November 2008

ALAMO SCOUTS Newsletter

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

ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION

Tucson, AZ

"We weren't out there for recognition... we were there to win a war!"
–Andy Smith

http://www.alamoscouts.org

Alamo Scouts Reunion - 2009

When: May 13-17, 2009.

Host: George Eaton.

Where: Rock Island/Moline, Illinois.

Hotel: Stoney Creek Lodge, Moline IL

Rate: We have blocked 25 rooms for 13-17 May. The rate is $109+ tax for a standard or deluxe king or queen. We are in walking distance to John Deere Commons and several good restaurants. The hotel has a bar, full hot breakfast, recreation areas, etc.

Reservations: To make a reservation call **309-743-0101** and mention the Alamo Scouts rate. Hotel web site is **www.stoneycreekinn.com** then click on the Quad Cities property. We encourage everyone who wants to attend the 2009 reunion to make your hotel room reservations early.

Airport: Moline (MLI) - a good airport not much more expensive than Chicago, which is a 3-hour drive. The motel provides free shuttle from Moline Airport.

Events: Tour of Rock Island Arsenal. Riverboat cruise. Reunion dinner. Annual meeting.

Guest Speaker: Lieutenant General Dave Fridovich , Director of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in Tampa, Florida.

We do not have a total dollar amount for the banquet and bus transportation as of yet. More information to follow as details get finalized. Also check the Alamo Scouts website for up-to-date information at www.alamoscouts.org

National Archives Battleground

In late July ASA Director Russ Blaise and Historian Lance Zedric deployed to the National Archives at College Park, Maryland for one week of "combat research" funded by a small group of ASA members. Private donations totaling $1950 were received in support of the trip.

"The extremely generous donations of just a few people provided us the means to stay near the Archives and to open and close the building each day for a week," said Zedric. "We found a treasure trove of Alamo Scouts reports, radio messages, photos, and other ephemera that had not seen the light of day since WWII."

All told, the junket netted some 200 new documents and approximately the same number of photographs, many of which have not been published or seen outside of the National Archives.

"Lance worked with documents and I primarily researched and copied photos in the Still Photo Branch of the Archives," said Blaise. Some of the photos were the originals of some we already have, which are of better quality, while the remainder are new finds. Because of this trip and from recent donations of scrapbooks and photo albums from family members of Alamo Scouts, the ASA Photo Archive will increase by a third. We also did a preliminary search of the film footage of the Alamo Scouts that we suspect might exist, particularly of the Cabanatuan Raid and of General Krueger's visit to Nagasaki."

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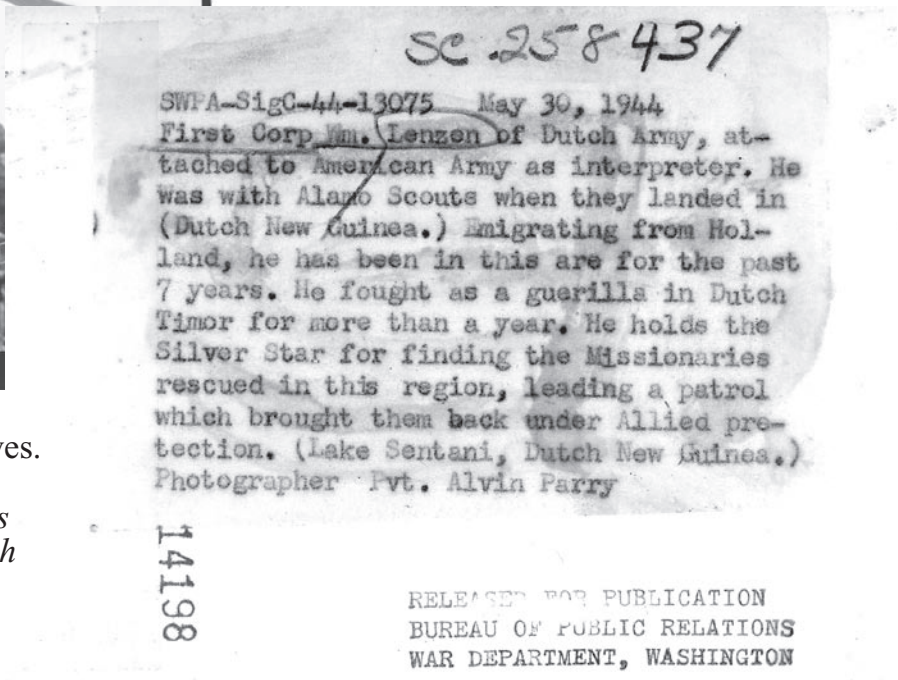
Mayo Stuntz and ASA Historian Lance Zedric chat as they walk from the restaurant to Mayo's house.

Blaise and Zedric also enjoyed dinner out with former ASA Historian and original Alamo Scout, Mayo Stuntz, and spent a wonderful evening visiting him and his wife, Connie, at their home in Vienna, Virginia. "It's always a pleasure seeing Mayo and Connie," said Zedric. "They are both in great health and are doing well. Without Mayo neither the Alamo Scouts nor the ASA would be what they are. We are hopeful of seeing them at the reunion in May."

Stuntz and founding ASA Director, Robert Sumner, conducted the first research trip to the National Archives (then at Suitland, Maryland) in the early 1980s. It was then that they discovered many of the Alamo Scouts mission reports and paved the way for further research about the unit.

"We cannot understate the historical importance of these kinds of research trips," said Zedric. "Without financial support from our members, this trip would not have been possible. There is so much more information at the Archives, but we simply ran out of time to find, copy, and catalog everything. But Russ and I are already planning our next trip!"

ASA Executive Director Russ Blaise in front of the National Archives building.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SWPA-SigC-44-13075 May 30, 1944
First Corp Wm. Lenzen of Dutch Army, attached to American Army as interpreter. He was with Alamo Scouts when they landed in (Dutch New Guinea.) Emigrating from Holland, he has been in this are for the past 7 years. He fought as a guerilla in Dutch Timor for more than a year. He holds the Silver Star for finding the Missionaries rescued in this region, leading a patrol which brought them back under Allied protection. (Lake Sentani, Dutch New Guinea.)
Photographer Pvt. Alvin Parry

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BUREAU OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON

A sample of a photo found at the National Archives. It reads: *First Corp Wm. Lenzon of Dutch Army, attached to American Army as interpreter. He was with the Alamo Scouts when they landed in (Dutch New Guinea)...*

Finding Louis Rapmund
By Lance Zedric

For me, one of the pure joys of historical research occurs when a living soul breathes life into the dusty pages of the past—when fate seems to validate itself by linking distant places and people with those whom they had once thought gone forever. Such was the simple, but amazing story of Louis Rapmund.

During one of my many late night internet searches I found his name in two obscure articles published in a New Guinea journal in the late 1940s. Rapmund was a Dutch NEI (Netherlands East Indies) officer who worked in western New Guinea facilitating the recovery of Indian, Papuan, and Dutch nationals who had been held by the Japanese. Rapmund assisted Nellist and Rounsaville Teams on their famous mission to liberate a Dutch governor and his family, along with 52 Javanese and twelve French civilians from an internee camp at Cape Oransbari in October 1944. He also worked with Littlefield Team in the recovery of displaced Indians in the Geelvink Bay area. For years I had attempted to find Rapmund to interview him, but every trail ran cold. And for good reason.

Upon finding the name of the articles, I contacted KITLV, a Dutch archival organization in The Netherlands, and purchased them. A month later they arrived, but to my dismay they were written in Dutch. Armed with several free computer translation sites and a working knowledge of German, I scratched out a rough translation, but rough wouldn't cut it. I posted an ad on several websites, including the Alamo Scouts website, seeking a free translation. After a couple months of nothing, I received an email from a Margaret Jacobs, claiming to be the niece of Louis Rapmund. She said that her uncle had been murdered in New Guinea by Indonesian extremists in October 1945. But that didn't correspond with what I had discovered through the Dutch Archives—that Rapmund had died in 1947. Furthermore, the articles were attributed to Rapmund sometime between 1947-1950, which further muddied the waters. But as a historian accustomed to dealing with emotional family members, faulty memories, incomplete stories, and lack of original documentation, I held something back to test the strength of her claim. Louis Rapmund had a unique middle name: Bernardus-Jan, and the article was written by one L.B.J. Rapmund, clearly a match. But I did not tell Margaret that. Instead, I asked if she knew her uncle's middle name. She did. And the plot grew thicker.

Margaret is a native Dutch speaker and works as a translator in Utah. She gladly offered to translate the lengthy articles into English for free—an offer I readily accepted. Within a week she returned the first article, and a few days later, the second. Amazingly, the articles were actual reports of several missions in Rapmund's own words and were published posthumously. The next week Margaret called and we had a wonderful conversation. She informed me that her uncle had children living in the United States. I immediately called Rapmund's daughter, 74-year-old Louise Van Den Eikhof, and the discrepancy surrounding the date of Rapmund's death was solved. Although he had died in 1945, it wasn't until 1947 that his body was recovered and he was officially listed as dead. But the phone conversation was not about death—instead, it was about life, love, and closure.

"The last time I saw my father was in 1942 in Java," said Louise. "He was literally running out the back door of our house as the Japanese were coming in the front door. They were looking for him. This has helped heal a wound in my soul that festered for over sixty years. I loved my father. He was a wonderful man."

Over the next week Margaret gathered what photos she could find of her father and sent them to me for the ASA Photo Archive. As the photos attest, Louis Rapmund was a striking figure; a handsome young man struck down in the prime of his life in a brutal war. But now thanks to modern technology, the undying love of a daughter, and the generosity of a total stranger, the words he penned a lifetime ago have helped bring others a little closer. The following is the first of the two Rapmund articles:

Report About the Attack on the Internee Camp in October 1944 at Oransbari
By reserve Second Lieutenant Louis Bernardus-Jan Rapmund

During the first days of my stay in Roemberpon, Caspers, an ex-colonist, told me about the existence of an internment camp at Oransbari. There, one would likely find some European families. He couldn't tell me anything about the surveillance. It took some time before I found people who knew the area to successfully gather more detailed information. Eventually, I was able to find a group and they left for Oransbari on 12 September 1944. I gave Hermanis, a Papuan from Biak, whom I found in Jamakani with three other rowers, the assignment to gather as much information and, if possible, to bring somebody back from the camp. Furthermore, he needed to be back within a week, because I wanted to take care of the matter as soon as possible as to not lose the value of the information too quickly. Hermanis carried out the assignment very well. He promptly returned after six days on 18 September with Soumokil, an ex-colonist, who gave me all the information I needed. Hermanis first contacted some Papuans in a nearby village and they in turn were able to contact Soumokil who, 'without too much hesitation,' agreed to come along to Roemberpon.

From the information Soumokil gave me, I prepared a plan and presented it to the Alamo Scouts. Lt. Rounsaville, who was stationed with his team of five men at Roemberpon, agreed right away. I put together a team of three guides and six soldiers, among whom were Sergeant Papari and five ex-POWs. After this, we had to wait for the P.T. boats and Lt. Dove, the operations officer of the scouts at Woendi, who had to approve the plan and had to arrange the use of the P.T. boats to land us.

Dove came on Friday, 22 September 1944 and agreed, however, he said right away that he had to telegraph the Sixth Army to get permission for this operation, because, after all, his men were scouts and not commandos, and that this would be an unusual operation for them and that he had to get permission from higher up.

Those were tense days of waiting, with all hoping that the Sixth Army would give permission, all the more because Soumokil gave a sad description of the situation in which all the children, who were in the camp, found themselves.

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Finally, on Monday, 25 September Dove came and told us that he just received a telegram with permission from the Sixth Army. He promised that the next day at the P. T. base he would arrange everything and would return on Wednesday afternoon to pick us up for the landing at Oransbari. Everybody was relieved and happy. I promised the scouts that I would take them deer hunting the next day. Luck was with us and that night in the moonlight I shot a beautiful deer, which we ate with gusto. The hindquarter was saved for the P. T. boats.

Lt. Dove came on Wednesday afternoon at about 5:00 p.m. We went aboard, but everything went wrong because there was a problem with the radio communication and the boats arrived way too late at the agreed place. We were going to operate four boats; two for the landing and the evacuation; the other two for cover. In view of this, we agreed at that time that we all would go to Woendi and try again the next day. About 1:00 p.m., we left again and not long after that we were caught in a severe storm. The storm was so fierce that we arrived at the landing site hours too late. One of the boats got damaged and many of us, even the members of the ship's company, were terribly seasick. Those who were not seasick were dead tired from the tremendous swaying and being bounced up and down by the sea. Finally, we decided to postpone the expedition—which was really too bad. There was just too much risk to continue the operation at this time, considering that we still had hours of walking through the forest in front of us.

Louis Bernardus-Jan Rapmund

At my request, we changed course and set off for Roemberpon. I already had stayed away too long to my liking and we were dropped there. The scouts all went back to Woendi. During the crossing everything was discussed again with the scouts, and Lt. Dove felt that it would be better to commit two teams of Alamo Scouts with Sgt. Papari and some guides.

One of the considerations was that if something would happen to me, the connection between the Americans and Indonesians would be totally lost, since nobody else could speak Malay and that the six scouts would be at considerable risk. Besides, after the trip my ex-POWs were in a bad way and most became sick. Because of the great exertion and stress a lot of sickness broke out. I also had to deal with malaria for some days. But things come out pretty well at this point because the next couple of days it stormed so severely that none of the P.T. boats could leave port.

On Wednesday, October 4, 1944 Lt. Dove finally arrived with two teams of scouts. At about 3 p.m., Sgt. Papari, Soumokil, another two guides, and Hermanis and I went on board and we went full speed and a considerable distance to the coast of Oransbari.

The situation in Oransbari was as follows and the following plan was made: we would land a distance away from Oransbari; from there we were going to walk to a Papuan village close to the camp to get the latest information. At this time Soumokil had been gone for more than two weeks and, if possible, they were trying to find more guides. From there the teams were going to be split as follows:

Lt. Nellist with three scouts and a guide would attack the machinegun post with three or four Japs. Two scouts from Nellist team with Hermanis would attack a post of two Kempeitai Japs, and finally, Lt. Rounsaville, five scouts, Papari and I, with Soumokil as guide, would attack a large hut with about 20 soldiers.

All three places would be attacked at the same time except if Nellist could not find the machine guns. These were set up some distance from the coast and were not always occupied. He [Nellist] would then, if he did not hear the shots of our fighting, wait until daylight; and if the Japs were alarmed by the shots, wait in ambush on the road to the village to prevent reinforcement from their soldiers. The machinegun post was about 4 km away from the village.

At about 7:00 p.m. we landed with four rubber boats at a point to the north of Oransbari at least 14 km from the camp, then we explored the area. It took some time before, led by the guides, we were able to find the opening in the forest because it was pretty dark. I had been told that we had to walk for about four hours along a pretty decent path. But there was no such path; the ground was too moist and we had to walk in mud up to our ankles. More than that, it was so dark in the forest that even the guides got lost. We couldn't continue this way [so] I walked right behind the guides and checked the direction on my compass. Then at some point I discovered that we were walking in a circle. We just had to stop and I told the officers that we had to use our torches. Half were against it and the other half in favor. Finally, strongly subdued flashlights were used. It then went a little better, but progress was slow. Then, unexpectedly around 10 o'clock, we heard a loud shot. 'Japs on a pig hunt' said Soumokil. It was a plausible explanation, and we went on again as carefully as possible. After walking for another hour we heard two shots; one after another again, straight ahead of us. Things became very tense at this point, as the hunting Japs might suddenly encounter us and sound the alarm.

Finally, at about 2:00 a.m. (we had been walking for about 7 hours), we arrived at a point that was approximately between the camp and the machinegun post. Here we rested and deliberated. Since we were an hour behind schedule we thought it best not to go to the Papuan village ourselves, but to send out two guides who could attempt to bring back other Papuans.

While we were waiting for the return of the two guides, two more shots rang out. Soumokil explained that the Japs were hunting in the yard of a certain Pongoh east of the camp. Now that we knew where about where they were, we were able to take better measures.

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The two guides came back at about 3:00 a.m. with two others from the village. They confirmed that there were four Japs with two machine guns at the coast and that there were about 20 soldiers in a hut and 2 Japanese policemen in another hut. They also knew the whereabouts of the machineguns. Then they told us that after Soumokil had been discovered missing, they had strengthened the guard at the camp. Later they were less strict and only the coast was patrolled.

The parties were now deployed: Lt. Nellist went to the coast with four scouts and two Papuan guides. They had to take a roundabout route to avoid the Japs who were hunting in Pongoh's yard. The attack would occur at 4:00 o'clock. We synchronized our watches and wished each other good luck and we went on again. About one km from the camp we split again. The two scouts with Hermanis would crawl to the hut, and upon the signal for the attack (shooting), would enter the hut and eliminate the Japs or, if possible, take them captive.

Lt. Rounsaville with five scouts, Papari, Soumokil and myself went to the soldiers hut. When we were about 30 meters away (it was a minute before 4:00 a.m.), we saw that the Japanese cook was already awake and cooking. This was a problem. Luckily, it wasn't too light yet. But we needed to pass the cook to take our positions. The door opening was over against a dry riverbed. We backed up and crawled along the riverbed and approached the hut. We would wait a short time until everybody had taken their position and then move from the river bank to the hut.

Rapmund (standing far left) aboard PT 524 (with Littlefield Team) after rescuing Javanese in the Geelvink Bay area. Littlefield Team participated in several such missions with Rapmund. September 1944. (Photo courtesy of Walt Kundis - PT 524)

After about five minutes when everyone was finally in position (we were about 10 meters from the hut), I gave the signal to attack by shining my flashlight in the hut and opening fire at the same time. Papari took care of the cook. Tommy guns, carbines, hand grenades, and even a torch lit up everything and did a good job. The part of the hut where we thought the Japs were sleeping was thoroughly destroyed with all the Japs in it. However, on the other side of the hut there were three Japs who jumped out of the hut and bolted away. We were able to catch them outside the hut. Some escaped, unfortunately, however, they were most likely wounded. After some salvos we entered the hut and found many interesting papers, which regrettably were lost in a rubber boat when it capsized. We also found a cache of weapons in good condition. At the same time we also heard shooting on the other side of the river, and we knew that everything went okay there too. The two scouts deployed there entered the hut and saw the two Japs lying down and shot them dead as they reached for their pistols.

The fight lasted only a half hour at best. Quickly, all families were collected; they were not upset by all the shooting, and at dawn we marched to the coast. The scouts were placed up front, on both sides of the troop, and also some in the rear for cover.

When we arrived at Pongoh's yard we went ahead with a little group and thoroughly inspected the yard. We met Pongoh in his hut and he told us that, indeed, three Japs had hunted on his property. When they heard the shots they went in the direction of the camp, however, for some unknown reason they ran off helter-skelter in the opposite direction.

We arrived by the coast at about 6:30 a.m., well over 300 meters from the point where Lt. Nellist attacked the machineguns. He seemed to have made radio contact because the four P. T. boats came full speed toward the coast. They were greeted with great jubilation. I think I have never seen people so excited to see a ship than these people who, for two long years, had suffered all kinds of things at the hands of the Japs. We felt sufficiently rewarded by just seeing all the joyful faces.

Lt. Nellist came walking down the beach about 15 minutes later with a heavy machinegun on his neck, while other scouts carried the other machinegun. They had killed all four Japs. At first Nellist could not find the machineguns, as it appeared that the Japs had moved to another hut. Luckily, this hut was found by chance and at the right moment, one of the Japs stood and lit something Since Nellist didn't hear our shots, he just laid in the grass and waited about 30 meters from the hut. Luck was with him, because at about 5:00 a.m., he suddenly saw all four Japs come out of the hut. They were talking to each other in the doorway. Most likely, they had heard the explosions from the hand grenades that we had set off in the Japanese huts. This was the right moment, and Nellist, being one of the best shots in the service, put all four down.

On board the P. T. boats, the people who had waited in great suspense, welcomed us with a loud hurray. They went out of their way to give, especially to the children, all kinds of things, even ice cream. They in return sang Long Shall They Live.

We reached Bosnik around 11:00 a.m., and after thanking everybody warmly, we all left ship. The next morning, Friday, October 6, Lt. Dove came to visit us in Bosnik and I left that same afternoon with some supplies to Roemberpon.

Finally, I want to thank the P. T. boats commanders from Woendi, who three times managed to give us 4 boats, and to the Alamo Scouts, especially Lt. Dove, who as operations officer of Woendi, went out of his way to Bosnik several times to get supplies and transported them to Roemberpon. And naturally, thanks of course to the officers of the Alamo Scouts, namely Rounsaville and Nellist, without whose teams our work would have been a lot harder. And finally, to the guides Soumokil and Hermanis, who provided vital information for our attack plan." **Note: Lt. Rapmund was killed by Indonesian extremists in October 1945 and was listed as missing until 1947.*

"Proud to be an American"

Nick Buschur's Boss Hoss motorcycle painted up in a "Proud to be an American" theme. The bike has a 350 Chevy engine and is made in Dyersburg, TN. On the front fender is painted the Alamo Scout emblem and says: "Dedicated To Robert L. Buschur".

Alamo Scout, Bob Buschur kneels next to the motorcycle dedicted to him by his son, Nick.

NECROLOGY

Aubrey Lee Hall

Soldier - Father - Friend

19 July 2008

RECENT FINDS!

Verified: *SGT Robert Beattie, graduate of 4th Class at ASTC Hollandia*

Verified: *PFC Howard R. Gray Jr., graduate of 7th Class at ASTC Subic Bay*

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

Executive Director	Secretary	Treasurer	2009 Reunion Host	Historian	Membership
Russ Blaise	Terry Santos	Audrene Hall Burress	George Eaton	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

2009 Alamo Scouts Membership Form

The Alamo Scouts Association is offering three types of memberships to those who wish to support the organization.

Annual dues are **$15.00**, and will be used to help maintain the Alamo Scouts Website; secure memorial plaques for the unit at historical and military institutions; fund special projects; and support ongoing archival research and procurement of historical unit-related memorabilia for educational purposes. Membership also entitles you to a membership card, newsletter, and attendance at our annual reunion.

Please select the appropriate membership category & complete the information below.

_____ **Gold** Alamo Scouts, ASTC Graduates, Staff & Overhead Personnel

_____ **Silver** Spouses & direct relatives of Scouts.

_____
Relationship & Name of Scout

_____ **Bronze** All others who wish to support the Alamo Scouts Association

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Other family members who wish to join:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship: _____

Use the back of this form to add more members if needed.

Make check payable to: **ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION**