March 2007

ALAMO SCOUTS Newsletter

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

ALAMO SCOUTS ASSOCIATION

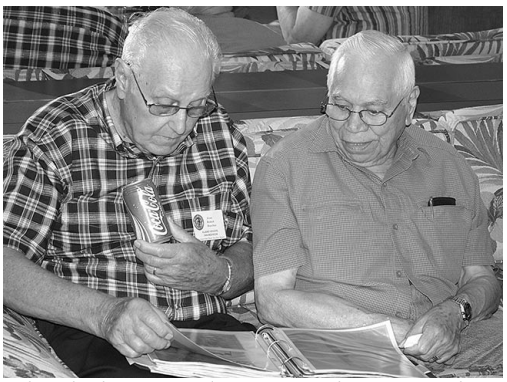
"Don't make me out to be a kindly old man, because I'm not. I don't want any legends built up around me. I'm just doing what they're paying me for." ***General Walter Krueger,*** 1945

"Don't let the rough side drag." ***Col. Frederick Bradshaw,*** 1944

2006 Alamo Scouts WWII Reunion

The 2006 annual Alamo Scout reunion was held in Honolulu HI from 4-7 Oct. We had a great turnout with about 60 guests attending. This included 9 original Scouts along with their family and friends coming in from all corners of the US. Our weather was clear and sunny the entire 5 days which made all the activities and outings that much nicer.

Wednesday, 4 Oct.: We started off with open registration in the lobby of the beautiful Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel in Waikiki. Terry Santos, our dedicated Alamo Scout Director manned the registration desk the entire day. All guests were greeted with a welcome goody packet and reunion itinerary. In addition, all attending Scouts were presented with the all new Alamo Scout WWII Special Forces cap. Our hospitality room was a beautiful ocean front suite with an open air lanai on the 26th floor of our hotel. Everyone enjoyed breathtaking ocean views as far as the eye could see including the entire stretch of Waikiki Beach. Needless to say this ended up being a popular place for all of us to hang out and visit during our free time.



Third class graduates, Robert Buschur and Zeke McConnell get together for the first time since 1944.

Thursday, 5 Oct. - 10 AM: We started this first event day with our annual Alamo Scout meeting lead by Terry Santos. This was an excellent time to hold our meeting as not only did we discuss Alamo Scout business and our upcoming 2007 reunion details, it also gave everyone a chance to meet each other before our activities actually started. In addition we were able to cover all questions and answers pertaining to our current reunion schedule of events. We broke about 12 noon. Everyone was on their own the remainder of the afternoon. Some headed for the beach while others took in some shopping. At 4:30 PM sharp we met in the hotel lobby to board our bus for a short 10 minute ride to the Hale Koa Military Resort on Waikiki Beach. This was our destination for an outdoor luau and dinner show. Upon arrival we were all greeted with a shell lei and a mai tai. Next we were led to the Imu ceremony in the Luau gardens where a very large steaming pig was dug up from the ground and placed on a huge platter. (our main course) After our 2nd or was it our 3rd mai tai, we all happily headed to the dining area for our dinner and Polynesian show. (Catch that group picture taken of us shortly before dinner.) The meal and entertainment were top notch, but I think all would agree the highlight of the evening was the MC requesting all veterans of previous wars to please stand and be honored. It was terrific seeing our own Alamo Scouts standing for WWII. A couple of them stood again as the veterans for Korea and Vietnam were asked to stand. Applause grew louder and louder as the vets from each previous war stood up, but of course nothing could match the overwhelming applause and cheers when the many Iraq and Afghanistan vets who sat among us took their stand. Some of these men had only been back on US soil in recent days and weeks.

Milton Beckworth has the honor of raising the flag at the USS Arizona Memorial.

Friday, 6 Oct. - 5:30 AM: We all boarded our bus at this very early hour and headed for Pearl Harbor and a privately arranged tour of the USS Arizona Memorial. The National Park Service

actually runs and operates the Memorial; however, the Navy operates all vessels going in and out of the Harbor. Our tour started with a boat ride out to the Memorial. Our narrator and guide, named Skip, did an excellent job educating us with all the historical facts and figures. We disembarked onto the Memorial and were able to take some time to quietly walk around and observe. Next came a ceremony that was quite a surprise to us. The Arizona Memorial Society presented our Alamo Scouts with the actual US flag that was flying on the memorial that day. Milton Beckworth, a Scout, and also a Pearl Harbor survivor, was asked to help lower the flag. It was then folded and presented to Bill Littlefield for safekeeping. Turns out the Arizona Memorial Society did some research and found out who these Alamo Scouts actually were and decided to do this special flag presentation in honor of these very special WWII veterans. It was a very moving ceremony and needless to say there was not a dry eye among us. We later had a tour of Ford Island where much of the Pearl Harbor attack occurred. After that we visited neighboring Hickam Airforce Base for a wonderful luncheon on the open air lanai of their ocean front Seabreeze Restaurant. It was then back to our hotel for a few hours rest.

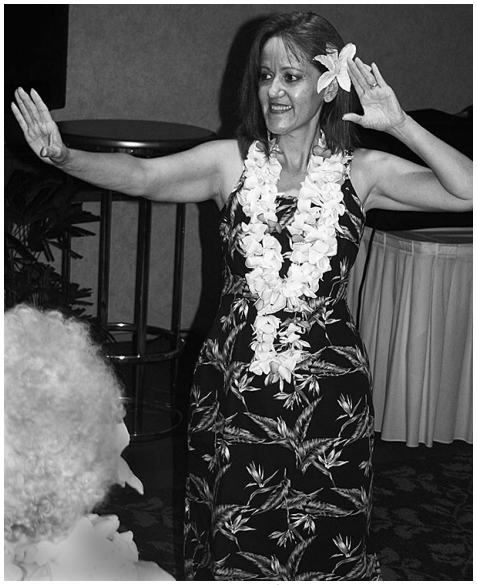
Terry Santos, Chuck Nellist and Major General David Fridovich discuss the finer points of war.

Friday Evening, 6 Oct - 5 PM: We boarded our bus at 5 PM for a ride back to the Hale Koa Military Resort for our reunion banquet dinner. Upon arrival all guests were greeted with fresh plumeria flower lei's flown in from the island of Molokai just a few hours prior. After some cocktail and mingling time, everyone proceeded into an elegantly set dining room. Shortly there after guests were entertained by 3 hula dancers performing several slow and graceful traditional Hawaiian dances. Next came our special guest speaker, Major General David Fridovich, currently the commander of Special Operations Pacific. He gave an interesting and informative talk and we were all extremely honored to have him that evening. Accompanying him for the evening was his delightful wife, Kathy, whom all enjoyed meeting and chatting with as well. Another special touch came when one of our guests, Betty Chambers, presented a special plaque to Terry Santos. During the war, Betty, was a former POW of Los Banos, Philippines. She was forever grateful to the Alamo Scouts knowing they had helped liberate her camp. She befriended Terry in future years.

Alamo Scouts pose for a picture at the USS Arizona Memorial. (L-R) Milton Beckworth, Connie Vineyard, Terry Santos, Zeke McConnell, Bill Littlefield, Jay Russell, Lee Hall and Robert Buschur.

Saturday, 7 Oct. - 8:30 AM: We all boarded the bus for our Windward (east side) Island tour. This time we had Jim Burress, Audrene's husband, as our tour guide. We started with a drive through visit of the Punchbowl Military Cemetery then proceeded over the Pali (mountain) Highway to visit the Pali Cliffs with its spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean and the Koolau Mountain range. We then drove on to visit the Byoto Temple set at the base of these majestic mountains. The Byoto Temple is an exact replica of the famous Byoto Temple in Japan. Couldn't pull people away from this site so we ended up running a little late for our scheduled beach lunch. Our bus then headed for Bellows Airforce Beach and Recreation area. Bellow's is a gorgeous 4 mile stretch of white sand beach and clear blue water. Lunch was a fun buffet under a beach cabana. After lunch some of the group headed for the water for a quick swim before heading back to the bus. We traveled back along a scenic ocean coast highway. Managed to fit in a couple of ocean look out stops before our return to Waikiki.

Sunday, 8 Oct.: This was our closing day and it was time to say Aloha to all. Most guests were heading back to the Mainland while a few others stayed on a couple of extra days or made an additional trip to another island.

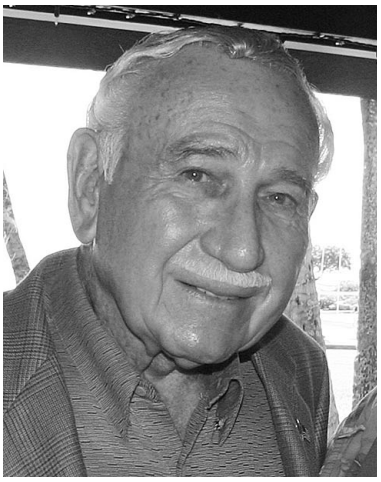


Reunion Host, Audrene Burress shows off her hula dancing skills.

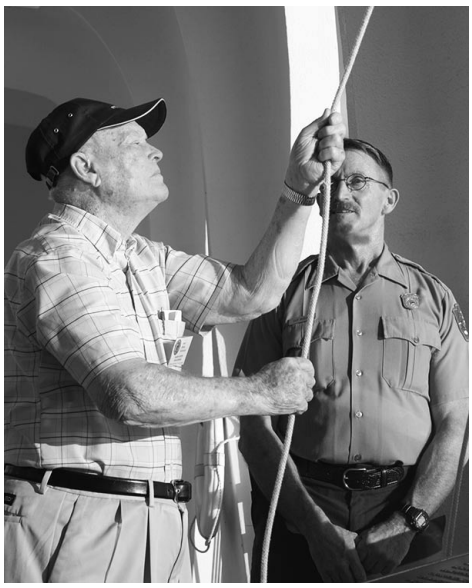
******A note from Audrene Burress, the reunion host******

Thank you all for making this reunion the huge success that it was. It was wonderful hooking up with old friends from past reunions and just as wonderful meeting all the new ones. A thank you to the "too numerous to mention" guests who stepped in with a helping hand and a special big thank you to Sid and Cindy Berg. You both truly went above and beyond. The endless running back and forth, the outstanding photography, everything was so appreciated. And of course thank you Terry Santos. How could we even manage a reunion without you. Thanks to all for your kind notes and letters. I so enjoyed hearing from you.

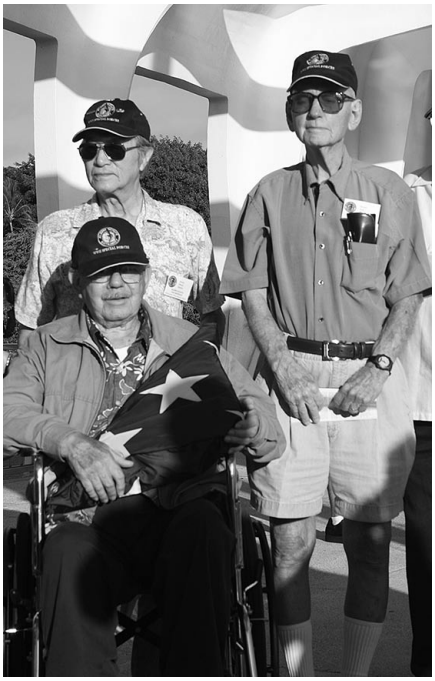
Until we meet again,
Aloha and Mahalo Nui Loa, ***Audrene***



Major General (Ret.) Herbert Wolff, a graduate of the Sixth Class, was a first time attendee.



Another photo of Milton Beckworth raising the flag at the USS Arizona Memorial. Milton was at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack.



Bill Littlefield holds the American flag which had flown over the USS Arizona Memorial for the month of September 2006. Terry Santos (left) and Lee Hall stand behind Littlefield.

Scouts, family and friends take time out for a group picture… It looks like they are having a great time.

An Alamo Scout Remembers
By John Geiger

My first memories of the Scouts began with a posting on the bulletin board on my company street at Oro Bay, New Guinea. It read something like "Sixth Army Headquarters will accept volunteers for reconnaissance work. Apply at the company office." I applied along with about 25 others from 31st Infantry Division.

We were temporarily billeted at a remote area of the division site and none of us enlisted men or officers was sure of what we volunteered for. The ranking officer was Capt. Kopp, (later KIA aboard a submarine), who sort of took charge while we awaited an interview. In a week or so, Colonel Bradshaw and an aide arrived and set up office in a wall tent. Sitting behind a table, he privately interviewed each and every one of us for about 20 minutes. He must have asked the right questions because he selected about twelve of us and we later learned we were somewhat similar in education, age, outdoor interest, normal weight, swimming ability, etc. Most all volunteers were called back moments after departing the tent and were asked what we recalled seeing on the table during the interview, thereby testing our observation abilities.

About twelve survived that cut, and in a few days we were transported by C-47 to the landing strip at Finschaven, N.G. From there we were trucked to a pier and boarded a beautiful boat, painted OD green, which we learned was an Army Picket Boat belonging to the Alamo Scout Training Center. We arrived at Mange Point, and all were impressed with this camp, which was probably the most luxurious camp in the SW Pacific Theatre. The first night our group, along with about 30 from other units of the 6th Army, assembled in the beautiful building we called the day room. It was constructed with coconut logs and had a thatched roof. It was built by the natives and was about 30 x 70 ft. We then learned that this group of about 50 was to be Class No. 3 and were to be trained in reconnaissance scouting. We were really impressed. Colonel Bradshaw, in very few words, explained what we were to train for and that anyone could leave at any time and return to their outfit if they found it was not for them. He also told us what he expected of us and most of us were sold on it. That was my first memory of the Alamo Scouts -- now I want to help jog a few Scouts' memories.

Do you recall the super camps at Mange Point, Hollandia, and Abuyog? I specifically recall Dove's Pagoda. Is that familiar? The Dove team returned to Hollandia after a mission and his team was assigned to construct a new latrine for the camp which was situated over the ocean. Lt. Dove selected high ground on a cove about 20 ft. above the water below. The latrine was of cantilevered construction with four coconut logs about 40 feet long protruding horizontally from the high ground out over the water. The outer ends of the logs were supported by cables running back to a vertical post about eight feet high anchored securely in the ground. A wood floor covered the logs forming a platform. Dove then made four rows of benches with 14-inch holes cut about three feet apart forming a magnificent toilet. The latrine could comfortably support about twelve persons at a sitting. The flushing mechanism was the tide because all waste landed in the ocean and was swept out to sea. It was the most sanitary latrine ever constructed in New Guinea. The sign at the entrance read, "Doves Pagoda."

Lutz Team member - John J. Geiger Jr.

How about our boat fleet? How many outfits had a private fleet? The only crew member I recall is Phil Boccelli. He was from Philadelphia, and was a member of a group of about four or five from the ASTC Overhead who were on loan from an amphibious outfit. They operated the Picket Boat, the J-boat and the landing craft which I think was an LCVP. They kept the camp supplied and transported personnel as well as providing boats for our training and rubber boat work. They also transported our supply officer to and from freighters anchored off shore, carrying souvenirs to and fresh food from the Merchant Marine ships. Incidentally, souvenirs brought into camp from our missions went a long way when bartering for groceries. Remember that great fresh food we enjoyed at mess?

How about our staff? I often think about "Doc" Canfield. He was our physician along with some wonderful medics. Doc had another talent. He always saw to it that we had a cocktail on special holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc. He would be at the head of the chow line and would serve the cocktails as we passed through. I don't know where the alcohol came from, do any of you? But it was memorable. I am sure all scouts recall the holiday cocktails compliments of the Doc.

Our camps all had a rifle range, combat course, parade ground, day room, and great pyramidal tents with wood floors, which were a luxury in New Guinea. We usually had a generator providing lights for the camp, and refrigeration for the fresh food. Only one camp, however, had the luxury of a "Dove Pagoda."

Another memory is of the PT boats and crews. It seems that every mission I went on involved a PT boat. Somehow they always got us to our destination, usually a hostile shore in the black of night, and probably in the right location. And when departure time arrived, we would, with crossed fingers, call them on our SCR300 radio and they were always on the way. They were dependable, in my experience, and returned to the correct spot schedule. Once we were aboard we were well received. The crews always gave us their bunks and served food. They were a pleasure. Does anyone recall Woendi Island PT base? We had a tent or two on the beach a little remote from the Navy. We did, however, join them in the chow line, which beat Army food, and we also joined them in the 3.2 beer line. We liked that. I'm sure you recall life aboard the tender, Oyster Bay. Life was good when in a quiet zone, but Leyte Gulf was not a quiet zone. However, there were quiet times aboard, and the food was fair and it had a library.

I would like to hear memories from other Alamo Scouts. At reunions we never seem to have the time to talk about the serious and funny things that happened. Perhaps you recall some missions that that were run of the mill to you, but would be interesting to other Scouts and their families. If you don't have time to do it this way, a letter or recording with some of your experiences would be great. You could make copies and send to a few of the remaining Scouts. However, I think placing it in the ASA Newsletter would be best. Just send it to Lance or Russ. *Thanks*.

Mac Made Bears' Coach Before Escape in Jungle

by Henry McLemore

[The following story appeared in the Syracuse Herald (NY) on November 9, 1945. According to research, the event likely occurred sometime during 20-24 August 1944. See explanation at end of article.]

Many honors have come to me in my lifetime. I was made a Kentucky colonel. I was made a Colorado admiral. I was made an infantry buck private. These honors I have mentioned before, but the honor I prize the most will see the light of day right now.

Just a little more than a year ago I was made a lifetime coach of the Chicago Bears football team. Salary: $1 a year. I was signed by Com. George Halas, owner of the Bears, on a PT boat that was riding the swells just off a tip of Jap-held New Guinea.

It was 3 o'clock of a moonless morning, and the commander and I were readying ourselves to go ashore with a group of Alamo Scouts. The Chief Alamo Scout had already put in a call for our transportation. With the lights of Jap campfires blinking from the nearby shore, he had blown a bird call on a conch shell. It had been answered, and we knew that in half an hour or so our transportation would arrive. It would be friendly headhunters, gliding softly across the water in outrigger canoes. The mission of the scouts was to hide in the bush near the crossing of two important trails, and study Jap troop movements.

PT Pickup Arranged

Crouched on the prow of the PT, the chief scout, who wasn't at all enthusiastic about taking Halas and me along, briefed us on what to do in case the Japs discovered us after we had landed.

"If they hop us," he said, "don't, no matter what happens, go deeper in the jungle to hide. You'll never get out. Make for the beach somewhere near where we'll land. Then make for the little tip of land about a mile south. When you get there you'll be able to see a little island. It's about a mile out. Swim to that island. It is a rendezvous point. In two or three days a PT boat will come and pick you up. Understand?" The scout left and Halas turned to me and whispered: "Can you swim a mile, Henry?"

"Hell, no," George answered.

As he answered, a silver streak flashed through the water close to the PT's side. Then another. Then another.

We turned to a sailor.

"What's that stuff in the water?" Halas asked.

"Sharks," the sailor said. "The water's full of 'em."

Neither of us spoke for a minute. Then we talked and made a pact.

George "Papa Bear" Halas on the sidelines as coach of the Chicago Bears.

Shark Bait? No Thanks!

If, when we get ashore, the Japs discovered us, we were going to head into the jungle, the chief scout's advice to the contrary.

"If we couldn't swim a mile in a swimming pool back home," Halas argued soundly, "what would be the sense in getting out in the Pacific and have the sharks eat us up? You know, I am going to make you an assistant coach of the Bears right now. At one buck a year. The way it looks now, I am going to be coaching the Bears from the New Guinea jungle, and I'll need some help."

Then the outrigger canoes came up, like phantoms. Dozens of squat, bushy-haired little ape-like men clambered noiselessly over the side of the PT. The natives and the scouts held a conference. The chief scout who had briefed us came back to us.

"Commander, I have a disappointment for you and the sergeant," he whispered. "We won't be able to land tonight. Any of us. The natives tell me the Japs are in there by the thousands. We'll have to come back some other night. Sorry."

Halas and I looked at one another, shook hands, and heaved a double sight that rocked the outrigger canoes on the water, almost upsetting them.

The next night, safely back on the island of Woendi PT base, we ran into Bob Hope. We kept Bob up until 3 o'clock in the morning—30 minutes earlier than his accustomed bedtime—telling him of our bravery.

Note: Bob Hope and his troupe performed at Woendi Island on August 25, 1944. SUMNER Team was there for the show and had just completed a mission on Pegun Island. LITTLEFIELD and CHANLEY Teams were also there at that time, but it is likely that McGOWEN Team was the culprit! Would like to hear from anyone who has any information.
Lance.

Dear Alamo Scout veteran and family members,

My name is Larry Alexander and I am a journalist from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I have received many state-level journalism awards and received a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 2005. I am also the author of the national best-selling book, "Biggest Brother: The Life of Major Dick Winters, the Man Who Led the Band of Brothers." For those of you who have read the book "Band of Brothers" by Stephen E. Ambrose or saw the Tom Hanks/Steven Spielberg miniseries, which followed the exploits of Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne during World War II, my book told the life story of the company's leader, Richard Winters. The book followed him from his birth, through his youth and the war years, and through later life up to, and including, his appearing on stage at the 2002 Emmy Awards in Hollywood. I had befriended Major Winters in 2001 and, starting in 2003, worked closely with him to create the book. The hardcover edition was released in spring 2005 by New American Library (a division of Penguin books) and went through 8 printings, or about 60,000 copies. The paperback came out in May of 2006 and there are at least four editions, with about 50,000 copies in print. Plus there are large print editions, as well as Dutch and Polish translations available overseas. The book made several best-sellers lists, including the New York Times and I received letters from well-satisfied readers from all across the nation, Europe and Australia. In looking for a topic for a new book, I discovered the Alamo Scouts Web site, and read every entry on it. As an historian, I had heard of the Alamo Scouts, but quite frankly, did not know a lot about their exploits. To supplement my knowledge, I first e-mailed, then phoned and spoke with Russ Blaise of the Alamo Scouts Assoc., who agreed to act as an intermediary between myself and the Scouts and their families.

I also purchased the book "Silent Warriors" by Lance Q. Zedric, and discovered that the more I read, the more I became entranced by the exploits of this wonderful group of brave men. Mr. Zedric has produced a terrific book that tells the story well, but I was astounded to find that it is the only book available on the Scouts and their heroic exploits. For that reason, I would very much like to write a new, updated book about the Scouts; one that tells their story rich in detail with gripping action scenes and realism. As with the Winters book, my intent is to place the reader right there in the jungle with the men, feeling the tension as they row ashore in the dark or as enemy patrols pass them by, even feeling the sweat from the tropical heat sting their eyes. One of the most frequent compliments I got from readers of "Biggest Brother" was the "you-are-there" feel the book exuded. That will be my intent with this book, as well. It will not be a dry history filled with just deeds and dates, but a gripping narrative rich with dialogue, emotion and courage. To accomplish this, I will require as much help as I can from all of you. From the veterans, I would like the opportunity to contact you for interviews, either in person when possible, or by phone. What I would like from you when we speak is as much detail as possible, including some of your personal background (place of birth, family, etc) as well as your time with the Scouts. But here I would like more than just what you did. I want to know why you volunteered for the Scouts, what you thought about on those missions, how you felt about them, and so forth. I would like the reader to understand you as a man, and not just as a soldier trained to fight the enemy. No detail is too trivial As for you family members of Scouts who are deceased, I would ask for similar information. Tell me about your Scout veteran. What was he like? His personality? His background? And I would appreciate any stories he related to you. Again, no detail is too small to help me round out a good picture of the person. And of course, if there are any diaries, journals, letters or memoirs written by the veteran, either at the time or later, that I can have access to, this would be most welcome. I know people may be reluctant to allow someone they do not know the use of these irreplaceable materials, but please rest assured. For the Winters book, I was given Dick's journal entries, his after action reports, company papers, photos, maps and letters. All of these were handled carefully and returned promptly to him when I was through. The same will be true for any materials you allow me to use. My plan for this book is to cover the Scouts throughout their entire existence, but to also focus on a few key missions, which I hope to write about in detail to put the reader into the action. Russ Blaise has kindly offered to pass this letter along to all of you, since you do not know me. To get me started he has also arranged for me to interview team leader Mr. Wilbur Littlefield, which I hope to do in the very near future. I hope all of you consider this request most sincerely. The success of the project, and how well I am able to tell the Alamo Scouts story, rests with the amount of assistance I can get from those who were there, or whose loved ones were there. I will use as many of their stories as possible, and include the names of the veterans in the book. I really would like to do this book and do it right, and I plan to work closely with the Alamo Scouts Assoc. to be sure I am on the right track. It is a troubling note that when I tell people I know, even some with strong history backgrounds, about the Alamo Scouts, they invariably ask, "Who?" or "I never heard of them." With your help, that response is what I am out to change, before the Alamo Scouts, with their proud heritage, become just a footnote in military history. If you wish to contact me, my address, phone and e-mail address appears below. Or you can go through Russ Blaise.

Sincerely,

Larry Alexander

JAMES R. MORRIS – ALAMO SCOUT

Interview by ASA Historian Lance Q. Zedric - 13 March 1993

The following is an excepted interview of Colonel James R. Morris, USA (Ret.), conducted in 1993 by ASA Historian Lance Zedric. Morris passed away in 1995. A selected interview will appear in each ASA Newsletter. If any Alamo Scouts, Overhead Personnel, or family members would like to participate in the Alamo Scouts Oral History Program, contact Lance.

Z: Which training class were you in?
MORRIS: It was in 1944 in Hollandia.
Z: Were you retained?
MORRIS: No, I was a recon officer for the 116th Engineer Bn, 41st ID, and we had orders sending us back to the unit on another mission. We were on a scouting mission for the battalion. I went back to the home unit and continued my recon work with them.
Z: How did you feel about that?
MORRIS: We sort of knew it before we went to the Scouts. We went through the training and got called back, so that was about it. That was always an open option, but they called us back.
Z: Did they send you to the Scouts to learn reconnaissance or did they just have slots to fill?
MORRIS: I was a recon officer to start with and was doing a lot of individual scouting and patrolling, and they needed an engineer officer to go on a scouting mission. I packed up all my gear and took off on a landing barge and met up with the mother ship of an Alamo Scout unit that was on a mission. It was my understanding that I was to team up with them and do the engineering work with them wherever they were going. When I got out there they were offshore of Biak Island. When I got out there they said "Oh no, you can't go with us, because you don't have the background and training that a Scout had." They were not only reluctant, they wouldn't take me with them. I think there was a mix-up in the signals as to who was to go where. Our Bn Commander was a full colonel, and he came back with us and off I went. That's when I found out about the Alamo Scouts and then applied for the school. That's when they sent me to Hollandia. I had already been on the invasion. We captured Hollandia, and then we went back for the training. After going through the Alamo Scout training I can understand why the team that was on the mother ship didn't want me to go along, because I just didn't know the rules.
Z: Do you think it was more advanced than the training you had as a recon officer?
MORRIS: No, not in that sense; but, if you didn't know how to work as a team it was impossible. The work with the Alamo Scouts was so delicate between one officer and five or six men. If you didn't know how every single one would respond to a different situation, then you would be in trouble. That's why the team didn't want to take me when I met them on the mother ship. The mother ship was a converted destroyer with a batch of landing barges tied up to it. When I appeared I was really an outsider. I hadn't been through any of that experience with them--although I had been in combat for months and months.
Z: Did you feel excluded?
MORRIS: I didn't hang around that long. It was a case of they were getting ready to go on a mission--I was not part--so I went back to my unit. Then I applied for the school. It wasn't all that well known. It was handled by Sixth Army. It moved from several different locations where training took place. Our SGM wrote a letter and off I went, just like any service school you might go to in the states.
Z: Did you stay in the service after the war?
MORRIS: Yes and no. I came back to the states and went into the Reserve in the end of 1945. I went into the NG in PA and organized an Engineer Company in the 28th ID. In 1950 I went back in with the Division in the Korean War. So, I was in four more years.
Z: Did you go to Korea?
MORRIS: No, the division was sent to Camp Atterbury, IN, for training and then shipped the whole division to Germany. The theory at that time was that the Korean War was a diversion for the start of WW III in Europe. We sent four infantry divisions to Germany, some armor, the whole support unit. We took over the responsibility for the defensive zone of Germany, from Heidelberg south to Karlsruhe. Then from the East German border from Hohenfeld to Nuremburg. We went into intensive training and field operations. The division went back to the States in a couple of years, but I had signed to stay on with the 9th ID. We took over that territory. In 1955 I came back and went into the Reserves again. I spent a total of 39 1/2 years in military service. I was in the National Guard in high school, and then I enlisted in the Regular Army after Pearl Harbor, and then life went on from there, and I retired a full colonel.
Z: What year did you retire?
MORRIS: 1979. Just to keep my hand in, I'm a National Defense Executive Reserve with FEMA, as a civil defense engineer in Washington, D.C.
Z: I want to take the slant that the Alamo Scouts were a forerunner of the Special Forces.
MORRIS: Exactly. We had rubber boat team, which was what I worked on. We had some teams operate from submarines, and other men that were paratroopers.
Z: Did you work out of a submarine during training?
MORRIS: No, I didn't. They were, I gather, a special group.
Z: Do you think rubber boat handling was one of the most difficult parts of the training?
MORRIS: Everybody had to learn to swim, and we would be in the water all day. That was the goal. Part of that training, they just threw you in. They didn't care if you swam, you just had to stay afloat and survive.
Z: What's the longest you remember staying in the water?
MORRIS: All day. This would be something like eight hours. You're just floating and they had a safety crew nearby if you sunk. We did a lot of rough and ready games on the beach like king of the hill and that sort of thing, where you had to grapple with the enemy. It was part of physical conditioning. It was rather--nothing like aerobics. These were the kind of games we would play on the beach, but it was more a game of physical conditioning, building stamina, coordination, that sort of thing.
Z: Do you think everyone was in good shape?
MORRIS: Yes, they were hearty, durable guys. Our commander was big on volleyball, and if you thought you were going to rest at the end of the day he'd have you out there on the volleyball court, and that was like worldwide wrestling. There was no peace! The training was good, it was excellent. It wasn't all physical, we had to learn the code, all the rules and regulations of how we were going to operate, and we actually did go out as teams. From Hollandia we actually trained in lightly-held enemy territory. Every once in a while a Jap would show up and get shot. That was his fault. ——

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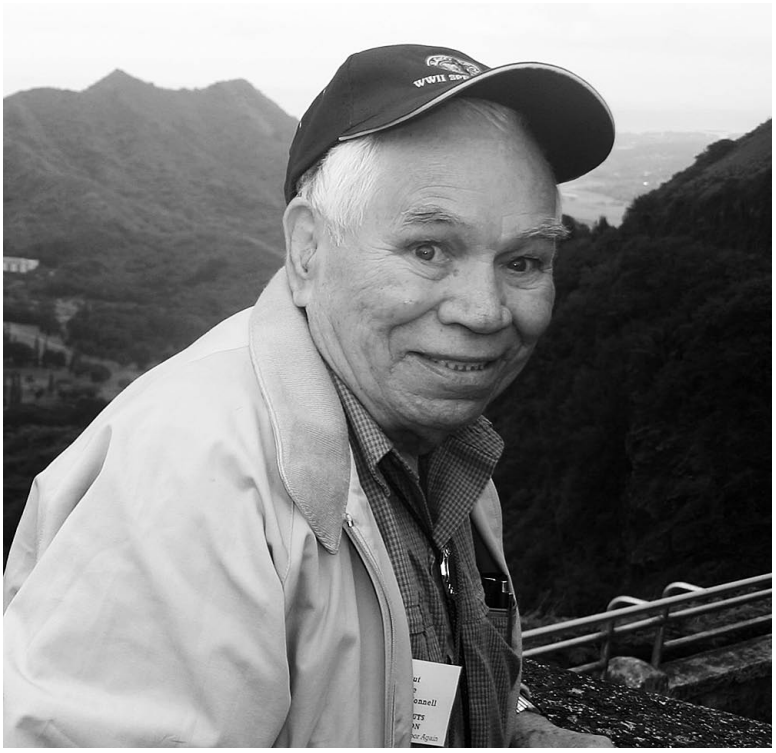
Z: Then you did live training missions?
MORRIS: Yes.
Z: Which training did you enjoy the most?
MORRIS: I like operating as a team. That's what I had been doing. I often had a small team. I wouldn't say we were as good as the Alamo Scouts in our methods of coordinating, but we didn't shrink from working in any kind of enemy territory. I spent days behind enemy lines picking up information and bringing it back--working my way through Japanese lines to our own. I just happened to have a feel for that kind of thing, so that's what I liked when I got into training with the Scouts.
Z: What lessons did you take back to your unit from the Scouts?
MORRIS: Being an engineer officer, my interest was in finding water point, the condition of enemy airfields, what kind of soils and terrain were we going to get into prior to an invasion, these are the things I did as a recon officer. Coming back from the Alamo Scouts I might have had more of a feel for training our own people as a unit, but its hard to get people to volunteer for this kind of work. I remember distinctly that one of our engineer companies got isolated on a road by the Japanese, and they were cut off. Our Bn Cdr asked me to go find them. So, I lined up all the available me and said "I'm going to make this a volunteer mission and I need some men to go with me and find out what happened to C Company.

NECROLOGY

Tucker, Clinton R.	10 Mar 2006
Alfonso, Alfred	11 Sep 2006
Griffith Earl G.	11 Aug 2006
Schermerhorn, Robert T.	22 May 2005
Weeks, Erskine G.	11 Nov 2006
Zeke McConnell	04 Feb 2007

"*What really sticks with me is that the officers and the men of the Alamo Scouts were just like one. We were like brothers. It was special.*"
Zeke McConnell, *1993.*



The Alamo Scouts community is deeply saddened by the passing of Zeke McConnell, who died on Sunday, February 4, 2007. For all who knew him, Zeke was a consummate gentleman who carried himself with class and dignity. He will long be remembered for his humility, keen sense of humor, and an infectious smile that could light up the darkest room.

Thank you, Sid Berg for the great photographs...

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

Executive Director	Secretary	Treasurer	Historian	Membership	2007 Reunion Host
Russ Blaise	Terry Santos	William Littlefield	Lance Zedric	Lynn Immel	Connie Vineyard

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

THE ASA ARCHIVES NEEDS COPIES OF YOUR PHOTOS, LETTERS, DIARIES, ORDERS, NOTES, CITATIONS, AND EVERYTHING ELSE RELATED TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER'S SERVICE AS AN ALAMO SCOUT.