



# Depot Fallout

AFTAC Alumni Association - West Coast Chapter  
AFTACAA-WCC, c/o 6605 Sweet Gum Ct., Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
Email: [TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org](mailto:TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org)



## JULY, 2021 EDITION

### A WORD FROM THE PREZ

*by , WCC President Allan Pentecost*

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**LOOK US UP AT**

**[www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org)**

I'm glad to see that things are opening up again after the long Covid shutdown. Hence we will be holding our **Annual BBQ Picnic** on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to sign up for it. (See the attached form, or visit the Forms page on our [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org) website). Also I want to remind everyone that you are all invited to attend our quarterly business meetings. We have been holding the meetings on ZOOM during the pandemic shutdown, and we will continue to do so. But we plan to also start holding them in person again at the Lions Gate Restaurant in McClellan Park. So you will have a choice of how to attend. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM. See the Events page on our website for how to **access the meetings** on ZOOM, and for future dates.

### THE HERE AND NOW

*By: Don King, Newsletter Editor*

We have always published obituaries of our members when they pass on. That is really nice for us when we read about them and reminisce. But wouldn't it be nice to honor the here-and-now about someone who we know or have known where they could also read what fellow 99's think about them? Send me comments and stories and I will publish them in each issue. It can be as long or short as you like. The stories might also bring some new members into the alumni fold.

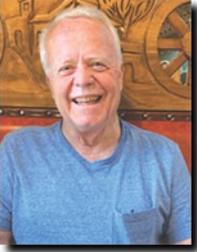
The person who immediately comes to my mind is someone with whom I never had the pleasure of serving. I wish that I had because of sharing his life for the past ten years. His name? Bob Fitzgerald! Bob has become a great friend and also a talented mentor and go-to guy during my years editing the Fallout. He has shared his knowledge very patiently to this guy who is not computer literate in almost any sense of the word! We have worked our ways around my hopelessly out-of-date equipment and software to get it published. I can only imagine what fun it would have been to work with him in the field. Under Bob, there is always a solution to whatever comes up. He has shown this to me as one of the real heart-and-soul persons that we are incredibly lucky to have in our chapter and in the whole AFTAC family around the world. I would literally trust him with my back in any situation! I know that if such a time comes to me, I'll be able to holler a big, "Thank you, Bob!"

## IN MEMORIAM

### **ROBERT DALE LAND**

b. 29-Jan-1949 in Hollister, CA. d. 28-Jun-2021 in Boise, ID

(As notified by **Ken Breitwieser**)



On Monday, June 28<sup>th</sup> 2021, the world lost a great man in **Robert Dale Land** who passed away at 72 years old in Boise, Idaho. Bob was born on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1949 in Hollister, CA to Charles and Mary Land. After graduating San Benito High School in 1968, he joined the Air Force in 1969 where he served tours in Spain and Korea. Once retiring from the USAF after 20 years in 1989, Bob began a 26 year career working for the state of California for the Air Resources Board and retired in 2015.

Bob loved his Harley-Davidson, the 49ers, and going on cruises all around the world.

He is preceded in death by his mom and dad, older brothers Chuck and Mike, and older sister Nora. He is survived by his wife of 15 years Patti and former wife Melissa, daughters Danielle, Stephanie, and Kimberly and sons John and Chris. He was Papa Bob to grandkids Dustin, Alyssa, Carli, Aleah, and Brayden.

A celebration of life for Bobbo will be held on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 1pm at the Eagles Hall on 1940 Mulberry St in Chico.

## STEEL STORM: A PIVOTAL BATTLE KEPT SECRET FOR 53 YEARS

### CHAPTER 2 OF 3

*A young US Marine Corps corporal directs modern history's largest Naval bombardment in support of ground forces, wiping out an entire Viet Cong battalion augmented by Red Chinese regular soldiers.\**

This is one story of fifteen that will shortly appear in his newest book;

Contrails

William B. Scott

Seasoned enemy soldiers intent on clearing the French bunker and sprinting across the bridge were hardly deterred by three rapid-fire F-4 strikes. The 7<sup>th</sup>'s troops kept coming, and Lippard and Sgt. Thi kept picking them off, when briefly illuminated by lightning.

In short order, Lippard had shot and killed 15-20 enemy soldiers with his M14. "They were attacking in threes, so we could take them down fairly quickly." Sgt. Thi ran out of M1 ammunition, prompting Lippard to trade his M14 and extra ammo magazines for Thi's .45-caliber pistol. The Marine could fire the forty-five one-handed and still operate the PRC-10 radio, his only means of communication.

Fortuitously, Lippard happened to be an expert shot with a forty-five. Years later, he would set world records for nailing targets at 500, 600 and 1,000 yards with the "Combat NCO", a .45-caliber semiautomatic of his own design.

With enemy fire zeroed-in on the old bunker, Lippard and Thi abandoned it, moved about 75 yards up the beach, and took cover behind sand dunes, backs to the water. Lippard radioed a brief situation report (SITREP) to division headquarters, which merely acknowledged that artillery couldn't reach him, then went silent.

"No further transmission. None from them or me. I was busy," Lippard clipped. The young Marine was on his own. Reinforcements and artillery simply weren't available. He transmitted in the blind, "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! Any station this net! This is Hotel Three! Do you copy? Over!"

“Hotel Three, this is Assassin. Give me your coordinates.” Out there in the Da Nang Bay, just offshore, a very powerful ally was arriving. Answering



**USS John R. Craig (DD-885)**

Lippard’s call was Harry Rodgers RD2, a sailor aboard the USS John R. Craig (DD-885), a U.S. Navy destroyer sporting four five-inch guns, two on its forward deck and another two on the aft. Rodgers was tasked with maintaining communications between the ship and a “target spotter” ashore. He received and plotted target coordinates as requested by the spotter. Those were passed to the ship Gunnery Officer, who fed them into a fire control computer and fired the guns. The spotter—Lippard, in this case—would call for illumination, high-explosive or white phosphorus rounds and make target adjustments, as required.

Navy gun support tactics in mid-1965 were to “get in as close to shore as possible, drop anchor and maneuver [to] bring guns to bear, while swinging on the anchor chain,” according to the Craig’s history. The ship drew about 18 feet of water and was now anchored in about 25 feet. Crewmembers said the Craig’s propellers were churning up bottom mud to keep the ship broadside to the beach, ensuring both fore and aft five-inch gun mounts could provide supporting fire.

By 2141 (9:41 p.m. local), the Craig was in position, lights out, and starting to fire illumination rounds, directed by Lippard’s radio calls. Now, “I could see the [enemy] force...but was unaware that a whole battalion was engaging,” the Marine recalls. “The Craig came in [and started firing] to the right of the airstrikes, immediately across my front, giving me some relief.”

Once he realized a huge Viet Cong/Red Chinese force was caught in the open, lit up by the Craig’s first illumination rounds, Lippard requested high-explosive shells. “I called the first rounds within 100 yards” of his and Thi’s beach position. “If I had not retired to the beach, I would have died at the bridge. It was very bad on the beach, but the dunes [absorbed] a lot, and as the enemy fell back, concussions from naval gunfire and [incoming] enemy fire decreased.”

Noise from airbursts was deafening, complicating radio communications. As Lippard shot enemy soldiers closing on his position, he transmitted a steady stream of radio calls, directing the big guns’ devastating fire. High explosive rounds “were tight” and accurate. The advantages of heavy rain and pitch darkness that enemy commanders had counted on for concealment were eradicated by frequent illumination rounds turning night into day.

Up the beach, the South Vietnamese reserves “were digging to China, pinned against the sea. [The Craig’s incessant barrage] had them bottled up and afraid to move,” Lippard said. “They had no idea who was calling in the fire or where it was coming from.”

Illumination rounds enabled Lippard and Thi spotting and shooting enemy troops “that made it to within fifteen yards of us. It was close; very, very close,” the Marine distinctly remembers. “The ‘problem’ was danger close that night. I was down to just my pistol, and plotted the last rounds right on my position. [We] could not hold, without maximum firepower on me. We got lucky.”

Lippard was a reluctant student, when assigned to Map and Aerial Photo School in his early Marine Corps days, yet he graduated at the top of his class. On the night of 28-29 July 1965, he was grateful for training-honed skills that enabled calling in absolutely devastating fire for almost five hours. The USS Craig ultimately fired 340 five-inch rounds—57 illumination, 22 white phosphorous and 261 high-explosive shells.

At 0146 (1:46 a.m.) on 29 July, the USS Stoddard (DD-566) slipped into Da Nang Bay and joined the battle. Lippard was unaware that two ships were firing through the night. He simply called the coordinates and that zone was obliterated. “They answered a Marine corporal’s Mayday. No questions.” Relentless pounding by two Navy destroyers’ five-inch guns forced the Vietcong and Red Chinese regulars to “collapse on themselves. I followed up the beach as enemy troops [dropped back], then inland as they retraced their approach of march,” Lippard continued.

Approaching the ARVN reserves’ position, “Sgt. Thi broke off to identify me on their flank. I moved inland, following the enemy and [directing naval] gunfire. I was then forty-five yards forward of the ARVN position.” The Marine was alone in no-man’s land, surrounded by dead enemy soldiers...or what was left of them. Lippard doesn’t talk about that.

When the Craig and Stoddard ceased firing, “I retired back to the beach and retraced my movements to the point of first call [for naval gunfire]. There I remained until daylight.” The Craig was ordered to weigh anchor and depart around 0310 (3:10 a.m.), but the Stoddard remained in Da Nang Bay until about 10:00 a.m. “The battle was over, but she finished some mop-up, [shelling] the base of the mountains [to take out] any stragglers or other units that might arrive.”



**USS Stoddard (DD-566)**

Records of the battle are sketchy and don’t always agree, but Lippard’s research found that 443 shells were fired by the Craig and Stoddard in response to his Mayday calls the night of 28-29 July

1965. Another 33 were delivered during post-battle mop-up operations. Ship logs have ambiguous accounts, including numbers that don't match other records: the USS John R. Craig—under the command of Navy Commander James Kenneth Jobe and supported by Lt. Jeremy Michael Boorda, the Weapons Officer—fired 348 rounds, while “conducting a night firing mission.” How many the USS Stoddard delivered under the command of U.S. Navy Commander Charles Presgrove is believed to be 95 rounds in the early morning hours of 29 July, and another 174 in “after-action” operations, according to a Naval War Gunfire Support Record.

A personal log written by Henry Lehtola, an enlisted sailor-turned-historian who chronicled the Craig's role in the 28-29 July 1965 battle for the Ca De Bridge, backs Lippard's account: “Anchored Da Nang. ...preparing to open fire. The VC must have been raising hell earlier. You could hear small arms fire on the beach and see tracers flying. Flares and star shells lit up the whole sky.”

The U.S. Marine Corps War Journal's cursory documentation for 28 July notes, “USS Craig commenced firing on designated targets. 340 five-inch rounds expended—57 illumination; 22 white phosphorous, and 261 high explosives. At 0146 hr., Craig joined by USS Stoddard (DD-566) in support.”

Although exhausted, Corporal Karl Lippard jotted down a few notes about the night's battle and had his knee wound dressed. Later, he snapped several color photos, then waited, fully expecting a thorough debriefing by his commanders. It didn't happen. Nobody at headquarters ever asked for Lippard's account, verbal or written.

Senior Marine commanders definitely knew the intense Ca De River bridge battle had occurred. In fact, the USS Craig and Stoddard destroyers would not have steamed into Da Nang Bay in response to Lippard's Mayday call, unless ordered by the Commanding General of Naval Forces, Maj. Gen. Walt. However, 3rd Marine headquarters apparently never reported the engagement's stark truth: A single USMC Raider, aided by an ARVN Ranger, directed naval gun fire on a battalion-size unit of enemy soldiers caught in the open. After about five hours of intense bombardment, the Viet Cong 7th Battalion ceased to exist. No enemy soldiers captured. No wounded recovered. No sign that any of the unit's approximately 600 Viet Cong and Red Chinese combatants had escaped. The VC 7th simply vanished, never to reappear in subsequent reports.

Incredibly, not a single Marine or ARVN soldier was killed. “No Marine or ARVN losses,” Lippard confirmed.

“The end result of this battle was total destruction of the 7th Viet Cong Battalion, by U.S. Marines in defense of the bridge complex,” Lippard recapped. “The Marine Corps acted with speed and force—brought in Marine Air Wing strikes and quickly moved Navy ships into position to provide full gun support within minutes of my call. ...This is believed to be one of the finest examples of combined Navy and Marine assets...in support of a small unit, during the Vietnam War.”

Although U.S. commanders may have ignored or forgotten the Ca De River bridge battle, senior South Vietnamese military and political leaders deeply appreciated what Lippard and his fellow Marines had done. Lippard was quickly summoned to an ARVN headquarters and awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm insignia, the first of three he earned. Later, Vietnam's then-Premier, Nguyen Cao Ky, recognized Lippard for his distinguished actions in defending the bridge.

Final Chapter in next issue.

## [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org)

Website Quarterly Activity Report for the period 1 Apr 2021 – 30 Jun 2021  
Submitted 18-Jul-2021 by Bob Fitzgerald, WCC Webmaster

<u>Visitors</u> <u>This Quarter</u>	<u>Highest</u> <u>Visitors Week</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Sessions</u>	<u>Most Popular*</u> <u>Page (#Sessions)</u>	<u>Next Most Popular*</u> <u>Page (#Sessions)</u>
4,297	**	4,543	Departed (816)	Links (253)

Notes: \* Does not include our 'Home' page, which almost always is the most popular page.

\*\* "Highest Visitors Week" for this quarter was not available.

**Visitors:** This evaluation shows how many visitors accessed our website. Visitors are uniquely identified on the basis of the IP address and the browser ID. **If a visitor goes to our website more than once a day, only one visitor is counted.**

**Sessions:** This evaluation shows the number of sessions. A session starts when a visitor accesses our website and ends when he or she leaves it. A session ends automatically after 30 minutes without activity. **If a visitor goes to our website more than once a day, multiple sessions are counted.**

## EVENTS CALENDAR

(By Bob Fitzgerald, WCC Webmaster)

### QUARTERLY MEETINGS:

Our quarterly WCC General Business Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of March, June, September & December at 4:00pm PDT. (Please note the time change.) Our next meeting is on Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and is expected to be held **IN PERSON** at the Lions Gate Restaurant at McClellan Field. All WCC members are welcome to join us. Always check our [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org) website "Events" page before coming to confirm the details in case of last minute changes.

### UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS:

**09/18/21 11:00am-2:00pm: "Welcome Back" BBQ Picnic & Potluck.** (Signup required by 9/11.)  
(See flyer this issue.) [Please check our website "Events" page for any last minute changes.]

**11/13/21 11:30am-2:30pm: "FALL SOCIAL".** (Signup we be required by 11/05.)  
(Flyer with details will be in the next issue.) [Please check our website "Events" page for up-to-date plans.]

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Dave Price, Membership Chairman

### AS OF JUNE 14, 2021

**Total Active Members = 140 Life Members = 136.**

**Annual membership fee of \$10 is due by 01 Jan** each year. Check your mailing label, or check the "WCC Roster" from our website "Forms" page. **Life memberships are available for \$75.** You can use the "Membership Application/Roster Update" form on the last page of this newsletter or the one from our web site "Forms" page to send with your dues. Don't let your membership lapse. **Those alumni who are not current with their membership dues will be dropped from the "active" roster along with our newsletter distribution & email notification lists.** (See our web site "Forms" page, "WCC Roster" link to check your status.)

## FOR FUN

It's 1955 at a SAC B-36 base and an F-86 pilot is requesting landing instructions. He is low on fuel and asks for priority. The tower tells him he is second in line behind a B-36 with an engine out. The jet pilot's response, "Ahh, the dreaded nine engine landing."

# AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION - WEST COAST CHAPTER WELCOME BACK PICNIC BBQ & POTLUCK SATURDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2021 – 11AM- 2PM

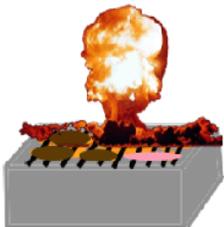
**Tempo Park, 13201 Fair Oaks Blvd, Citrus Heights, CA 95610**

### ATTENTION TO ORDERS

We are very happy to invite all AFTAC'ers, their families and friends to join us as we have our first event since COVID-19 shut everything down in March of last year. Our picnic area has good restroom facilities, ample parking, and a covered pavilion reserved for our use. We will be lighting the BBQs before 1100 hours and wrap things up by 1400 hours. Once again, the West Coast Chapter (WCC) of our alumni association will supply the basics: hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments, soft drinks/water, utensils & paper products. We ask that you bring a salad, side dish, dessert, or ?? **Please remember that due to current county regulations there is no alcohol consumption allowed at this facility.** All AFTAC Alumni & their guests (*including non-AFTAC'ers*) are cordially invited, but please submit your sign up(s) early so the logistics can be tweaked.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Be sure to follow all of the current local, state & federal COVID safety guidelines for small outdoor gatherings. **THANK YOU!**

Please fill out the sign-up form & send it to us now! **YOUR SIGN UP IS NEEDED BY 9/11/2021.**



#### VITAL DETAILS:

When: **Saturday, 18 September 2021**  
Where: **Tempo Park**  
Address: **13201 Fair Oaks Blvd, Citrus Heights, 95610**  
Hours: **1100 Hrs -1400 Hrs (11:00 am – 2:00 pm)**  
Cost: **Nada\***



#### DIRECTIONS

*From I-80: Go East on Greenback, turn left (North) on Fair Oaks Blvd. The park will be on the left side <1 mile up.*

*From Hwy 50: Go North on Sunrise Blvd, turn right (East) on Greenback and left (North) on Fair Oaks Blvd. ^.*

If you have questions, call WCC President, Allan Pentecost, (916) 276-9203 or Email:  
**"PicnicGurus@AFTACWCC.org"**

**PLEASE FILL IN & MAIL, or EMAIL, THE SIGN-UP FORM BELOW BY 9/11/2021 to:**

**[New Address:] AFTACAA-WCC, c/o 6605 Sweet Gum Ct, Citrus Heights, CA 95610**

*(You type the information requested & Email it, or scan the completed form and mail/Email it to <PicnicGurus@AFTACWCC.org>.)*

I [ ] mailed / [ ] Emailed my form on \_\_/\_\_/21. There will be \_\_ of us coming & we'll bring \_\_\_\_\_ for potluck.

**(Note: This upper part is for your records, so keep it as a reminder)**

*(Email this info. or cut here & mail or scan the form & e-mail it to: "PicnicGurus@AFTACWCC.org" ----- Picnic Sign-up Form -----)*

### WELCOME BACK WCC PICNIC BBQ & POTLUCK – SATURDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2021

*(Please print)*

NAMES (Firsts & Lasts): \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE/GUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Add'l Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Number Attending [ ]**

I/We will bring for the potluck:

Salad [ ] Side Dish [ ] Dessert [ ] Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Ph#: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email Addr: \_\_\_\_\_



# Depot Fallout



AFTAC Alumni Association - West Coast Chapter  
AFTACAA-WCC, c/o 6605 Sweet Gum Ct., Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
Email: [TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org](mailto:TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org)

Annual membership fee of \$10.<sup>00</sup> is due by 01 January each year. Check your mailing label for expiration date. Your last newsletter will be the one following your expiration date. Life memberships are available for \$75.<sup>00</sup>.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last, First MI Last Rank Held Nickname Name of Spouse*

Addr: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street, Apt #, etc. City State Zip Code*

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Home Phone Work Phone E-mail Address*

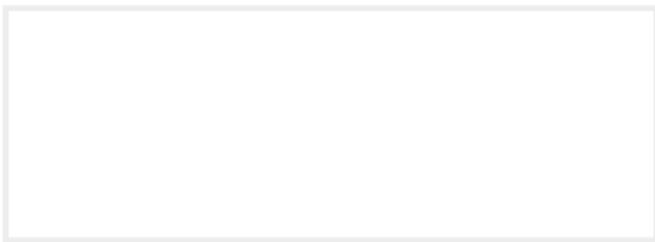
Active Duty: \_\_\_\_\_

AFTAC Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
*From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy*

**Support your West Coast Chapter: Please pass a copy of this form to your AFTAC Alumni friends.** *[From the Depot Fallout]*

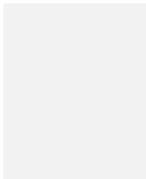
CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org) FOR THE LATEST WCC NEWS & PHOTOS

*(updated 9/24/2020 ..bf)*



To:

== FIRST CLASS MAIL ==



AFTACAA-WCC  
c/o 6605 Sweet Gum Ct.  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
*RETURN ADDRESS:*