

The Listening Post

"NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER"



Holiday Season Pot Luck Dinner & Toys For Tots Collection December Meeting To Ring In Holiday Cheer



Picture from past Holiday Pot Luck

We always have a great time at our Christmas pot luck, again members voted to have another pot luck at this December meeting. The chapter will furnish the main dish for the meal, soft drinks, coffee and water. Kick off time 6:00pm.

Everyone is invited, please bring a dish to share if possible.



**POT LUCK BEFORE MEETING
BRING A DISH TO SHARE
BRING A FRIEND
6 PM IS KICK OFF**

December 2017 Meeting
Sunday December 10, 2017 at 7 p.m.
LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING
Corner, St. Rt. 795 and Cummings Rd.
Lake Township, Wood County

2017-2018 Officers

- Robert Stewart / President
 - Phillip Hotz / V. President
 - Ralph Wineland / 2nd V. President
 - Clyde Appleby / Secretary
 - Gene Shurtz / Treasurer
- Board Members
- Edward Hart / till 2020
 - John Slaughterbeck / till 2018
 - Al Meadows / till 2019
 - Ron Sherman / till 2019
 - AVVA/Jan Baker

Office 419.242.4293



In the past, Chapter 35 members have come through with loads of toys and lots of cash for the Toys For Tots drive. Some of our members, have even helped with the distribution of all toys. Marine Master Sgt. Major Kosinski stated that their buying power is about 3 1/2 times ours. If we went out and bought \$50 worth of toys, they could use the same money and get over \$150.00 worth of toys.

If you would rather donate unwrapped toys, that is ok. This year at the November meeting the chapter decided that we should give cash or checks to the cause and the chapter will match donations up to \$300.00, to be collected and turned over to The Marine Toys for Tots at the Dec 10th meeting. Can't make the December meeting? You can still make a donation to the Toys For Tots. Send your check right away to Chapter 35 c/o Gene Shurtz 5661 Brown Rd, Oregon, Oh. 43616 Make checks payable to, Marine Toys For Tots Foundation

**A POEM WRITTEN BY,
LIFE MEMBER, ED HART**

VIETNAM

*AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I DID MY THING,
JOINED THE ARMY FOR A THREE YEAR FLING.
WHILE SERVING MY TIME, I LEARNED A TRADE,
READING BLUE PRINTS TO EXCAVATE A 3% GRADE.*

*I PULLED MY SHARE OF GUARD DUTY AND DID KP,
TO KEEP MY POST SECURE AND FOOD TO FEED ME.
THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT,
I BOARDED A PLANE FOR MY VERY FIRST FLIGHT.*

*OFF TO VIETNAM TO MAKE A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL,
IT'S PEOPLE, THEIR LIVELIHOOD AND PROTOCOL.
WE CLEARED THE LAND, THE FIELDS TO MAKE WAY,
RICE PADDIES AND JUNGLE WERE LEFT TO SURVEY.*

*UPON LEAVING THIS PLACE, I LEFT BEHIND FRIENDS,
FINISHING UP MY TOUR OF DUTY AND ODDS AND ENDS.
NOW WE ARE GONE, AND WHAT WE LEFT BEHIND,
THE WISDOM, OUR KNOWLEDGE AND PEACE OF MIND.*

2005 c/r Ed Hart

January 2018 Meeting
Sunday January 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.
LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING
St. Rt. 795 & Cummings Rd.
Lake Township, Wood County
Fellowship at 6:30pm

**Try Doing This Today...
Air Corps Painting**



Just Some Funnies

Thanks John

I was standing at the bar at the VFW one night minding my own business. This FAT ugly chick came up behind me, grabbed my behind and said, "You're kinda cute. You gotta phone number?"

*I said, "Yeah, you gotta pen?"
She said, "Yeah, I got a pen".
I said, "You better get back in it before the farmer misses you."
Cost me 6 stitches...but,
When you're over seventy.....who cares?*

I went to the drug store and told the clerk "Give me 3 packets of condoms, please."

*Lady Clerk: "Do you need a paper bag with that, sir?";
I said "Nah... She's purty good lookin'....."
When you're over seventy.....who cares?*

I was talking to a young woman in the VFW last night.

*She said, "If you lost a few pounds, had a shave and got your hair cut, you'd look all right.";
I said, "If I did that, I'd be talking to your friends over there instead of you.";*

*Cost me a fat lip, but...
When you're over seventy.....who cares?*

*I got caught taking a pee in the swimming pool today.
The lifeguard shouted at me so loud, I nearly fell in.*

When you're over seventy.....who cares?

I went to our VFW last night and saw a BIG woman dancing on a table.

*I said, "Good legs."
The girl giggled and said, "Do you really think so?"
I said, "Definitely! Most tables would have collapsed by now."
Cost me 6 more stitches, but...
When you're over seventy.....who cares?*

Was The Tet Offensive Really A Surprise?



Paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade filing past bodies of fellow soldiers killed in the Battle of Dak To.

I learned the hard way during the Vietnam War that when intelligence is ignored, people get killed. I spent the better part of the war with the National Security Agency, often undercover. Time after time, I and my colleagues felt like Cassandra, the mythical Trojan princess blessed with foresight but doomed not to be believed. One example was the Battle of Dak To. By 1967, much of the fighting in South Vietnam was concentrated in the highlands, the mountainous region along the Laos-Cambodia border encompassing Kontum, Pleiku and Darlac Provinces. American military forces were drawn to the region for two reasons. First, it's where the enemy was: The North Vietnamese used the area as a redoubt. The terrain was rough and barren with a sparse population of mostly non-Vietnamese Montagnard tribes, driven there centuries before by the Vietnamese who seized the lowlands for themselves. Second, it was the site of a critical section of the covert infiltration network used by the North Vietnamese to funnel thousands of troops into South Vietnam, known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail by Americans.

That summer and fall I was in the highlands too, working undercover alongside American combat troops. I was a specialist in Vietnamese Communist communications, and I spoke Vietnamese, Chinese and French, the three languages of Vietnam. Unlike many other N.S.A. signals-intelligence specialists, I was willing to go into combat with the American units I was attached to.

I was assigned to coach and assist the Army signals-intelligence team supporting the 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which was headquartered in the Pleiku area. Our intercept site was at a place called Engineer Hill, high enough so that we could detect enemy transmissions from far away; we also took in intercepts from other teams deployed with Special Forces units operating deep in the highlands.

Throughout September and October 1967, my military counterparts and I kept close track of the communications of the B3 Front, the senior North Vietnamese headquarters for the highlands; its subordinate 1st Division; and two independent regiments, the 24th and the 33rd. Over those months we followed the B3 Front as it deployed a forward command post that established communications with Hanoi — always a sign of impending combat. Soon it was exchanging a large volume of messages with North Vietnam, mostly sent at night when Vietnamese Communist transmitters normally shut down. The command post and the 24th Regiment moved quickly to Kontum Province. The 33rd Regiment, two provinces to the south in Darlac, initiated combat communications. A new unit, not yet identified, showed up in Pleiku Province, close to our location.

In other words, it looked like the enemy was preparing a highlands-wide offensive. One moonless night in late October, we located another new North Vietnamese unit, about 20 kilometers from where we were sitting. As if to underline the enemy's

proximity, while we were reporting the new unit's appearance, we suddenly came under attack from mortars. The only casualty, it turned out, was a portable outhouse. Still, we were spooked.

Before the end of October, the North Vietnamese 1st Division and its three subordinate regiments had all moved to the Dak To area of Kontum Province — a region of steep hills and deep jungle valleys. There was a Special Forces base at Dak To, a tempting target, but it was clear to us that it wasn't the only objective. Low-level reconnaissance communications appeared, a sure sign that combat was imminent. Then the division headquarters dispatched a forward command post that took control of the regiments. They were ready. We informed the American 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Brigade that an attack on the Dak To area would very likely begin between Oct. 30 and Nov. 4, dates we learned from the reconnaissance unit's messages. But we also warned that units throughout the highlands were preparing for combat. This, we said, was going to be big.

At this point we hit an unexpected obstacle: credibility. Several of us went to brief the commander of the 4th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. William Peers. I warned him that a multi-division North Vietnamese attack on Dak To would take place at any moment, coincident with attacks throughout the highlands. He shook his head and pointed to our camp on Engineer Hill. "So I'm supposed to believe that some kind of magic allows a bunch of shaky girbs" — acronym for "G.I. rat bastards" — "distinguished more for their spit than their polish and abetted by a civilian, to use a tangle of antennas and funny talk to divine the combat plans of the enemy?" He waved us away. The briefing was over. But we were right. On Nov. 1, a bomb dropped from a B-57 struck somewhere near Dak To. It hit an enemy supply dump, setting off secondary explosions, proof positive that significant numbers of North Vietnamese troops were out there. General Peers sent a unit from the division's 1st Brigade to investigate and make contact with the Special Forces camp at Dak To. Two days later, one of the brigade's battalions landed by helicopter on Hill 978, near Dak To, expecting to meet little resistance. Instead they found thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers, well entrenched and ready. The battalion was decimated. That same day, another American battalion ran into similar trouble on nearby Hill 882. General Peers and the other generals soon recognized the gravity of what we'd been

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trying to tell them: that the North Vietnamese had moved into the area in force and were itching to fight.

The weeklong series of engagements that followed, collectively known as the Battle of Dak To, was one of the biggest in the war, and one of the conflict's few pitched battles. The North Vietnamese had established defensive positions on several hills, forcing the American and South Vietnamese forces to fight uphill, culminating in a horrifically bloody engagement at Hill 875, from Nov. 19 to Nov. 23. By the end of Dak To, nine American battalions from the 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Airborne Brigade — some 16,000 men — had been committed. American bombers flew more than 2,000 sorties. The Americans eventually won, but at great cost to both sides: More than 2,100 North Vietnamese were killed, as were 376 Americans and 61 South Vietnamese soldiers.

I left the highlands in December when the offensive was all but over. I moved south to work with another team near Bien Hoa, just north of Saigon. When I got there, I saw all the same sorts of communications indicators we were picking up in the highlands before Dak To. We weren't alone; American signals-intelligence units in the northernmost part of South Vietnam were intercepting the same patterns. We realized that an offensive was going to occur throughout the country starting at the end of January.

The N.S.A. pulled together all the evidence, and once again we presented it to the military leadership. And once again, the generals refused to believe us. At the time, Marines in the north were under



VIETNAM. During the Vietnamese New Year celebrations of the Tet, the city of Hue an ancient Mandarin walled city which stood on the banks of the perfumed river and near to the demilitarized zone, a force of 5000 Vietcong and NVA (North Vietnamese Army) regulars took siege of the citadel. The American sent in the Fifth Marine Commando force to dislodge them. 1968. Philip Jones Griffiths



Military policemen capture a Viet Cong guerrilla after the surprise attack on the U.S. embassy and South Vietnamese government buildings in Saigon. History



siege at Khe Sanh, and the top brass in Saigon was convinced that any other North Vietnamese activity was only a diversion, an effort to pull away American forces from what they and Washington believed was Hanoi's plan to reprise the victory over the French at the siege of Dien Bien Phu, 13 years earlier. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, they did not prepare for an all-out assault, and at the end of January they were thrown back on their heels by the Tet offensive.

Put differently, it's not quite correct to say that Tet caught the Americans and South Vietnamese by surprise. The intelligence was there, and the recent experience leading up to Dak To should have persuaded General William Westmoreland to take it seriously. Instead, he chose not to believe it.

The problem was bigger than Generals Peers and Westmoreland; eight years later, the same mistake was made with the fall of Saigon. By then I was the N.S.A. station chief in the city. I warned Graham Martin,

the American ambassador, about overwhelming evidence showing that Saigon was about to be attacked. He refused to believe me and didn't call for an evacuation of the thousands of American civilians still in the city, along with our South Vietnamese counterparts. When the North Vietnamese attacked a few days later, the city descended into panic. I escaped under fire. My South Vietnamese partners, the men I was working with, weren't so lucky. Some 2,700 of them were killed or captured and sent to "re-education" camps.

Was Cassandra blessed or cursed? Those of us who worked in intelligence during Vietnam know the answer.

Tom Glenn is a former National Security Agency employee and the author of the novel "Last of the Annamese."