August 2010

ALAMO SCOUTS Newsletter

The U.S. Sixth Army Special Reconnaissance Unit of World War II

ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION, Inc.

Tucson, AZ

http://www.alamoscouts.org

"I thought volunteering for the Alamo Scouts would be a whole lot more interesting and safer than being in the combat engineers. Hell, if nobody knew you were there behind enemy lines you were a whole lot safer. But you were in a heap of trouble if they did."

-Charles Forrester, ASTC Class 7

Happy Birthday ASA!

For many, turning 30 is traumatic, but for others it is the perfect blend of youth and experience, an age when one can straddle the fence and taste the greenest grass on both sides. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the formation of the Alamo Scouts Association, and true to form, the ASA has grown from a seedling into a mighty oak, and is now morphing into something different—but its core mission is still the same. It is important to occasionally revisit the past, and in the words of Medal of Honor recipient Col. Roger Donlan, delivered at the ASA Reunion in Kansas City in 2005, "take a back azimuth of our lives to see where we are heading." The following are excerpts taken from the original letters leading up to the formation of the ASA in 1980. Enjoy!

On October 2, 1979, the late Col. Robert S. Sumner contacted author Forrest Johnson in regard to his book, *Raid on Cabanatuan*, and asked if he would consider writing about the Alamo Scouts. Johnson was already committed to another project but put him in touch with Alamo Scout Galen [Gay] Kittleson. On October 17, Sumner wrote:

"Dear Sergeant Major: Don't faint dead away when you glance at the signature. Forrest Johnson furnished me your address. I had asked Johnson if he had considered a story about the Scouts…If you take on such a writing assignment, I would be happy to assist where I can. My primary intention is to get a copy of Lew Hochstrasser's manuscript [*They Were First*]…Let me hear from you…"

Alamo Scouts 1985 reunion in Ann Arbor, Michigan

Kittleson – October 28, 1979:

"Dear Col. Sumner: Your letter was a complete welcomed surprise and I'm very pleased that you would take the time to write. I, like you, have very little contact with any of the Scouts. I'm sending Lt. Hochstrasser's version of the missions to you…Yes, I've been thinking about writing about my version of an enlisted man's career in the U.S. Army, which in my case would involve the Alamo Scouts and Special Forces primarily. However, I probably will never get at it…I've enclosed the manuscript and thanks for writing…*I'd like to get the old crew together one time, think we could do it?*"

Sumner - November 6, 1979:

"Dear Sergeant Major: As to getting the Scouts together for a one-time reunion, it shouldn't be too difficult—more correspondence than anything else and the time to devote to it…Look over the attached and if it makes sense, maybe we can divide the labor and do something about it. I'm open to any and all suggestions and I have no pride of authorship."

Kittleson – February 25, 1980:

"Col. Sumner: I've been working on names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Trying to complete a list of Scouts. I now have a list of ten, and with a couple more addresses to write. Col. Rounsaville gave me a name of Robert Shirkey in Kansas City, if we can get him to help, that would be an excellent location."

[Continued on next page]

Kittleson – March 18, 1980:

"Dear Alamo Scout: The past two months I have been contacting ex-Alamo Scouts to obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers and to ascertain the interest for a Scout reunion. The response by fifteen has been outstanding. Robert Shirkey of Kansas City, Mo., has offered to host such a reunion…Let's try to make it fifty Scouts or better. Then add the wives and it will be a super group. Send me names! P.S.: Get off your ass and do something!"

In late March Sumner located Mayo Stuntz asking for his help in locating Scouts. Stuntz responded on April 4, 1980.

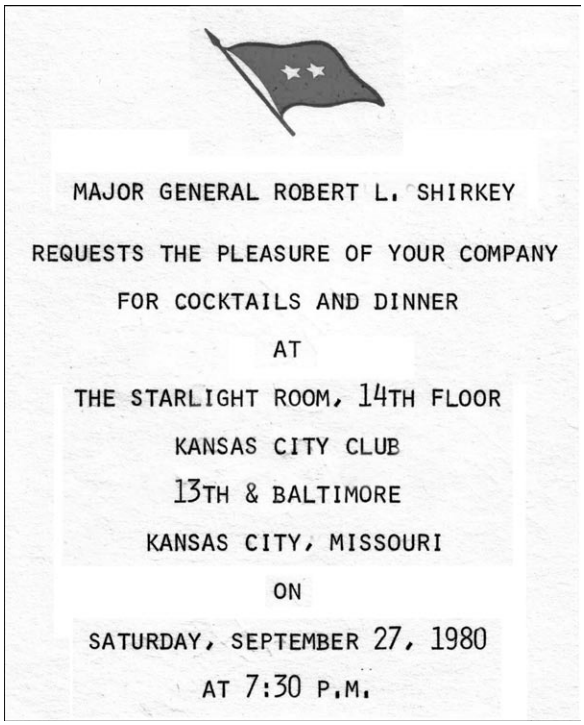
"Dear Bob: I've contacted more Scouts…I'm full of ideas, for someone else [to do]!"

Sumner – May 20, 1980:

"Dear Gay: Enclosed is a revised list of Scouts—Stuntz has located more of them…we are up to about 28 names…If we can get them all to come we should have a sizeable reunion. Meanwhile, let's continue plugging along."

Shirkey – May 27, 1980:

"Dear Bob: I'm looking forward to this reunion and I can assure you that it will be a memorable weekend in Kansas City. I should hope that I can arrange a few surprises for those who attend this particular get-together."



MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT L. SHIRKEY

REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY

FOR COCKTAILS AND DINNER

AT

THE STARLIGHT ROOM, 14TH FLOOR

KANSAS CITY CLUB

13TH & BALTIMORE

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

ON

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1980

AT 7:30 P.M.

Kittleson – July 4, 1980:

"Dear Bob: Some people I've contacted just don't believe the reunion will happen, so I really want it to get off with a blast. I'm sure looking forward to it!...Well, Col. Bob, I'll keep pitching, you have some excellent ideas and I'll help promote and push them."

Sumner – July 9, 1980:

"Dear Gay: So, we have 30 people accounted for. Whatever or whoever we get from the notices in the vets magazines will be frosting on the cake…So that's about where we are at this end. Given what we had to start with, we've done a darn good job. And on that note of a group love-in, I'll conclude."

Kittleson – July 27, 1980:

"Col. Bob: I'm getting hepped up about this now—ready to tip a few and tell some lies."

September 27, 1980:

"Suffice to say we are now known as THE ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION (ASA). ASA has Sumner as Director, Kittleson as Secretary Treasurer, Stuntz as Historian and Hochstrasser (in absentia) as Biographic Editor….

Thus the assembled group decreed, we will as ASA:

(1) Operate a non-profit organization which shall commemorate the deeds of valor and the contribution of the Alamo Scouts who operated under the direction of the Commanding General, Sixth United States Army in the Southwest Pacific Theater during World War II. (2) Form a central repository for memoirs and memorabilia to be used by members of the ASA, their families and military historians. (3) Provide a central point for contact by the US Army Center of Military History, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. (4) Publish and disseminate a semi-annual newsletter every May and November…"

So there it is! From conception to birth—the beginning of the Alamo Scouts Association. Over the next twenty years under the guidance of Sumner, Kittleson, Stuntz, Bill Littlefield, and others, the association grew and flourished. Following Bob's death, the ASA was in a state of organized limbo until Russ Blaise assumed the duties of Executive Director. Since that time, and with the passing of so many of the original core members, the ASA has reorganized and retooled. This year the ASA was incorporated and registered as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational/historical organization, shifting the focus of the association from primarily that of a social one, but still remaining dedicated to the principles established in 1980.

As the ASA enters a new phase it is prudent to invoke Santayana's dictum that "those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." But given the myriad successes of the past 30 years and the hundreds of friendships made and renewed, wouldn't that be nice.

Reunion 2010

In a literal sense the 2010 Alamo Scouts Reunion in Seal Beach, CA was a cool affair. For those suffering from oppressive heat and humidity throughout much of the nation, the moderate temperatures, low humidity, and fresh sea air was a slice of paradise. But although the mercury was low, spirits were high as Alamo Scouts, family members, and friends reunited to celebrate old friendships and to make new ones.

Alamo Scouts Bill Littlefield & Bob Buschur.

After a one-year hiatus, ASA stalwart Terry Santos was back in the saddle again (see more about that later) on Wednesday to greet early arrivals, accompanied by his daughter, T.A., ASA Executive Director Russ Blaise, and Glenn and Annette Groen, who assisted Jerry Littlefield in hosting the event. Attendees enjoyed the laidback atmosphere by exploring the myriad shops on nearby Main Street, sticking their feet into the sandy beaches of the Pacific Ocean, or enjoying the libations and culinary accoutrements of the hospitality suite.

Thursday's schedule kicked off with a bus ride to the outstanding Gene Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles. Most expected the focus to be on the singing cowboy himself, but were wildly surprised at the variety and breadth of the displays, as were the hundreds of school children also in attendance! Lunch was held at the museum cafeteria before heading back to the motel. The rest of the afternoon and evening were spent catching up with old friends and sampling the local fare.

Business meeting: Lance Zedric, Audrene Hall Burress, Russ Blaise & Terry Santos.

The business meeting was the first item on Friday's agenda, where the various and sundry ASA officers illuminated the attendees on old business, new business, and on the general state of the association. Russ reported that the ASA is now incorporated and that efforts are ongoing to obtain not-for-profit status (which has since been obtained), while Audrene indicated that the coffers of the treasury are relatively healthy. Lance updated the members on the discovery of two new Alamo Scouts missions and on the status of ongoing historical research projects and plans (see National Archives). Terry motioned that the 2011 ASA reunion be held in Myrtle Beach, SC, with Audrene and Terry serving as co-hosts. After much elation and cheering, order was restored and the motion passed. However, after considering that ASA members would likely be clad only in swimwear for four days, cooler heads prevailed and it was later deemed that nearby Charleston, SC would be more appropriate, if not tasteful.

Alamo Scout Terry Santos.

The meeting was followed by an informative and spirited presentation on the MacArthur Memorial by archivist, James Zobel. The memorial is located in Norfolk, VA and has one of the largest collections of SWPA material in the country. It would be worth a visit.

The afternoon featured a windy but enjoyable cruise of the magnificent San Pedro and Los Angeles harbors. For those who have not toured the massive LA Harbor, it is a must see. The windblown but happy caravan arrived back at the hotel at 4 o'clock and readied for the week's marquee event, the Reunion Banquet. Following a quick change (and nap), guests were shuttled to a local restaurant and enjoyed a delicious meal of either prime rib, fish, or chicken and ribs. With over 70 ASA members, family, and friends in attendance, guest speaker Colonel Mark Rosengard, a career Special Forces officer, enlightened the audience on operations in Afghanistan. After much

James Zobel, MacArthur Memorial archivist.

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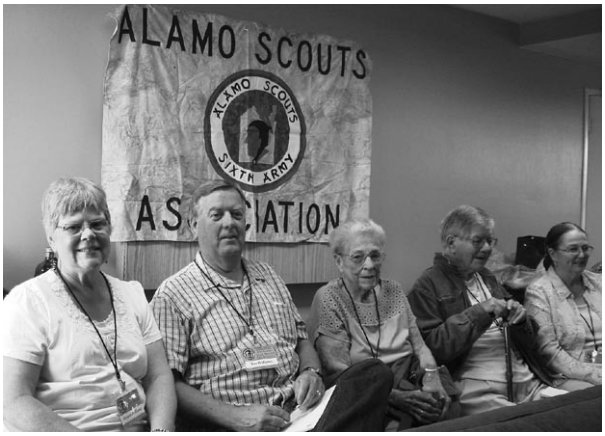


Megan & Tim Williams, Evelyn Branson, Bill Littlefield & Marilyn Plutae.

eating, drinking and revelry, the happy celebrants returned to the hotel with another successful banquet under their somewhat loosened belts.

With all official business concluded, Saturday was optional. Some toured the Long Beach Aquarium and the local environs, while others left for home or continued on with extended vacations, and as all left the west coast Eden they had a cool breeze at their backs and warm smiles on their faces. Another happy ending.

A special thanks to Jerry Littlefield and to Glen and Annette Groen for hosting an outstanding reunion. And thanks to Ching Zedric and Linda Nellist for the great photos.

Russ Blaise "getting to the point".

Reunion speaker Mark Rosengard with historians Lance Zedric & George Eaton.

Historian's Corner

New Finds at NARA:

The National Archives in College Park, Maryland has again opened its arms to the Alamo Scouts Association in its quest to locate archival material. From 9-16 July, ASA Historian Lance Zedric revisited one of the nation's premier archives and uncovered a treasure trove of information. All told, almost 1200 pages of Alamo Scouts related material was identified, located, and photographed.

"It was a marvelous trip," said Lance. "The primary focus was to find and begin to document the combined Alamo Scouts and Navy PT boat operations, of which there are several, and to continue the secondary mission of locating previously unknown or undocumented Alamo Scouts operations. The trip was successful on both counts."

Hollinger archival boxes waiting to be explored at NARA

Five years ago the ASA had identified less than five PT boats by number which had supported the Alamo Scouts. Following a trip to the National PT Boat Headquarters in Memphis in 2009, and this year's trip to College Park, over 75 PT boats have been substantiated as having transported, supplied, or assisted Alamo Scouts on live missions.

"The area of PT boat operations in relation to the Alamo Scouts virtually had been untouched until now," added Lance. "Learning to navigate through naval records is entirely new, but Nathaniel Patch of the NARA staff was immensely helpful."

[Continued on next page]

Some of the finds include one undiscovered mission performed by Chanley Team at Arso, DNG, from 1-5 August; one previously undiscovered mission report from Littlefield Team (Vanimo); one mission report from Dove Team (Cape Opmorai); and three previously unidentified missions (Roemberpon, Mapia Island, Naoefi) performed by unknown teams in July 1944. Additional finds include more than 120 Alamo Scouts radio messages and 105 PT boat messages related to the Alamo Scouts, which is just part of the large discovery of reports, charts, rosters, maps, and other ephemera netted during the junket.

"The most exciting finds weren't about missions," said Lance. "They were about people. We can now put to rest some of the speculation around a couple of the training classes. The names of over 115 Alamo Scouts graduates, trainees, and overhead were located, to include the complete 48-man graduation roster from the 4th class. This is the only such roster we have, and what it doesn't say is just as important as what it does say in terms of identifying Scout graduates. But it doesn't stop there. A short film clip showing Bob Sumner receiving the Silver Star from General Krueger in June 1945 was also located and copied. Now that's something to get excited about!"

But the National Archives had yet another surprise in store. Bill Cowell, a retired sergeant major and student of Alamo Scout Andy Smith at the Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, AZ in the early 1970s, gave Lance a personal tour of the Nixon Library (NARA) containing the original Nixon tapes. Cowell is an audio preservation specialist and cleans, preserves, and digitizes the tapes.

"Holding the Nixon tapes in my hands was a thrill," beamed Lance. "It's not everyday that someone gets to do something like that. If it wasn't for my association with Andy Smith and his association with Bill that never would have happened. Apparently, Andy is still scouting around looking out for people."

1LT Eugene Kersting

Holder & Kersting:

On 9 October 1944, 1LT Eugene Kersting of Dayton, OH and SSG Wendell Holder of Bowling Green, KY drowned in a training (5th class) accident at Tami Beach, Dutch New Guinea. After several years, relatives of each man have been located, and they are interested in learning more. Lance is looking to speak with anyone who was there or who might have firsthand knowledge of the incident, or who might have known either man. This is a great opportunity to provide closure to the families. Let's not let it slip by.

SSG Wendell Holder

Christmas in June:

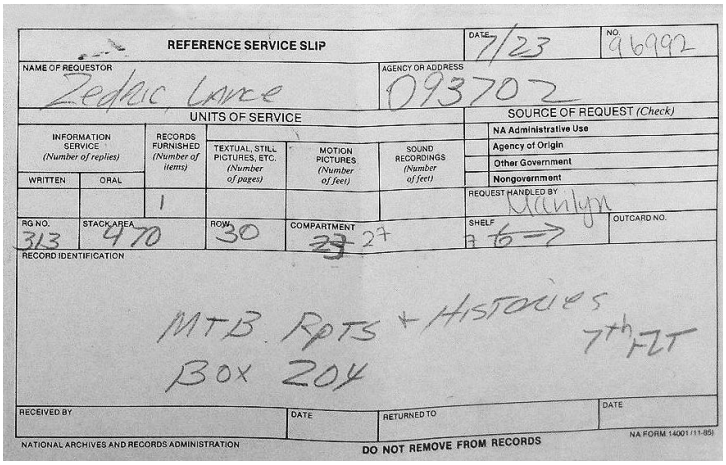
Christine McGowen recently unearthed 180 wartime letters written by husband John over roughly 15 months with the Scouts. The letters, many running 3-6 pages, are being scanned, digitized, and catalogued for the ASA archives. They give an intimate look into the Alamo Scout who started it all and provide details into daily Scout life that only someone who was there could provide. Christine is our new hero! Anyone who has photos, letters home or other ephemera and would like them scanned and placed into a single PDF file that can easily be copied and given out to family members, contact Lance. It's free!

The John McGowen letters.

National Archives Made Simple
Textual Records Research
by: Lance Zedric

For many, yours truly included, a trip to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland may seem overwhelming. But it's really not that difficult. The following is the down and dirty on what to do.

1) Plan wisely and bring a GPS, and contrary to what the National Archives Records Administration (NARA) posts on its website, there is ample parking space even during peak periods.
2) Research your subject online BEFORE you go. It will save you hours of frustration. As of August 2010 NARA has WiFi access in the research rooms!
3) When you arrive you will be required to show a photo ID and to pass through security, so be ready.
4) A NARA Researcher's Card is also required. After passing through security, enter the registration office immediately to the right. You will watch a brief introduction to NARA policies and procedures and then be issued a card. The official will also inspect and stamp any research notes you might have.
5) At this point if you have a camera and a computer and/or scanner, you must check in with security in the center of the lobby and be issued a property pass for all equipment. It only takes a minute or two.
6) Then take the elevator down one floor to the locker room – Room 1000 – where you must leave any purses, bags, briefcases, coats, pens, markers, etc. ONLY PROVIDED PENCILS are allowed. Be sure to bring a quarter for the locker. It will be returned when finished.
7) Next take the elevator back to the main floor and turn left to enter the security checkpoint. The guard will scan your Researcher's Card and match your electronic equipment against the property pass. You're on your way.
8) Enter the elevator and proceed to the 2nd Floor for textual records. Upon entering each day you are required to sign in by having your Researcher's Card scanned.
9) Now the race is on to get a good seat and to submit a research request in time for the first "Pull" of the day, which occurs at 10a.m., with additional pulls at 11a.m., 1:30p.m., and 2:30p.m. Extended summer hours are in effect Wednesday-Friday and an additional pull is at 3:30p.m. on those days.
10) To submit a Research Request (see example), several items of information are required. Each is explained below.
11) STEP 1 – Go to the research room and ask one of the several archivists for help. That's their job and they are good at it. They will show you how to fill out a slip.
12) STEP 2 – Try it out for yourself. Go to either the computer or the subject file RECORD GROUP and look for your subject. Once the subject is located a MLR will be noted. Write it down.
13) STEP 3 – Consult the appropriate MLR RECORD GROUP file and find the MLR. The entry will provide the following information: Stack, Shelf, Row, Container, etc.
14) STEP 4 - Enter that information onto the slip along with any required narrative or optional information you might desire, and turn into the archivist for inspection and submission. Unfortunately, items from only one record group at a time may be requested during each pull. But up to 24 boxes per pull are allowed. So it pays to submit like record group requests at the same time.


REFERENCE SERVICE SLIP

DATE 7/23 NO. 96992

NAME OF REQUESTOR: Zedric, Lance

AGENCY OR ADDRESS: 093702

UNITS OF SERVICE

INFORMATION SERVICE (Number of replies)		RECORDS FURNISHED (Number of items)	TEXTUAL, STILL PICTURES, ETC. (Number of pages)	MOTION PICTURES (Number of feet)	SOUND RECORDINGS (Number of feet)
WRITTEN	ORAL				
		1			

SOURCE OF REQUEST (Check)
- NA Administrative Use
- Agency of Origin
- Other Government
- Nongovernment

REQUEST HANDLED BY: Marilyn

RG NO.	STACK AREA	ROW	COMPARTMENT	SHELF	OUTCARD NO.
313	470	30	23 27	A 76 →	

RECORD IDENTIFICATION

MTB Rpts + Histories 7th FLT
Box 204

RECEIVED BY	DATE	RETURNED TO	DATE

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION — DO NOT REMOVE FROM RECORDS — NA FORM 14001 (11-85)

NARA Pull Slip

15) STEP 5 – Wait. Normally within 30 minutes to an hour your request will be available. In the meantime, complete the research requests you wish to submit for later pulls. A running log of fulfilled requests is located at the pull desk. Check the log for your name.
16) STEP 6 – When your name appears on the log, show your researcher's card to the staff and they will retrieve your order. You will then sign, date, and initial the request in receipt for the material.
17) STEP 7 - Take the material to your desk and begin reading. Once you discover something that you want to photograph, scan, or copy, take the entire research box to the one of the staff kiosks and request a reproduction tag to hang on the light of your desk and receive a declassification sticker to affix to the scanner or photocopier, or to place next to any documents that are being photographed. Stickers are MANDATORY on all reproduced and photographed items. You won't get out of the door without one.

[Continued on next page]

18) STEP 8 – Once you have finished examining your records, return them to the pull desk and sign, date, and initial the pull slip indicating return of materials. All orders may be held for three days without resubmitting a new request. Just tell the staff that you want to hold the material.
19) STEP 9 – Leaving. Upon exiting the research room all laptop computers must be opened and notes and/or papers inspected. All NARA notepaper has a hole punched in the upper left corner and waved through. Photocopies and other materials must bear a declassification stamp to be removed.
20) STEP 10 – Take the elevator back to the main floor and pass through security. Again, IDs, property passes, and electronics are inspected.
21) STEP 11 – Take the elevator to the locker room to return the cart and to retrieve personal belongs.
22) STEP 12 (optional) – Eat at the NARA cafeteria. Reasonable prices, good food and daily specials. But they only take cash.

Tips: Bring a battery charger for any camera. If using a scanner, buy a portable that needs only a USB hookup for the computer. Bring a ziplock bag (picked this up from the pros!) for all computer cables, rechargers, card readers, and for the computer mouse. Get there early.

How to Research and Order from NARA Online

1. Go to www.archives.gov
2. Spend 30 minutes browsing.
3. In the left column under Research & Order Click on START YOUR RESEARCH
4. Scroll to ONLINE RESEARCH TOOLS. There are several options. For military related matters suggest clicking Archival Research Catalog (ARC).
5. Enter a specific subject—such as ALAMO SCOUTS—click SEARCH.
6. Two results will appear. Note the following: ARC Identifier 1414073 / MLR Number A1 1137. The MLR number is required to find the location to enter on a NARA RESEARCH REQUEST (see above). The records also provides the Record Group, name of file, container ID # (if any), status, etc. However, it does not provide the NARA stack, shelf, and row number. Those are found in the MLR reference books at NARA.
7. Print out desired record and make notes on it as necessary. Take this information with you to NARA.
8. TO ORDER INFORMATION ONLINE continue.
9. Return to the Main Page at www.Archives.gov. Under RESEARCH and ORDER click ORDER ONLINE.
10. Scroll to bottom of page and click ORDER REPRODUCTIONS
11. Ordering online requires that you register as a user and that you pay with a credit card.
12. Click NEW USER under Login on the right column to set up login & password.
13. Click FIND & REQUEST
14. Click MILITARY and MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS
15. Click WORLD WAR II (or desired period)
16. Click REFERENCE REQUEST on right column.
17. Complete form being as specific as possible. If files were found online, provide all relevant information, to include: Name, Record Group, MLR Number, etc. Click SEND. NOTE: Only three (3) requests can be made at once and only (3) may be pending at any one time.
18. Within one or two days you will receive a Research Request Confirmation.
19. Within 10-30 working days you will receive notification of what records exist, cost, etc. NARA will often provide up to 15 FREE photocopies of specifically requested documents per order. Larger files will cost.
20. For extensive research, the names of several onsite researchers are available through NARA. These commercial researchers are generally experienced and thorough.

Tips: Don't save NARA into your computer's "Favorite Places". The cookies seem to disable themselves after about 30 minutes. Be specific and provide all possible information. Many of the staff are college interns and are learning on the job. PRINT OUT EVERYTHING YOU FIND WHEN YOU FIND IT because you might not find it again. Read through the HIERARCHY of each topic. It can provide clues and leads to other locations. Good luck!

-Lance Zedric

Don't Forget!

Your charitable gift to the ASA is now tax deductable! To make a donation to the historical research fund or for more information, contact Audrene or Russ. Thank you for your ongoing support.

The MacArthur Memorial

James Zobel—the energetic archivist from the MacArthur Memorial who spoke after the business meeting in Seal Beach, is working with Lance in hammering out the details for establishing a permanent Alamo Scouts display and records repository at the MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, Virginia. That means we need original Alamo Scouts items; boots, enemy war souvenirs, compasses, equipment, photos, flags, knives, combat uniforms, etc. Anything you might think of. If you have two of something—cough one up for posterity! This is what we've been looking for. Contact Lance for more details.

Family Needs Photos!

The family of Alamo Scout Elijah Parish, who was a retained graduate of the 9th Class, is trying to locate a photo of Elijah. All family photos were lost in a fire several years ago. Elijah was a member of WILLIAMS TEAM and went to Japan after the war. Please check your albums!

Need Photos from Past Reunions

The ASA Archive needs Alamo Scouts group photos (or scans) from the following reunions: 1980 (Kansas City); 1982 (San Antonio); 1987 (Kansas City); 1991 (Orlando); 1997 (Asheville): 2007 (Denver). So dig into those photo albums—and thanks to everyone who has sent photos from the others. We're whittling this thing down.

Challenge Coins

Alamo Scouts challenge coins are still available. Use the enclosed form to order as many as you like. They make great gifts and there's room on the edge to inscribe the name of your Alamo Scout or loved one.

NECROLOGY

Ralph Kleeberger reported that boat mate Handy Stinson, a veteran of PT-379, made his last patrol on Monday, August 23, 2010. Handy supported the Alamo Scouts on two known missions in the Philippines in July 1945. The ASA would like to extend its condolences to his family and to all who knew him.

Handy Stinson

John E. Phillips
August 22nd, 2008

George B. "Buck" Hansel
February 7th, 2009

Director
Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret), *pro perpetua*
November 15, 1921 - August 3, 2004

Executive Director	Secretary	Treasurer	2011 Reunion Host	Historian	Membership
Russ Blaise	Terry Santos	Audrene Hall Burress	Audrene Hall Burress	Lance Zedric	Russ Blaise

Alamo Scouts Association
Co-founders: Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret)
Command Sergeant Major Galen C. Kittleson (Ret)

Alamo Scouts Website
www.alamoscouts.org
Co-founders: Russ Blaise and Lance Zedric