatigers.homestead.com
www.458pbr-vungrobay.com
www.pbr-fva.org
www.mrfa.org
www.riverinesailor.com
www.rivervet.com
www.tf116.org
www.warboats.org
www.brownwater-navy.com
www.yogies.tripod.com

◆◆◆

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

In case any of you have ever wondered where all the rest of you are, here's the breakdown: Most of you live in **NC** (15), followed by **VA**, **FL** and **CA** with 10 each. Eight live in **OH**, with seven in **NY** and **WA**. Six of you are in **NJ** and **MN**. Five live in **IL**, **MI**, **MO**, and **TX** and **PA**. Four are in **SD** and **WI**. Three live in **KY**, **IN**, **TN**,. Only two live in **AL**, **AZ**, **CO**, **GA**, **IA**, **KS**, **NV** and **OR**. And only person from our group lives in **DE**, **CT**, **LA**, **ME**, **MD**, **SC**, **ND**, **NE**, **OK**, **WV** and **VT**!

458TH PBR OFFICERS

President: Denny Hull (641) 228-6701
Vice-President: Robert Ness (719) 390-3283
Secretary: Bill Northrop (605) 339-3381
Chaplin: Larry Kallod
Historian: George Paavola

Any submissions, feature ideas, corrections, or criticisms for this newsletter greatly appreciated. Please submit info to:

Bill Northrop: norwill6@sio.midco.net

Don Cook: dccookjr6@cox.net

Mike Hebert: michaelhebert@cox.net

Cat-Lo ◆ Dian ◆ Newport ◆ Qui Nhon ◆ Vung Ro Bay ◆ Cam Rahn ◆ Vung Tau ◆ Cat Lai ◆ Cogido

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

A quarterly publication of the 458th Transportation Company (LARC & PBR)

CARRYING ON THE TRADITION

This feature is *short profile* of the children and grandchildren of 458th members who are currently serving our county.

The McCabe Family of Durhamville, NY has two sons currently serving in the US Army. Their middle son, Casey, served with the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom .

Their youngest son, Daniel, completed his Basic Training at Fort Benning, GA and is currently an SP-4 and stationed in Georgia. Proud parents Bob and Carol were on hand

to witness Daniel being awarded his "Ranger" tab. In keeping with a long-standing tradition, Daniel was thrown into Victory Pond by his comrades. He has served in Afghanistan and Iraq as a Ranger. Dad says Daniel is "a very happy camper doing what he does"

Bob also just retired from the Army Reserves after 29 years of service. Bob was activated in January 2003 and spent 5½ years training other Reserves and Guardsmen for overseas duty.

Many thanks to the McCabe Family for their dedicated service to our nation!

458TH SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

Bill Northrop, Secretary
2600 E. 49th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57103
email: www.norwill6@sio.midco.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

email: _____

Military Info:

Unit: _____ Dates w/Unit: _____ Location: _____ Rank: _____

- Please check this box if you **DO NOT** want information on this application shared with other members of our organization.

Dues (check box): 1 year: \$20.00 3 years: \$45.00 Lifetime: \$195.00

Please submit verification of service with application. We will need any of the following:
copy of orders, copy of 201, photos, or a member who can vouch for you.

Thank you for your support!

Cat-Lo ♦ Dian ♦ Newport ♦ Qui Nhon ♦ Vung Ro Bay ♦ Cam Rahn ♦ Vung Tau ♦ Cat Lai ♦ Cogido