

Torii Tribune

Volume 2, Issue 2

May 2002

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ASA OKINAWA



Special Points of Interest

- *The importance of keeping your personal records and documents is discussed in the cover story.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page three lists all newly located members.*
- *Another interesting story about an unforgettable person. See page four.*
- *Read about the recognition and medals for the Korean War on page five.*
- *The Navajo "Code Talkers" finally got some recognition. See page five.*
- *The President's Corner on page 6 explains about the reunion procedure.*

PERSONNEL RECORDS & DOCUMENTS

Written by William Thayer

Many veterans are unaware of the need to preserve documents relating to their military service. The most important of these documents is the Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge (DD Form 214), usually just referred to as the DD Form 214. This is the document prepared and issued at the time of separation or discharge from active duty or reserve service and it contains much personnel-related information such as the date of separation, character of service, au-

thorized awards, MOS, etc. Not to worry. (It has Privacy Act protected information, but it does not contain references to activities in Kadena Circle, Koza (old or new), Four Corners, Futenma or similar haunts.)

The DD Form 214 is the document that must be produced to apply for and receive benefits or entitlements provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other state agencies or departments. Among these are such things as educational assistance, service-

connected disability and entitlement to burial in a national cemetery.

What makes it even more important to retain and safeguard the DD Form 214 is an event, which occurred in July 1973 at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in Saint Louis, Missouri. The NPRC is the repository for the military personnel and medical records of veterans who have severed all ties with the military and who are no longer on active duty, retired or members of the re-

(Continued on page 3)

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Members with comments or questions are invited to contact any of the above persons.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Torii Tribune is the official publication of the US Army Security Agency Association Okinawa. It is published semi-annually in November and May. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. Contributions should be sent to the treasurer. All members are encouraged to support the voice of ASA Okinawa. A financial statement appears annually in the November issue.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another member will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE ON LINE

The Newsletter for the ASA Okinawa is now available to download from the Military Locator & Reunion Service Inc web site.

Please visit our web site at www.MLRSINC.com, then follow the link labeled **Reunions**, then scroll down until you see the listing for the **ASA Okinawa**. Click on the button labeled **Newsletters**, and the newsletter should appear on your screen. This will only work if you have **Adobe Reader 4.0** or higher. You can also download this viewer for free from our web site.

If you would like to receive all future mailings from us in this method, please send me an e-mail requesting to subscribe to the ASA Okinawa E-mail Roster. Each time something new is available, we will send you an e-mail informing you. **Please let us know if your e-mail address changes so you don't miss any important information.**

To subscribe to the ASA Okinawa E-mail Roster please **send an e-mail to SubscribeMLRS@aol.com, put the phrase SUBSCRIBE ASA Okinawa in the Subject line and type your name and e-mail address in the body of your e-mail.** You will be placed in the e-mail roster.

Dina Coffey

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 04/01/02

Beginning Balance: \$3881.64
Income From dues: \$30.00
Income from Torii Pin Sales:
\$20.00
Subtotal \$3931.64
Disbursement Expenses:
Postage: -\$6.80
Purchase of ASA pins: -\$269.20
November 2001 Newsletter:
-\$695.16

Balance as of 05/01/02
+\$2960/48

(Continued from page 1)

serves or National Guard. In July of 1973, there was a fire at the center, which destroyed between sixteen and eighteen million records. It is estimated that eighty percent of the Army records of those who served between November 1, 1912 and discharged before January 1, 1960 were destroyed. The destruction of these records essentially means that only the original documents in the possession of veterans themselves now exist.

If persons, veterans or their next of kin write to the NPRC, and as an example, request they be issued medals or decorations, and if the records were destroyed, they will be so informed. Whatever copies of documents such as the DD Form 214, orders and commendations provided by the person contacting the NPRC, will become the first documents used in reconstruction of a record. On the other hand, if a veteran whose record has been destroyed needs a copy of his or her original DD Form 214, contacting the National Personnel Records Center is of no use. These veterans after a lengthy time period has elapsed will receive a confirmation of their service, but it will not be a copy of the DD Form 214.

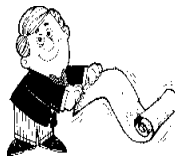
Those having access to computers and the internet may go to the following websites for information on contacting the NPRC regarding military records, the fire, and reconstruction efforts.

<http://www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html> <http://www.nara.gov/regional/mprfire.html>

Whether veterans do or do not have access to computers or the internet, the address for contacting the NPRC is:

National Personnel Records Center,
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63132-5100.

The author retired from the Army in July, 1989 as a CWO-4, Personnel Officer with almost 33 years of active duty. His last assignment of ten plus years was in the Department of the Army Military Awards Branch, where he served as an expert witness in formal judicial and administrative proceedings and in Federal courts. His initial Army assignment in 1957 was as a 058 on Trick Two at the 3rd USASAFS, followed by being a Personnel Specialist in the Unit Personnel Office at Sobe.



WELCOME MAT

The following members have been located. Welcome to the Association. Space limitations prevent us from printing the addresses, but if you see a name you recognize and would like to have his address, just give us a call, note, or e-mail and we will be glad to send it to you.

Sam Accordino
Ronald Berg
Clifford Borden, Jr.
Benford Byrd
Chuck & Susan Cannon
David Clapp
Robert Clemmons
John Conley, Jr.
Charles Cornelison
Crawford Cox
Dorley Dorsey II
Raymond Drews, Jr.
Paul Duffau
Patrick Dunn
John Dwyer
Harold Ellis, Jr.
Clayton Fischer
Ottie Fisher
Donald Flohre
Richard Frakes
Richard Fries
Richard Gerlich
Devern Gustavson
Johnny Hancock

Lewis Hart
Wallace Hawkins, Jr.
Hampton Hayner
Jack Hazlett
David Holder
James Ishee
Henry Jarvey, Jr.
Frank Jett
Robert Jones
Paul Kessler
Robert Kinser
William Knowles
Robert Koslow
Eugene Kreuz
John Lacy
Gerald Laurentius
Paul Leimbach
Samuel Moore
Jack Morgan
Ken Mori
Austin Morris
Royce Parks
Robert Peck
Robert Pettitt
Erroll Pierce
Russell Poole, Jr.
Henry Prieber
Alan Richards
William Salmon
Henry Sanders
Leonard Serattle
Pryce Shores
James Short
Perry Sparks
Lou Spiegel
Joe Stapleton
Ralph Steele
Ronald Stradling
Larry Swafford
Lester Tankersley
Clinton Todd
James Tronnier
Harold Twellman, Jr.
Richard Van Schaick
Walter Webster
Morgan Williams
Joe Zerman

The Welcome list in this issue contains the names of individuals for whom I have been searching for years thanks to a helpful website on the internet.

Now, for a given "Army name", it

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

is possible to find the city and state of residence as well as the age of the persons matching that name on the website **www.USSearch.com**.

Prior to this time, all computer phonebook matches had to be checked out as often there were several matches in the country.

Since the listings in USSearch are the complete name, first, middle initial, and last name, as used by the Army, it is possible to find those who use initials or nicknames for their phone listings.

Armed with the city and state information for the likely prospects in the age category one would expect for a Sobe vet, it is a simple matter to make phone contact if there is a published phone listing.

This source of information falls short when an unlisted number is encountered. And, since USSearch is a pay-for-information site, you have the option of paying the nominal fee for the address information they have on file.

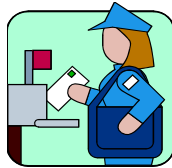
For those with an unlisted number, address information can be obtained from the voter registration officials in that city. (There is one person on this Welcome list who was located using that method.)

So, troops, it is still possible to find some of our Army buddies who have been "lost".

If anyone would like to make contact with an unlocated buddy by searching on the internet, I will be more than happy to provide the "Army name" as it appeared on orders that I have collected. There are also service numbers for most individuals which can be helpful.

Paul Watson
pwatson@greenet.net

**NEWSLETTER EXPENDITURES
FOR 05/02
\$724.19**



MAIL CALL

MY MOST UNFORGETTABLE PERSON

My most unforgettable person is a mentor I had, Neal Watkins. Remember he was the one that they broke every law in the book to get him in the Army Security Agency. He was flat footed, asthmatic and you swore that if you blew on him he would take three somersaults backwards. Of course, the fact that he was a genius, whose IQ at the time was immeasurable, and that he had started teaching psychology in a university at the age of 19 I am sure had no bearing on the decision to recruit him. I imagine because he was a genius who also had horse sense made him all the more valuable.

SFC Watkins was on days only and worked in the back corner office in the operations building where I ended up working with him. This was the guy that when you walked into the office could tell what your last meal consisted of and where and who you had it with. It was a little disconcerting, especially when you just had got back from the village. Maybe that's why a few of us talked him into teaching a crash psychology course, which he did on off hours.

I suspect that some of the rumors about his being able to talk to the CIA and when in the operations building having equal rank to any outside visitor because of his position had some basis of truth in it. I do know, that at that time, if Okinawa had come under attack he was the third person on the list, of all the people on the island, to be evacuated. Which was to say he was on the first plane out.

Neal had a great deal to do about raising funds and getting Mr. Miyagi (Shinsho) sent off to college in the United States. In 1958, Neal went

home to get married and brought his bride, whose name for the life of me I can't remember, back with him. GI (George Irving) Smith and I became the Godparents for his daughter.

Sadly, a few years after I left Okinawa I 1959, Neal died of an asthma attack. I have since lost track of both his wife and daughter, so if anyone has a clue to where they can be contacted, I would be in your debt.

Mike Maki (1956-59)
650 SW Meadow Dr #203
Beaverton, OR 97006
503-846-9581
Mikem@pageantpage.com

How many remember this one? It was printed up on a wallet size card on pink card paper and given to everyone that wanted one. I believe it was in the year of 1958.

SERVING A HITCH IN HELL

It's just across the blue Pacific,
Okinawa is the spot,
Where we're doomed to serve our
time
in a land that God forgot.
Down with the snakes and lizards,
down where a man gets blue,
Right in the middle of nowhere,
ten thousand miles from you.
We sweat, we freeze, we shiver,
it's more than a man can stand,
We're not supposed to be convicts,
but defenders of the land.
We're soldiers of the Army,
drawing our measley pay,
Guarding those with millions,
for two fifty a day.
Here we live with our memories,
thinking about our gals,
Hoping while we're away,
they don't marry our pals.
Few know that we're living,
the rest don't give a damn,
Just to do a stinking job,
for good old Uncle Sam.
But when we pass those Pearly Gates,
you'll hear St. Peter yell,
"Pass on you boys from Oki,
you've served your hitch in hell."

Mike Maki

RECOGNITION AND MEDALS

Recognition was pretty hard to come by for soldiers after Korea. There was the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. The National Defense Service Medal was awarded to those who served honorably on active duty during the periods 27 June 1950 through 27 July 1954 or 1 January 1961 through 14 August 1974. Many who served in the Army Security Agency in Okinawa and elsewhere during these periods either have been awarded the medal on their records or qualify for the award, but may have never received the actual medal. Award and issue of the medal can be accomplished by writing the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in Saint Louis, MO.

Of course the Good Conduct Medal has slightly different criteria. In the 1950's it was awarded only to enlisted personnel based upon conduct and efficiency ratings of EXCELLENT, and with no record of courts-martial. For those of us who were young and single on Okinawa and in ASA during the decade of the fifties, an efficiency rating of EXCELLENT was not difficult to receive from supervisors and commanders. It was the conduct rating that proved to be a little bit elusive and harder to obtain. Believe it or not, there were those who did qualify for and may have been awarded the Good Conduct Medal, but seldom received the medal itself. There are others who may have qualified, but may have been overlooked. Then there are those of us who know we didn't qualify for this medal and were not awarded it. In any case, for those who might be interested, the NPRC can authorize the award and issue this medal. The following website provides the address and further information: <http://www.nara.gov/regional/mpawr.html>

The address for written contacts and applications is shown below:

National Personnel Records Center
Medals Section (NRPMA-M)
9700 Page Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63132-5100

For the specific criteria on all Army awards and decorations and what they look like, the following websites are informative:

http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/R600_822/CCONTENTS

<http://www.perscom.army.mil/tagd/tioh/Awards/Campaign%20Medals/US%20Army%20Service%20&%20Campaign%20Medals.htm>

<http://www.perscom.army.mil/tagd/tioh/Awards/Ribbons/Order%20of%20Precedence.htm>

There is also something called the Cold War Recognition Certificate for those who served honorably and faithfully during the period September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991. There is no emblem or medal, but the certificate is suitable for framing and hanging on a wall. Further information can be found at: <http://coldwar.army.mil/>

Written by William Thayer

NAVAJOS GET MEDALS FOR WWII CODE WORK

*Taken from the El Paso Times,
Sunday, Nov. 25, 2001*

*By Angela Turner
Associated Press*

Hundreds of Navajo Code Talkers were honored Saturday in a ceremony that many said was long overdue.

Thousands of people gathered to watch as more than 300 Congressional Silver Medals were presented

to the Code Talkers at the fairgrounds in Window Rock, Ariz.

The Code Talkers were honored for creating a code from their native tongue that was indecipherable by the Japanese. It was credited for saving thousands of lives during World War II.

"It feels great," 76-year-old Samuel Smith said after receiving his medal. "I think I finally became an American."

Smith, of San Fidel, NM, said he didn't ask for the job or the award.

"I'm proud to have done what I did," he said.

Keith M. Little, 76, knew Navajos were used for a special assignment but he had no idea of the role he would play in the war when he joined the Marines.

"They didn't tell me what it was until I got to communication school," Little said. "We didn't know (the code). We had to learn it."

Little, his fellow Code Talkers and speakers at the ceremony said the recognition was long overdue.

"We worked for it," he said.

Rep. Tom Udall, D-NM, said the Code Talkers had finally received their place in history.

"Their contributions to the preservation of liberty and freedom will never be forgotten and can never be diminished," Udall said.

Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye said it took a long time to recognize the men for their work, but it would never be forgotten.

"From this day forward we will continue to remember the courage and sacrifice of the Navajo Code Talkers," he said. "You are our true American heroes."

YOUR INPUT NEEDED

It is important for you to become involved in your newsletter by sending in articles that you think would be of interest to others in the association. Some of the best stories are ones that come from your experiences in the ASA Okinawa—stories that evoke memories in others also. This is your newsletter, so please contribute to it with your stories.

President's Corner

*Larry Eckard, President ASA
Okinawa Assn*

It hardly seems possible that 6 months have passed since the last newsletter. Thanks to the advertisements and Paul Watson's efforts, a lot of new members have been located. We hope to see all of you at the reunion and hope you will become an active member of the Association.

For the benefit of our new members and for those who may have questions about the reunion registration procedures. First, the dates and location of the reunion was published in the last newsletter and is currently posted on the ML & RS, Inc website. Newly located members were sent letters of introduction with the dates and location of the reunion, so everyone has access to that information for months. The registration packets will be mailed within a month. These packets go to every single person on the mailing list, whether you are a dues paying member or not. For the benefit of the newly located members, and for anyone who may have forgotten the procedures, following is a brief outline of the registration process. Most important, all reservations, including hotel reservations are made through the reunion manager, Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc. The hotel will not accept your individual reservation if you identify yourself as a member of the group, and if you do not, you will not receive the reunion rate (which is \$30.00 plus tax per night less than the standard rate.) The registration packets are self-explanatory, so we won't bore you by repeating the information here. The important thing to know is to wait for the registration packets and then if you have questions, call the reunion manager. We are expecting a big crowd so get your reservations in early. Just in case you

missed it somewhere, the reunion is **Oct 03-06, 2002 at the Holiday Inn BWI, near the Baltimore-Washington International Airport.** Some of you may remember it as the Friendship Airport and the near-by NSA Annex, aptly named FANEX.

While we plan on having a great time reminiscing and making new acquaintances, there are a few items of business to take care. The meeting agenda will be in the packet that you pick up at the on-site registration desk. One of the items for discussion will be whether to change from the present "geographic" area directors to a "by-the-year" directors. One of the members has made this suggestion which will be brought before the membership. There are no elections scheduled for this meeting.

As you know, Natchez, MS has been selected as the 2003 reunion site. The reunion manager has been and will continue to work with Col Wisyanski who lives in the area to come up with the best possible reunion. The 2004 reunion site will be selected at this meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

Every idea and every suggestion will be considered and brought before the general membership. If you have anything to bring to the floor, we would appreciate a note so it can be added to the agenda.

Looking forward to seeing each of you in Baltimore.

UPDATES CRUCIAL

Keeping your mailing address, e-mail address and phone number updated with Military Locator & Reunion Service is very important for you to continue to receive information concerning the association. **If you have a change in either address or phone number, be sure to contact ML&RS immediately** so you do not miss out on any information. We can be reached by mail, phone or e-mail at the addresses or phone number on page three of this issue.



TAPS

The Tribune learned of the following deaths since the last newsletter was published. The deaths are not necessarily recent, but they were just learned of. The entire membership extends our deepest sympathy to the widows, families and friends of the deceased.

*Glen Bricker, Jr.
Died February 7, 2002*

*Hensel Bryenldson
Died November 26, 2001*

*Edward Driscoll
Died January 15, 2001*

*Clarence Stryker
Died July 28, 2001*

*Milner Loyce
Died February 24, 2002*

*John Hamilton
Died May 29, 1999*

*Martin Gates
Died January 17, 1999*

*James Wilkinson
Died April 12, 1998*

Anyone learning of the death of someone who served with ASA Okinawa, please advise the Tribune so their passing can be acknowledged.

**ASA OKINAWA
2002 REUNION
OCTOBER 3-6
BALTIMORE, MD
BE THERE!**