August 2011

ALAMO SCOUTS Newsletter

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

ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION, Inc.

"The men of the Alamo Scouts were incredible soldiers and great guys. I was just happy to be one of them."

-Franklin B. Fox, Rounsaville Team

http://www.alamoscouts.org

ASA Charleston Reunion, June 8-12, 2011

Civil War Cannon.

On April 12, 1861, southern cannon in Charleston, South Carolina shelled the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter guarding the approach to Charleston Harbor, and ignited four bitter years of civil war that tested the mettle of our nation and left indelible scars on our national spirit. Scars so deep that they would be borne by the men in battle for their entire lives and be visited upon their sons and their sons' sons. One hundred and fifty years later, five warriors of another era, tested and true as their blue and grey brethren who fought at Sumter, Gettysburg, and hundreds of other places famous and obscure, gathered at Charleston with family and friends, to recognize their own call to arms 70 years past, to celebrate the collective fruits of their service, and to look to the future with hope. It was the best of times.

"This was a wonderful reunion," beamed Alamo Scout Bill Littlefield, speaking on the 20th gathering of the Alamo Scouts Association since 1980. "The atmosphere was fantastic and the reunion was one of the most congenial we've had."

"I'm blown away," added Charles Ouzts, son of Alamo Scouts team leader Wilmot Ouzts, upon attending his first reunion. "I wish I had come to a reunion years ago, but daddy rarely talked about the war."

Guests began arriving at the spacious Courtyard Marriott on the water's edge on Wednesday, and upon checking in, received a beautiful teal blue Alamo Scouts lanyard and ID badge made by Russ Blaise. Most then ventured out and explored the charm (and traffic) of Charleston. The sub-tropical clime quickly loosened joints and reaffirmed that air conditioning, whether in a hotel room or car, is one of the greatest inventions in history. By the evening, many guests had arrived and our rag-tag caravan traveled by foot and car to a nearby seafood restaurant for dinner. Our late arrival, 10 minutes before closing time, almost caused the overworked waiters and underprepared cooks to have nervous breakdowns, but despite a long wait and grumbling stomachs, all survived to eat another day.

A view from our hotel.

The next morning, 36 brave souls boarded a tour bus and traveled to Middleton Place, one of the finest existing antebellum plantations in the south, and the place where British General Lord Cornwallis headquartered while chasing Francis "Swamp Fox" Marion and the colonial militia throughout South Carolina during the Revolutionary War. After chasing down an open-air lunch at the plantation, the group was treated to a narrated driving tour of downtown Charleston and a stop at water's edge to view the splendor of southern living 1860s style, and to stand where the cannon fired on Fort Sumter in the distance.

Time in the hospitality suite.

The group then returned to the hotel around 4 o'clock and retired to the safety of their rooms and to the intimacy of the fully-stocked hospitality suite, where story-telling, hobnobbing, and socializing went on until Russ could no longer keep his eyes open and locked the door.

[Continued on next page]

ASA Board of Directors.

Friday was a free day, and many guests visited Fort Sumter, which was a short ferry ride away, and spent two enjoyable hours wandering through the ruins and basking in the historical relevance of the site. Others explored downtown Charleston and shopped, sampled the local cuisine, and took in the southern hospitality of one of America's signature cities. After a full day, most returned to the hotel and enjoyed the company, but George Eaton received a special surprise when Tim Williams presented him with a pristine, sealed, vintage Korean War gas mask, which George promptly unsealed and played with like a Christmas toy to everyone's enjoyment!

A visit to Fort Sumter.

Saturday's festivities began with a 10 a.m. business meeting. The first order of business was to elect Kathi Henderson, daughter of Alamo Scout Zeke McConnell, as the new Secretary of the ASA, replacing Terry Santos, who has been experiencing health issues. However, Terry is recovering nicely and was named ASA Ambassador, in which he will continue to represent the ASA at reunions and in a social capacity. Kathi and Russ reported that the ASA has 96 current members and is committed to increasing membership to over 100 by the next reunion. So, everyone recruit family members and friends. Russ also explained the need for the Alamo Scouts community to maintain privacy and to protect its members. Good OPSEC is a must!

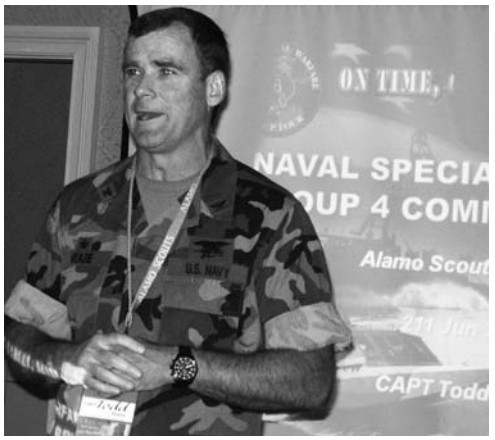
Next, Audrene issued the Treasurer's Report and gladly reported that the organization is still in the black, but since many members purchased the attractive 5-year and 10-year memberships, the coffers might seem fuller than they are.

Lance concluded the meeting with the Historian's Report, and outlined what dusty old relics he dug up over the past year, which included almost 200 wartime letters from John McGowen, over 1200 pieces of ephemera from the last National Archives research trip, and locating new Scouts and others who operated with the unit during the war.

Group gathers for the ASA business meeting.

Finally, Kathi made an impassioned plea to host next year's reunion in Seattle, which was overwhelmingly accepted. Tentatively, the reunion will be held about the same time (or a week later) than this year, so mark your calendars and begin saving your coins. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m., and everyone scattered to the four winds to visit, eat, nap, and prepare for the reunion banquet.

During the traditional Director's Reception, (in honor of the late, Robert S. Sumner), which always goes by too quickly, the group was joined by Charles Ouzts, Bruce Kittleson, and other Alamo Scout progeny. Jack Littlefield opened the ceremonies with a stirring benediction, then the feedbag was on! The food was catered in and consisted of chicken, beef, pork, and several declicious side dishes and dessert. Afterward, Navy SEAL captain Todd Veazie, head of the Navy SEALS Warfare Group, gave an informative and spirited 90-minute audio-visual presentation on the capabilities of the Navy's SWIC groups, which are responsible for supporting Navy SEALs teams in training and in the field. The audience was also treated to a special viewing of John McGowen and his team back in their salad days. Following a brief photo op, the festivities were over, and some guests retired to their rooms, while others reconvened in the hospitality suite for a nightcap and to say goodbye before catching early flights home on Sunday morning.



Keynote Speaker, CAPT Todd Veazie.

First timers, Earl & Kathy Coleman.

"Although our father died aboard the Sea Wolf submarine in 1944, coming to the reunion has helped us reconnect with him and with our new family," said Nancy Mozingo.

"We will never forget this week," echoed her sister Jenne Heffern. "It has helped bring us closure with the loss of our father. The Alamo Scouts were an amazing group of men, and we're proud that our father was one of them."

Unfortunately, the reunion ended too quickly, and everyone had to return home, putting a bittersweet bow on our "yearly vigil feast." But the beauty about our reunions is how we revisit the past and remember old friends; how we enjoy the present and make new memories, and how we look to the future in anticipation of both. See you in Seattle!

ASA Reunion Attendees

Jack & Betty Geiger - Scout
Mary Beth & Ron Clayton (daughter)
Maria & John Checton (daughter)
John Geiger, Jr.

Bill Littlefield & Marilyn Plutae - Scout & Friend
Jerry & Laurie Littlefield
Jack Littlefield
Glen & Annette Groen - Friends

Sheila Hard - (Hal Hard's daughter)
Jo & Greg Churchill (Hal Hard's daughter)

Nancy & Charles Mozingo - (Howell Kopp's daughter)
Jenne & Frank Heffern – (Howell Kopp's daughter)

Bob & Rita Buschur - Scout
Mary & Jack Barga (Bob's sister)

Christine McGowen - (John' wife)
John McGowen (John's son)

Connie & Pricilla Vineyard - Scout

Josie & Dennis Asis - (Sabas' wife and son)

Bill & Sheila Boes - (Warren's son)

Linda Nellist – (Bill's daughter-in-law)

Audrene & Jim Burress - (Aubrey (Lee) Hall's daughter)

Earl & Kathy Coleman - (Lawrence Sr. son)

Kathi & Jack Henderson - (Zeke McConnell's daughter)

Bruce & Judy Kittleson - (Galen's son)

Ralph & Lee Anne Kleeberger - (PT Boat Crewman)

Megan & Tim Williams - (Tommy Thompson's daughter)

Charles Ouzts - (Wilmot B. Jr. son)

George Eaton - (WW II Historian)

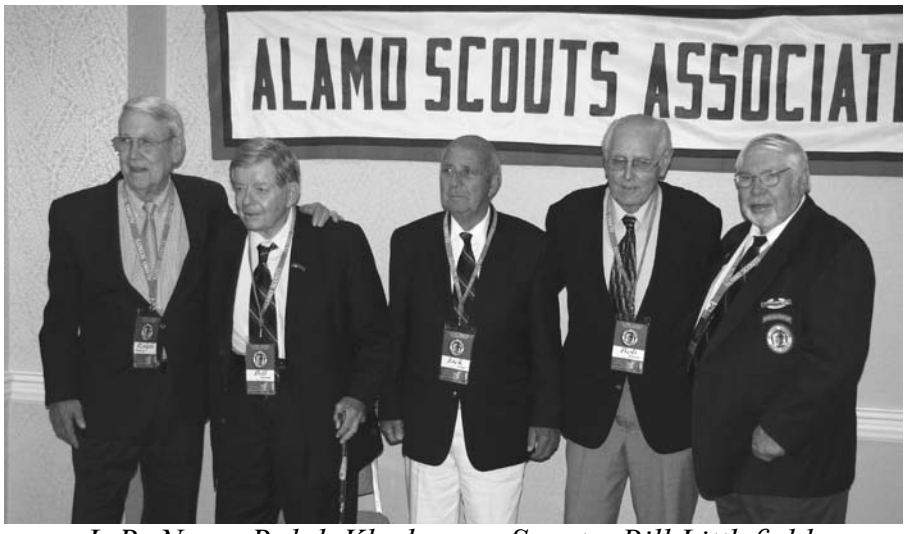
Lance Zedric - (ASA Historian)

Russ Blaise - (William's (Bill) son)

Todd & Valerie Veazie (Guest speaker & wife)

Large tree on the grounds of Middleton Place Plantation.

Our tour guide tells us about Charleston.



L-R: Navy: Ralph Kleeberger, Scouts: Bill Littlefield, Jack Geiger, Bob Buschur & Connie Vineyard.

Historian's Corner

To the letter by Lance Zedric.

The ASA Historical Archive has struck pay dirt again! Jo Churchill and Sheila Hard, daughters of Alamo Scout Harold "Hal" Hard of Rounsaville Team, and Tim and Megan Williams, daughter and son-in-law of team leader George "Tommy" Thompson, have generously donated copies of Hal and George's wartime letters. All told, the period missives number over 400 and constitute a significant historical find. Coupled with some 180 letters of John McGowen's donated by John McGowen, Jr., and Christine McGowen last year, along with recent contributions of letters by Nancy Mozingo and Jenne Heffern, daughters of Howell Kopp, and others, the ASA Archive has amassed a broad body of primary sources which offer a valuable look into the training, operations, and daily life of the Alamo Scouts. While many of the letters home are intentionally vague and cryptic as to pass wartime censorship, they provide extensive general information and enough specifics to definitively place men and teams at exact locations, or verify what has thus far been speculation. More importantly, the letters offer an unflinching look at the personalities of the men in camp, and reveal the raw emotions felt by men at war thousands of miles from home.

Below are two letters from the Hard and Thompson collections. The first was from Hal Hard to his parents written on February 6, 1945, five days after he returned from the Cabanatuan POW camp liberation. The second letter was written by George Thompson to his future wife, Helen, on February 24, 1944, five days before the first Alamo Scouts mission:

"Dearest folks: I have a few minutes to write this afternoon but not much to write about I'm afraid. The rain that started two nights ago has continued with break of half a day or so. It just finished sprinkling a little and now the sun is coming out. I've seen more rainbows in the Philippines than anywhere I've been. Some real pretty ones too. There was one thing I wanted to tell you about. Did you hear (I presume you did - it's been in all communiqués and radio reports) of the 500 American prisoners rescued from a Jap concentration camp? Well, I thought you'd be interested in knowing that we were along on that job. It was one of the biggest thrills I have ever received. To see all those guys that had been there for three years. They were glad to hear from us too I can tell you. Of course, we met and had a chance to talk to some of them - there was a Major Hill that lived in Manila before the war and a Catholic priest that comes from Maryland… He's a young fellow, very interesting talker and her took all our addresses and is going to try and write all the folks. (Pardon the change of ink- it's all I could bum. Ha!). So don't be surprised if you hear from stranger some of these days. They gave a list of names over the radio of all the fellows and their hometowns. There were only three that I ever heard of from Michigan. Utica, Jackson, and Grand Rapids… Today I went down to see a Opu who is in the Hospital for awhile. He's O.K. but laying around in these Hospitals gets tiring and it's pleasant to have someone come in for a little while anyway. Well, all the fellows did manage to help me eat up all the groceries (except the turkey and chicken) that I received in those last packages. The only thing that was spoiled was a box of candy that Phyliss Munger sent me. - They were moldy. I hope, Mother, that you are continuing to take things easy and that your trouble - whatever it is - has left you for good. Just as healthy but a little more cautious. Your always loving son, Harold"

"Dearest Darling, All I have to say tonite is that I still love you & miss you like hell. That will ever be true even though I don't write it. Tomorrow I am returning to camp. I hope there are some more of your nice letters waiting for me. After my return chances are that I will be rather busy so I might not be writing too often. For awhile I thought that I might not get out of here. I was given tests for everything from syphilis to worms. All tests turned up negative. I thought they would because I have never felt better in my life. As yet I haven't gained back the few pounds of stomach which I lost during the last problem. Maybe that is why I feel so fine. Much to my regret we were unable to make ice cream today. The ice machine broke down. Guess I'll have to wait 'til I make my own at camp. I think the boys there will be very pleased to have a dish of the stuff so I'm taking plenty of the mix. Guess that's all for now, Darling. I'll try to write some time during the weekend. Love you, Dick"

[Continued on next page]

Clearly, each letter offers something different, but both provide valuable historical information. A special thanks to Jo, Sheila, Tim, Megan, Christine, John, Nancy, and Jenne for their time and effort. Given that over 200 men worked at the ASTCs as overhead, and that over 400 trainees were graduated, and that some 138 men performed a live mission, a lot of letters are still stuffed away in closets and in shoeboxes, each containing another small piece of the Alamo Scouts puzzle. The ASA asks that everyone sort through their old letters, scrapbooks, and photo albums and take the next step in preserving the history of one of the elite units in American history. Call or email if you have any questions or need help.

RECENT FINDS by Lance Zedric

FOUND: Joseph P. Novella

The internet is a beautiful thing, especially when hunting for Alamo Scouts that have been off the grid since 1945. "I lost contact with everyone," said Alamo Scouts Joe Novella , "When I got out of the service, I finished high school, and the day after I finished high school, I started college. Then I finished college, went to work, and got married. I've had a good life.

Joseph P. Novella

ovella graduated from the 8th Class and was placed on Hall Team, led by Aubrey "Lee" Hall. Hall graduated with the 1st Class, and served on several teams before receiving a battlefield commission five months in March 1945. The team consisted of Clifford Henrickson, Bill Swain, Curtiss Broussard, and Norman Boschert. "We didn't get to go on any live missions," added Novella, "But we did some serious damage to some nightclubs in Japan during occupation duty."

After a month in Japan, Novella returned to the 136th Infantry, where he had served with fellow Scouts Frank Fox, Hal Hard, and Francis Peeples. Joe and his wife live in Florida in the winter and spend summers in Michigan. Anyone wanting his address, drop us a line.

FOUND: Lt. Walter Pierce

In late February 1944, PBY pilot Lt. (jg) Walter Pierce had the distinction of picking up McGowen Team from Los Negros Island on the first operational Alamo Scouts mission. In March of this year, I had the distinction of locating him and being the first person to speak with him about the mission since 1944.

For years, I had tried to learn the name of the pilot that dropped off and picked up McGowen Team, but I only learned of Mr. Pierce through John McGowen's war letters, donated by the McGowen family. I also learned that Pierce was not the pilot who dropped the team off. That distinction goes to James F. Merritt, who passed away several years ago. In all extant accounts of the mission, Pierce was not been mentioned by name, but thanks to serendipity and John's loquacious letters, I learned of his last name only. It was a place to start, but looking for "Pierce" in America is like looking for a needle in a stack of needles. Finally, after doing a little historical detective work, I found an obscure reference to a "Walter O. Pierce who picked up a scouting parting on Los Negros." Another couple months passed and I narrowed the list down to six people with that name. But there was no guarantee that any were living. So, I called several and came up short on all but one, which I repeatedly got an answering machine with no message. So I left my own message. Three months later I get a phone call from 94-year-old Walter O. Pierce, the pilot. He recalled the event clearly and had often wondered what had happened to the "Rangers" he picked up. In fact, he still has his original logbook listing McGowen and Barnes and a few details of the mission. The rest, as they say, is history.

Walter Pierce

FOUND: Lu Soon Pu

In early 1945, Alamo Scout Wilbur Littlefield was operating in the Pila, Laguna area on Luzon with Rounsaville Team, and had contact with the Wha Chi unit of the Hukbalahop. As with many, Bill made a lasting impression on Lu Soon Pu, a young Chinese soldier serving with the unit. "Our unit was the Wha Chi," said Lu, now 89 years old and living in Manila. "We met up with the Americans almost at the end of the war in 1945, and there was a person named 'Bill' who frequently visited the Chinese camp. He was about our age and was friendly. The Americans dropped food and clothing and I got an American suit jacket and shoes, which I wore with shorts. Everybody thought I was crazy by the way I dressed, but I didn't care."

Lu's daughter contacted our historian and supplied a story written by Lu, which is currently being translated by Ching Zedric. "Thank you for putting us in contact with Bill," wrote Pu's daughter in an email to the ASA. "My father is happy to hear that Bill is around and doing well. He made an impression on the Chinese in his group."

[Continued on next page]

The following mission report and map, written by Alamo Scout Bill Littlefield, was recently found in the National Archives by the ASA historian. It recounts the team's mission to ascertain enemy strength and movement around Vanimo, which is situated on a small peninsula along the northern coast of New Guinea west of Aitape. The report is one of the few that is accompanied by an original hand-drawn map. Note that the team worked with soldiers from NEFIS, the Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service, which sent teams of agents behind the lines to work with indigenous populations. Good stuff!

HEADQUARTERS ALAMO FORCE
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
APO 712

20 August 1944

Report of Reconnaissance VANIMO BAY area, 13 Aug. 44 to 16 Aug. 44

Map references: VANIMO EAST and VANIMO WEST. 1/63360.

1. 13 Aug. 44, patrol consisting of 1 officer and 7 EM from Alamo Scouts landed ½ mile East of WARIMO VILLAGE at 1600. Natives from WARIMO VILLAGE reported no Japs in the area and stated that the Japs have not used the coastal track West of VANIMO BAY for two or three months.

2. Patrol proceeded to WAMINO VILLAGE and contacted Capt. Pearson, AIF, and Cpl. Touhy, ANGAU, who had been in the area for about two weeks, recruiting natives for work at AITAPE and giving medical treatment. They stated that there had been no signs of Japs West of VANIMO BAY and that a native police patrol sent out one week before had found no signs of recent Jap occupation of the bush South and West of WAMINO VILLAGE. One police boy stated that he had killed five Japs at WAMINO MISSION about three weeks previously.

3. Patrol proceeded to WAMINO MISSION, bivouaced for night. The mission has been completely destroyed, but large numbers of empty tins and boxes in the area indicated that it had been occupied by the Japs for a long period of time. Natives stated that the Japs had been in the WAMINO BAY area for about one year. The presence of several wrecked barges and two small fishing boats which had been beached led patrol to believe that VANIMO BAY may have been a stopping point in the coastal barge traffic. 14 Aug. 44 patrol consisting of M/Sgt. de Jong, NEFIS, S/Sgt. Bemish and S/Sgt. Throgmorton was sent to reconnoiter area around VANIMO HOUSE and native police barracks. They found no evidence of recent Jap occupation of the area. One large native type house of recent construction was found, and some papers were found in the house (turned in to CIC). Patrol found small corrugated iron building at (74.3 - 03.5). One motor in good condition except for a missing generator was found, and small parts of radio equipment led patrol to believe that building had been a radio station. Radio parts found had been burned.

4. Patrol consisting of Lt. Littlefield, Sgt. McConnell and Cpl. Armstrong reconnoitered coastal track and trails leading back into bush in the VANIMO HARBOR area. Skeletons and some equipment were found. From the condition of the clothing and equipment it is believed that these had been there for two or three months. Bush natives camped near the junction of the coastal track and track leading South into bush (72.2 - 04.2) stated that there were no Japs in the bush South and West of VANIMO HARBOR and that the tracks leading into the bush from VANIMO HARBOR had not been used for two or three months.

SECRET UNCLASSIFIED RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG/BS800

Copy Sent I Corps

- 1 -

SECRET

[Continued on next page]

SECRET

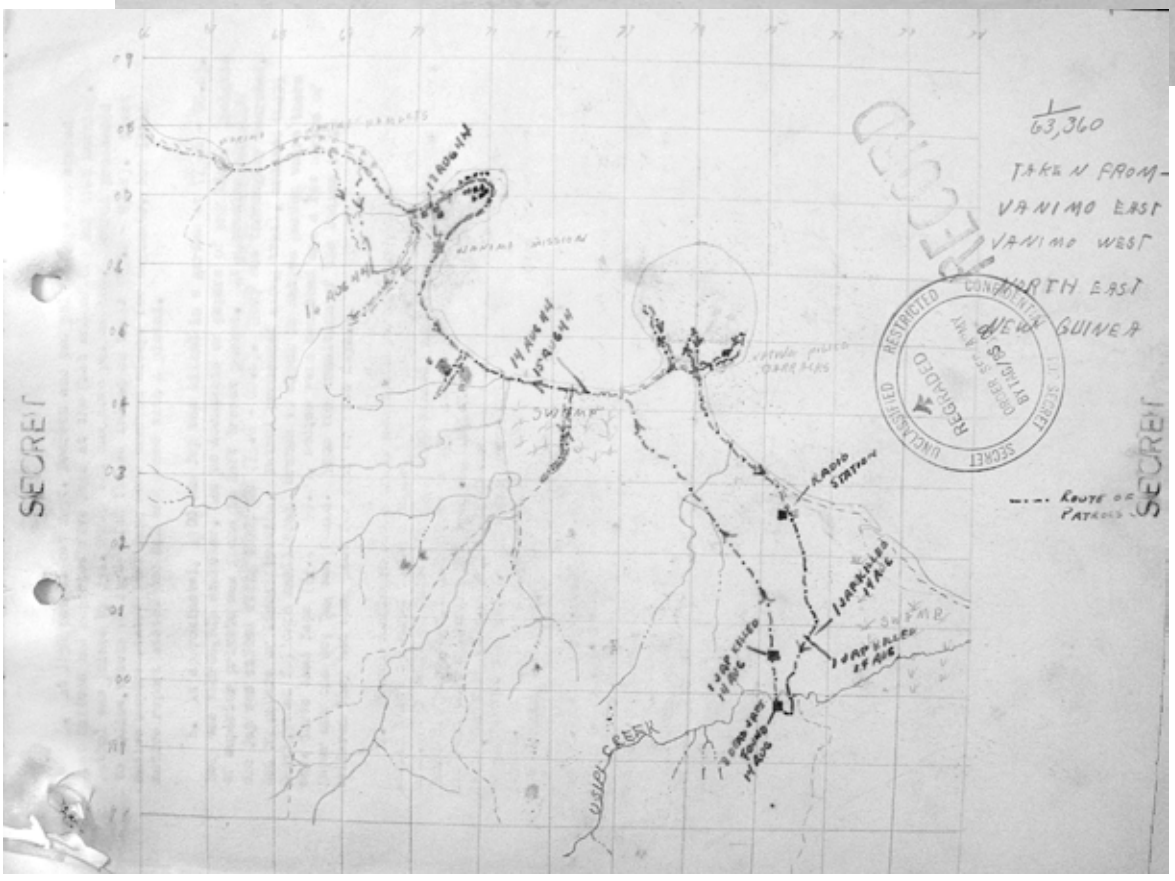
5. At 1030 patrol met Capt. Pearson and two police boys who stated that natives had reported five Japs at the East end of the Bay that morning. Patrol was joined by Cpl. Touhy and one more police boy. Patrol proceeded to follow tracks of Japs which turned inland on trail (75.2 - 03.0). First native report stated that Japs were unarmed except for bayonets, but later native report stated one man was armed with a pistol.

6. At approximately 1300 one Jap was killed in a garden at (75.6 - 00.6). Body was thoroughly searched, had no documents or papers of any kind. Insignia of superior private was found in left breast pocket. At approximately 1330 one Jap was killed along trail at (75.6 - 00.6). Body was thoroughly searched, had no papers or identification. Patrol proceeded along trail, crossed USIPI CREEK, then followed small trail branch to shack in native garden where there were three dead Japs (75.4 - 99.8), bodies were searched and a few scraps of paper and one dog tag was found. From the condition of the bodies it is believed they had been dead for four or five days.

7. Patrol continued along trail about 600 yards came upon a shack in a garden which appeared to be occupied by five men (75.3 - 00.6). Five sleeping mats, four pairs of shoes, two pairs of sandals and one pair boots were found. Extra clothing, small quantities of food and personal papers, equipment, and the fact that a latrine had been dug indicated that Japs intended to live in shack for some time. While patrol was searching shack one Jap was killed as he approached the shack. This Jap had no insignia of rank, but had several papers. After thoroughly searching the shack, patrol burned it, destroying the clothing and food.

8. Patrol returned to WAMINO MISSION, saw no signs of any more Japs. Those killed appeared in poor physical condition. Natives from NEGIRA VILLAGE met on coastal track 15 August stated that there were no Japs along the coastal track, but that there were a few Japs inland in the bush. Natives could give no definite information as to where the enemy were. On 16 August patrol reconnoitered trails South of WAMINO VILLAGE and WARIMO VILLAGE for several miles but found no recent signs of Japs in the area. The party returned to ASTC on 17 August.

WILLIAM F. LITTLEFIELD,
2nd Lt., Inf.,
Patrol Leader



New ASA Secretary

My name is Kathi Henderson and I am the oldest daughter of Alamo Scout Zeke McConnell, who passed away in Feb 2007.

Background: I was born and raised in Seattle, and graduated from high school in 1965, at which time I joined the U.S. Navy. I was Active Duty Navy for 13 Years in an administrative job, and upon my discharge from Active Duty, I joined the Naval Reserve as a "Drilling Reservist". I served in the administrative field in the Reserves for another 8 years, then in the same capacity in the private sector, before I retired in 1993.

My husband, Jack, and I met at our first duty station in Corpus Christi, TX. We have been married for 43 years and have one daughter, Jenni, and three grandchildren.

I started coming to the Alamo Scout Reunions in Denver, CO, in 2007, I was thrilled beyond belief, but my only REGRET was that I was never able to come to a Reunion with my Dad! I am so honored to be offered the job of Secretary!I will try my best to make you and my Dad proud of me!

-Kathi Henderson

2012 Reunion

At this time, we do not have a solid date for the 2012 reunion in Seattle, Washington, but we are shooting for June 20-24. We are planning a trip to the Fort Lewis Army Museum, among other places, but no additional site or hotel information is set at this time. When we have information, we will pass it along so everyone can start making reservations.

This N' That

The ASA is sad to announce that Christine McGowen has moved back to England following her retirement from teaching, but she has reassured us that she will continue to attend ASA reunions.

We also received an update from Terry Santos. He is improving daily and can be reached at his old phone number. Terry will continue to represent the ASA at reunions and in a social capacity as ASA Ambassador. We look forward to seeing him next year.

Past Newsletters Needed

The ASA Archive still needs the following ASA Newsletters to complete its files: **May 1989, Nov 1992, Nov 1995, May 2000, Nov 2000, May 2001.** Anyone who has one or all, please contact Lance.

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 Russ, Audrene or Kathi. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Necrology

Franklin B. Fox
July 30th, 2011

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

Executive Director/ Board Chairman
Russ Blaise

Secretary
Kathi Henderson

Treasurer
Audrene Hall Burress

Historian
Lance Zedric

Ambassador
Terry Santos

Membership
Russ Blaise

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

2012 Reunion Host
Kathi Henderson

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