

PUBLICATION OF THE ALAMO SCOUTS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

RECON

Feb/Mar 2018 Issue

MAGAZINE

The Alamo Scouts on Salebaboe Island



Colorized photo of joint Alamo Scouts-Netherlands East Indies Administration team aboard the USS Mobjack following a successful Snatch & Grab mission to Salebaboe Island in which the team captured a native boy (middle front) to obtain information about Japanese forces in the Talaud Island Group.



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

SPECIAL FORCES



ALAMO SCOUTS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION, INC.

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The Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation

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in the State of Illinois

Alamo Scouts Association 1980 - 2012

Co-founders: *Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret)*

Command Sergeant Major Galen C. Kittleson (Ret)

In Memoriam

Director: 1980 -2004

Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret) In Perpetuity

NECROLOGY

Daniel Jackson

November 16, 2017

Camp Doctor

Cover Photo:

Alamo Scouts aboard a PT boat en route to recon Salebaboe Island (Talaud Island Group), September 1944.

Back Row L-R: Lt. jg, David Dewindt (Navy 7th Amphibious Force), Clifford Gonyea, Bob Shullaw, Oliver Roesler, 1LT R.F. De Bruine (NEIA Officer), Bob Ross.

Front Row L-R: William Lutz, Native Boy, Finn (Dutch Officer), John McGowen, Zeke McConnell, Bob Schermerhorn.

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2018 Washington DC Meet-Up



The Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation Board of Directors will be conducting its annual meeting on Friday, June 8, 2018, in Washington DC, and we cordially invite ASHF members, families, and friends to join us for the weekend. Board members have reserved hotel rooms for themselves at the Embassy Suites in DC for the nights of June 7-9, and will be visiting Arlington National Cemetery, President Lincoln's Cottage, the National Mall, and other sites. We are also planning to have a nice Meet-Up dinner together on Saturday night (June 9th).

On Sunday, Russ Blaise, Lance Zedric and Linda Nellist will be heading to College Park, Maryland to conduct research at the National Archives. We are planning to spend a few days there beginning Monday, June 11th. If you are interested in doing any research at the archives, you're welcome to join us.

If you are interested in meeting up with us, please make your room reservations soon. The hotel listed below is where some of us are staying. If the hotel is booked, there is other hotels in the vicinity.

Embassy Suites
900 10th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001
202-739-2001

Please note that you are responsible for all expenses like airfare, transportation, hotel, dinning out, etc.

For questions, please contact Russ Blaise by email at: recon@alamoscouts.org

Also, if you are going to join us in DC. Please contact me and let me know so we can get a count on how many will be joining us. You can also email me if you are not planning to join us.

Also please join our Facebook group for the latest news and stories:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/alamoscouts/>

It's a closed group so you'll have to ask to join when you get to the page. All posts and comments stay within the group. We found this is the best way to communicate with members and Alamo Scouts enthusiast. Sending out bulk emails only produce spam. Having a Facebook private closed group eliminates spam and lost emails.

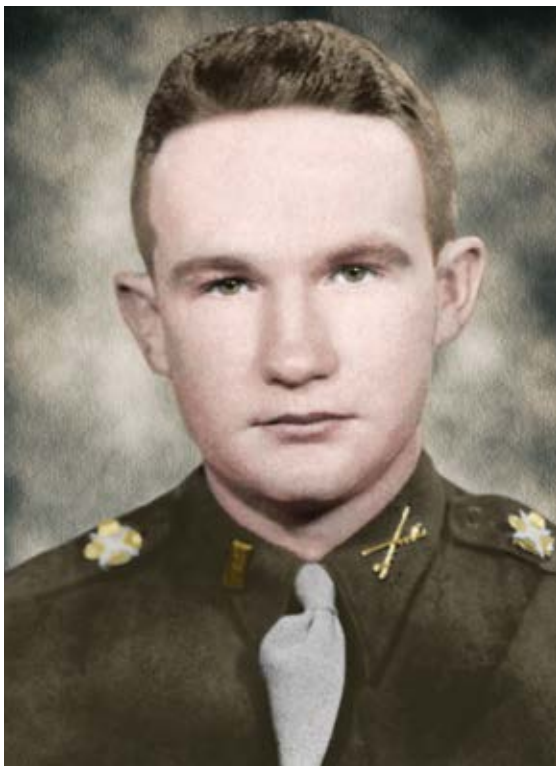
Snatch & Grab

The Alamo Scouts on Salebaboe Island

By Lance Zedric

By early September 1944, the U.S. Third Fleet had pounded the enemy in the Southwest Pacific and had so reduced its shipping and air power that Allied planners saw an opportunity to advance their strategic timetable. On 15 September, U.S. Sixth Army ground forces successfully invaded Morotai in the Halmaheras prompting the cancellation of a planned airborne invasion of Mindanao, the southernmost of the principle islands in the Philippines, in favor of a 20 October amphibious landing on Leyte Island further north. The Mindanao plan had included an assault on the volcanic and heavily forested Talaud Islands situated 150 miles south of Mindanao and some 150 miles northwest of Morotai, but the success on Morotai had reduced the immediacy of constructing an airfield there. However, the objective was still important.

Consisting of Salebaboe (Sally-bah-bo-e), Karakelong, and Kaburang islands, the 495-square-mile Talaud Island Group still contained numerous islets on which the Japanese could hide and threaten the Leyte Operation. And although air reconnaissance of the islands was important in detecting enemy strength and movement, nothing could beat having boots on the ground.



1Lt William B. Lutz, Team Leader

Lieutenant William “Bill” Lutz and his team, along with most of the operational Alamo Scouts in theater, departed Woendi Island on 12 September aboard the PT tender *Mobjack*. Following a stop at Amsterdam Island, the Scouts arrived at Morotai on the 16th ready for a mission. For four days they ate, played cards, slept, and waited. Finally, the warning order came

down, but not for a mission on Morotai. Tiny Salebaboe Island was calling.

The mission plan was simple. LUTZ Team, plus a contact team led by operations officer and Alamo Scout team leader Lt. John McGowen, would travel across the open Celebes Sea aboard PT boats to the island, paddle ashore in a rubber boat, land undetected on enemy-held territory in the dark, and perform a beach and land reconnaissance while avoiding enemy patrols. Next, they would capture two or three natives for interrogation, contact the PT boats for pick-up, and deliver the captives to 6th Army the next day. No problem!

“The mission at Salebaboe was to land in the vicinity of Liroeng Village to obtain two or three native informants for return to Headquarters, Sixth Army for interrogation,” wrote Lutz, “and to determine the suitability of the beach in the vicinity of Liroeng Village for the landing of naval landing craft.”



PT tender *Mobjack*

At 1:30 pm (1300) on 20 September, Lutz and McGowen, with Alamo Scouts John Geiger, Bob Ross, Oliver Roesler, Robert Shullaw, Clifford Gonyea, Zeke McConnell, Alva Branson, and Robert Schermerhorn assembled for the mission. Allan Throgmorton, Samuel Armstrong, and Elmer Niemela would stand by as reserve scouts and act as the contact team. Lt. David Dewindt from the 7th Amphibious Force, and Lt. R.F. DeBruine, a Dutch officer from the Netherlands East Indies Administration (NEIA), accompanied the Scouts. The party drew weapons and equipment and quickly boarded PT 364 of Motor Torpedo Squadron 18 and PTs 490 and 495 from RON 33. The PTs job was to take them in.

"At 4:30 our boats pulled out," said Bob Ross. "It was a long ride, and really in dangerous waters. We all wore our life belts, and after supper when it began to rain, we went below to try to sleep a bit before landing."

But sleep didn't come easy. The Scouts arrived 1000 yards offshore of Salebaboe. The driving rain tossed the tiny boats in the water like corks. A few hours later, the Scouts and DeBruine boarded a ten-man rubber raft and paddled ashore. The rain intensified and lightening crackled across the sky. McGowen remained on a PT boat with the contact team to maintain communication with the party.



1LT R.F. DeBruine & Native Boy

"The key to the mission plan was to make the landing sufficiently early in the evening to give the landing party enough time to enable them to accomplish their mission, to take off, and for the PT boats to be out of sight of the Talaud Island Group by daylight the following morning," said Lutz. "About halfway to the islands a squall came up, and in the darkness, the PT boats lost contact with each other."

"We got into the rubber boat and hit shore," said Ross. "I was in the bow and was supposed to secure the beach on my side. I jumped out and fell into a hole—there was no beach at all—it was deeply rutted and sharp coral. I proceeded as fast as I could across 40 or 50 feet of coral—taking such a very long time and falling down four or five times. I crouched in the bush at the edge of the beach and waited..."

At 0315 three men crouched at the edge of the beach and watched the boat while the rest of the party joined Ross. If the Scouts did not return by 0400, the men would return to the PT boat and await word. "Upon reaching land, enough cover was found to provide concealment for the landing party in daylight," said Lutz, "so the operations officer aboard [McGowen] the PT was contacted and arrangements made for pick-up at 2230 the following night."

Some members of the recon party conducted a beach reconnaissance while the remainder moved several hundred

yards inland, but the going was tough. "It was so dark we couldn't see a thing and had to hold on to the man in front," lamented Ross. "The jungle wasn't thick, but there was a lot of bamboo lying around which made a lot of noise. Somehow we got mixed up, and before we knew it, we were back at the beach having gone in somewhat of a semi-circle! We ended up going back to the rubber boat to make further plans."

And plan they did. Although some members of the exhausted team wanted to send the boat back as not to risk it being discovered, Lutz vetoed the idea and directed the team to remain on the island. Shortly before dawn, the party carefully transported the boat over the jagged coral reef and covered it with brush and leaves. The party then tried to sleep, but the rain made it difficult.

In the early morning, Lutz, Roesler, and Ross located the main trail bisecting the island. The group conducted a quick reconnaissance of the area, which consisted of several native gardens and cleared hills. "There was a trail that ran inland from the coast," noted Roesler. "There was probably a quarter mile of jungle between the coast—and on the other side of the trail there were cultivated gardens."



John J. Geiger, Jr.

Everyone agreed that the snatch & grab of the natives would have to be done in the late afternoon. All parties then reassembled at the edge of the beach for some much-needed rest.

"After a short reconnaissance inland, the party moved southeast about 200 yards and lay concealed until 1600," said Lutz. "A shore watch was kept to observe any traffic along the beach and between Salebaboe and Karakellang [*sic*] Islands."

"Our mission was a simple prisoner snatch," added Geiger.

“But from the beginning it wasn’t as easy as it sounded. While we were resting, we were almost detected by a native woman, and native canoes were active along the coast. We didn’t rest much.”

At 1600, the party moved out and again were almost spotted by natives. “We then moved up to the trail with intentions of snatching the first natives who went by,” said Ross. “Two women passed us before we could get our trap set. Schermerhorn [and] Lt. DeBruine stayed at one spot in the trail. Two men went with them, and Gonyea and I [stayed] below. We were to let the natives go by—the Lt. would step out and talk to them—and we were to cut off any attempt at escape.”

Ross and Gonyea soon spotted a man wearing a white pith helmet walking down the trail carrying an axe and a machete. They let him pass, but DeBruine stepped out and surprised him. The Scouts quickly moved in and secured the capture. “He was halted and willingly taken captive,” said Lutz. “At 1615, three more native boys, apparently about twelve years of age, approached from the same direction. They were halted but immediately fled, one toward Moesi, and the others toward Liroeng.”



Oliver J. Roesler

“We, of course, didn’t want to shoot them,” added Roesler. “We didn’t want to hurt them. We didn’t have anything against them. Besides that, we were close enough to the Japanese that they could hear us if we started firing.”

Having been detected, the Scouts were unsure if the boys would report what they saw, and with Liroeng being occupied by the Japanese, they couldn’t take any chances. They moved 1200 yards to their front, retraced their steps, crossed the road, then advanced about 1200 yards toward Moesi and away

from their rubber boat, where they spread out and concealed themselves in the thickest part of the jungle. A few minutes later, a native who had followed their trail detected them but darted on past when confronted. The Scouts quietly backtracked 500 yards toward Liroeng and concealed themselves in the brush, where they would wait for nightfall and then return to the boat.

But they weren’t out of danger yet. Just as darkness was falling, a Japanese patrol went right through them. “I don’t know how they missed us!” exclaimed Roesler. “About 20 or 25 Japanese walked right through our patrol. Of course, we had camouflage uniforms and our noses were about six inches in the dirt. They walked right over us and never saw us. I felt like I could have reached and out touched them it was that close. That was a little scary.”



Bob Ross

“I was at the tail of the column and kept a sharp lookout behind us,” explained Ross. “Just as the front end of the column got to the boat, we heard a party moving toward us through the bush. I tried to get behind some cover, but just as I got on my knee, I saw them. They were Japs, I knew, and armed—chatting like so many monkeys. They were soon 10 to 15 feet from me—looking around and thrashing the brush. I kept my eyes glued on them for any sign of their seeing me—I was more or less in the open and I was scared. The sweat poured down like rain.”

“I think the Japanese thought that these kids had seen things,” added Roesler. “Supposedly, the Japs thought we were still several hundred miles away because they were talking, which was a good thing, because if they hadn’t been talking, we wouldn’t have seen them soon enough to avoid them.”

The rest of the mission was less stressful but no less dangerous. At 2200, Lutz attempted to contact McGowen aboard the command PT boat but was unsuccessful. Waiting was tough, and Lutz had to prepare for every contingency. He ordered that the boat be put into the water in case a quick getaway was needed. An hour later, Lutz finally radioed McGowen and the contact team, which had returned from Morotai where they had switched boats. They soon returned aboard *PT 365* of RON

18 and PT 156 of RON 9 and effected the pick up.

The new PT crews greeted the Scouts with sandwiches and hot coffee while DeBruine interrogated the boy, whom it was learned was 21 years of age and lived in Moesi with his mother, sister, and three brothers. He reported that the Japanese were cruel and that the some 100 soldiers on Salebaboe had moved from the villages to the mountains and were digging in. He also reported that a 1000-man garrison occupied the larger island but that the other islands were unoccupied. All valuable information for Sixth Army and the invasion that would never come.

"We got back to the *Mobjack* at dawn with no further incidents," concluded Ross. "Mission accomplished. Though we made mistakes—lost our tempers at times, and were often disgusted, the important thing was that we did what our job called for in spite of many things beyond our control."

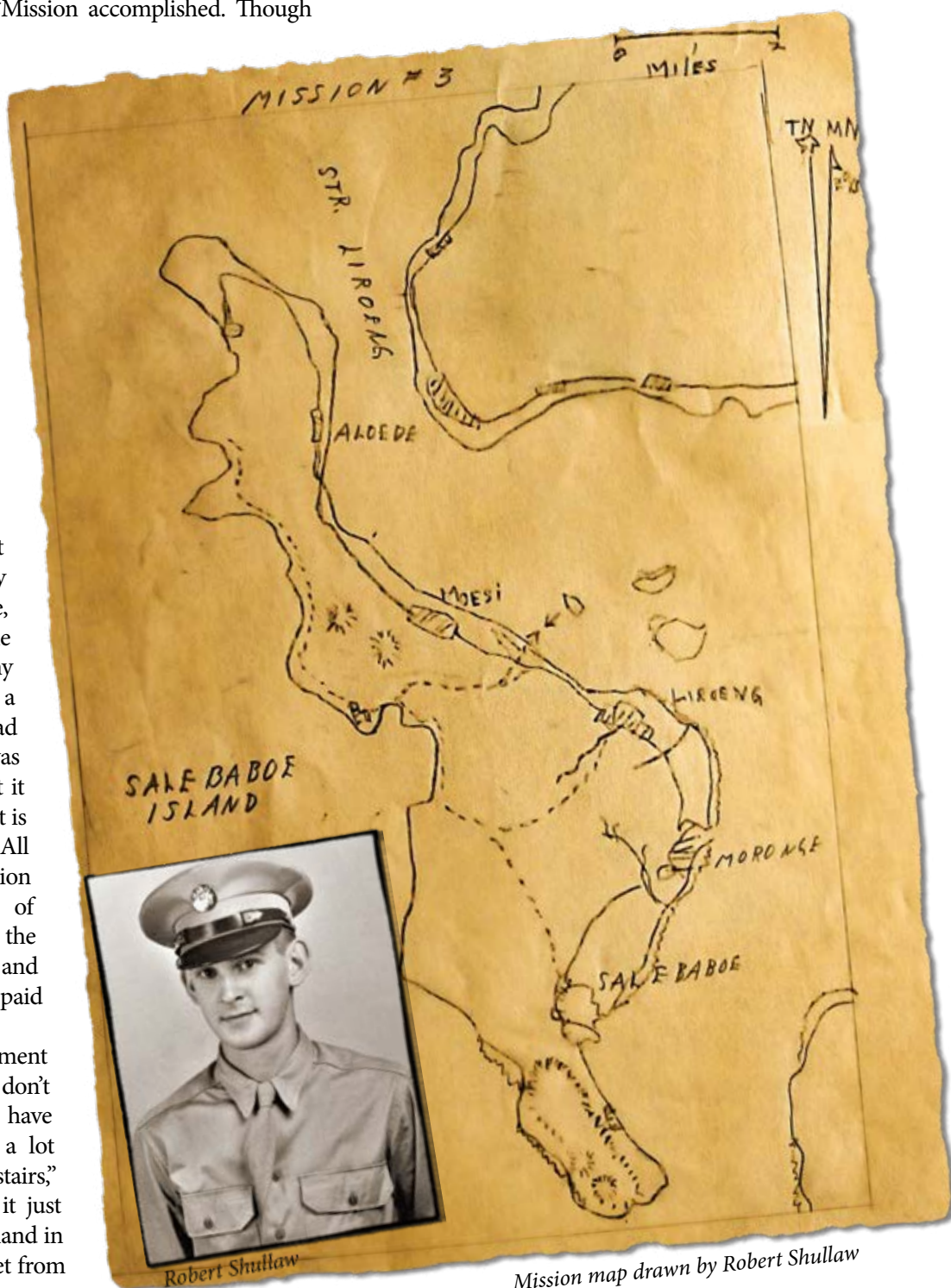
"My boys did do one job, and a rather ticklish at that," wrote McGowen in a vague letter to his mother three days after the mission. "Of course, there wasn't much work in that for me, but I did lose about 48 hours of sleep over it. The margin between disaster and success in this business is so infinitesimal that just a bit of negligence on my part might make the difference, and I had much rather take the consequences than have my men take them... They did a good job this last time, and had a lot of fun doing it, but it was touch and go for a while, but it usually is. I still think that that is the best job by far in the army. All the excitement and gratification without the unpleasantness of dull, monotonous work of the base sections, or the filth and eternity of the front. Just paid vacations as it were."

An eloquent understatement of the mission at best. "I just don't understand how we could have done what we did without a lot of help from somebody upstairs," concluded Roesler. "To me, it just doesn't figure—to be on an island in the middle of nowhere ten feet from

the enemy and to not be seen. It was more than luck."

The Alamo Scouts reconnaissance of Salebaboe Island was less glamorous than other notable Alamo Scouts missions, but its value was certain. It provided Sixth Army with timely information that helped military planners concentrate resources needed for the return to the Philippines. On 20 October 1944, Allied forces landed on Leyte two months ahead of schedule. Less than a year later, the war was over.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Mission map drawn by Robert Shullaw

Hall of Honor

6th Army South Inaugural Ceremony

On September 14, 2017, the Alamo Scouts and their founder, General Walter Krueger, were inducted in the 6th Army South “Hall of Honor” in an inaugural ceremony at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Frank and Jeanne Heffern accepted for the Alamo Scouts. Jeanne’s father was a graduate of the 3rd class at the ASTC, while Grayson Kirtland accepted the award on behalf of his great-grandfather. Excerpts from each acceptance speech follow:



L to R: Standing in front of the U.S. Army South “Hall of Honor”, Grayson Kirtland, Dr. Isaac Hampton (Command Historian), Jean Howell Kopp Heffern, and her husband, Frank Heffern. The Hall of Honor is displayed on an interactive HDTV.

My husband Frank and I were honored to represent the Alamo Scouts and the Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas on 14 September 2017 for the induction of the Alamo Scouts into the U.S. Army South Hall of Honor.

The Alamo Scouts were among five recipients chosen from ten nominees to be inducted in the inaugural ceremony. Other inductees included General Walter Krueger, founder of the Alamo Scouts, and Colonel Ralph Puckett, founder and commander of the Eighth Army Ranger Company.

Major General K.K. Chinn, commanding general of U.S. Army South, introduced the inductees and gave an excellent presentation of who the Alamo Scouts were and how they were formed. His presentation sent a wave of honor through me knowing my father, Captain Howell S. Kopp, a graduate of the third Alamo Scouts training class, had a small part in the achievements of the Alamo Scouts.

Hearing Mr. Grayson Kirkland, great-grandson of General Krueger, tell stories about his great-grandfather, brought a familiarity to the man who formed the Alamo Scouts and who was one of the unsung heroes of World War II.

My husband and I were very proud to represent the many members of the Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation and for being able to speak on their behalf. In my talk about the Alamo Scouts and my father’s experience of being trained as a Scout, I remembered a line in one of his letters to my mother. He wrote, “I feel it is my duty to the Army and my country to put my abilities to the best use, and experience has proven that I am a good scout.”

-Jean Howell Kopp Heffern



U.S. Army South / 6th Army



Hall of Honor

This is to certify that

The Alamo Scouts

Are inducted into the U.S. Army South / 6th Army Hall of Honor. This elite group of Soldiers' conducted over 100 special operations missions behind Japanese lines without losing a single man during World War II. Their heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon the United States Army. In view of their contributions, the Alamo Scouts are inducted into the U.S. Army South / 6th Army Hall of Honor this 14th day of September, 2017.

Carlos R. Olvera
Command Sergeant Major
United States Army

"Juntos Podemos"
Together we can!

Clarence K.K. Chinn
Major General, USA
Commanding

Hall of Honor certificate given to Jean Howell Kopp Heffern during the induction ceremony.

I remember well General Krueger visiting us at our home in Richmond, Virginia when I was a boy. We called him "grandfather" in our house. He was very courtly and unassuming. I never heard him talk about World War II. My mother told me last week again how unassuming he was.

I think my great grandfather would be very pleased that the Alamo Scouts are also being honored here today. They were very close to his heart. Last year, I met Alamo Scout Terry Santos in San Francisco where he lives. Terry remembers General Krueger stopping by their Alamo Scout camp frequently. One time the Scouts were testing a crossbow and General Krueger asked to try it out. He hit the target, a tree, and said, "I can't even see and I hit the that tree."

-Grayson Kirtland



U.S. Army South / 6th Army



Hall of Honor

This is to certify that

General (R) Walter Krueger

Is inducted into the U.S. Army South / 6th Army Hall of Honor. Throughout his career, General Krueger made significant contributions during World War I and World War II to the United States war effort. His work in organizing the stand up of 6th Army and serving as its first commander in the Pacific Theater reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Army. In view of his contributions, he is inducted into the U.S. Army South / 6th Army Hall of Honor this 14th day of September, 2017.

Carlos R. Olvera
Command Sergeant Major
United States Army

"Juntos Podemos"
Together we can!

Clarence K.K. Chinn
Major General, USA
Commanding

Hall of Honor certificate presented to Grayson Kirtland.

YouTube video of the inaugural ceremony:
<https://youtu.be/dH1hObbxchI>

Army South unveils Hall of Honor, inducts recipients

By Maj. Jamelle A. Garner | U.S. Army South Public Affairs
| September 19, 2017

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM
HOUSTON, Texas --

Thanks to the behind-the-scenes efforts of Army South historian Dr. Isaac Hampton, the Army South Hall of Honor became a reality with a flagship ceremony Sept. 14 in the lobby of the headquarters building at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

The selection process for the first inductees involved a 10-person panel, made up of a cross section of the command, to include Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Olvera, and, if needed as a tie-breaker, Maj. Gen. K.K. Chinn, ARSOUTH commanding general. The committee then reviewed the biographical packets of nine different candidates.

In order to select these candidates, Hampton researched the past 70 years of Army South history, poring over the contributions of the hero-selects to determine the packets for final review by the committee.

The committee voted to induct Lt. Gen. Edward Brooks, Maj. Gen. George Mabry Jr., the Alamo Scouts (officially named the Sixth Army Special Reconnaissance Unit), Gen. Walter Krueger and Col. Ralph Puckett.

“Nothing is more important than honoring those that went before us in peace and in war. Events like this remind us of our rich history,” Chinn said.

During the ceremony, the inductees were hailed as creating the legacy that makes the U.S. the global superpower that it is today. The family members of two of the inductees were present and agreed with Chinn as they spoke in fond remembrance of their loved ones and shared with the crowd special moments about the honorees.

The great-grandson to Gen. Walter Krueger, Grayson Kirtland, spoke of how his great-grandfather would always write him a letter and send him a present every year for his birthday. Upon finding one such correspondence he lamented on how Krueger expressed his desire for him to, “do well in school and grow up into a strong courageous man.”

“To him, it was the officers and especially the enlisted man who deserved all of the credit for the 6th Army’s success,” Kirtland said. “His love of the enlisted man came naturally as he was a private when he joined the Army and climbed the ranks to four-star general.”

The daughter of Capt. Howell S. Kopp, Jeannie Kopp Heffern, spoke with the assistance of her husband about her father who was a member of the Alamo Scouts. The Alamo Scouts were elite six-to seven-man teams who performed 110 known missions behind enemy lines without having a single man killed or captured including the liberation of two prisoner camps.

Prior to his last mission, Kopp penned a letter to his family. Kopp, (along with 16 of his men) boarded the *USS Seawolf*, a submarine directed to run silent. Refusing to break radio



Maj. Gen. K.K. Chinn and the family members of two of the inductees, Gen. Walter Krueger and Capt. Howell Kopp (Alamo Scouts), along with retired Col. Ralph Puckett, cut the cake at the inaugural Hall of Honor ceremony Sept. 14 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

silence, they were mistaken as a Japanese submarine and assumed destroyed by friendly fire in a tragic accident, recognized by the U.S. government.

Retired Col. Ralph Puckett concluded the ceremony, accepting his induction into the Hall of Honor by making it very clear that his successes laid entirely on the shoulders of the Soldiers who served with him.

“The real credit should go to the NCOs and officers that led the way,” Puckett said. “I want to give credit to the 8th Army Ranger Company, service troops and the Escuela de Lanceros. I was proud to be a member of the Lancero team, where the word impossible does not exist.”

“Soldiering is an affair of the heart, it’s that spirit and fundamental commitment to volunteer that makes our inductees the best in the world then and continue to be the best in the world today,” Chinn said.

Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation Membership

The Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation offers three types of memberships to those who wish to support the organization. Annual dues are \$25.00, 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, a newsletter, our new RECON magazine, and attendance to any of the ASHF events. **We offer a 3 and 5 year membership. Get a three-year membership for \$70.00 (\$5.00 savings) or a 5-year membership for \$115.00 (\$10.00 savings).**

Select from the appropriate membership category.

Gold Membership – Alamo Scouts, ASTC Graduates, Staff & Overhead Personnel.

Silver Membership – Spouses & direct relatives of Scouts.

Bronze Membership – All others who wish to support the ASHF.

1-Year Membership - \$25

3-Year Membership - \$70

5-Year Membership - \$115

For all memberships, please provide your full name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address. If applying for Silver Membership Plan, please indicate the name of and relationship to an Alamo Scout. **Also, print (clearly) how you want your name to appear on your membership card(s).**

Make check payable to: **ALAMO SCOUTS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION, INC.**

Mail your check to:

**Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 15303
Clearwater, FL 33766-5303**

You can now pay your membership dues online using a credit card or PayPal. Go To:
<http://www.alamoscouts.org/membership/>

Walter O. Pierce

Surprise Visit

Shortly before dawn on 29 February 1944, Lt. Walter O. Pierce guided his PBY Catalina flying boat into the glassy waters off the southern tip of Los Negros Island, part of the Admiralty Islands some 200 miles north and east of New Guinea. Allied capture of the Admiralties was essential to the reduction of the Japanese stronghold at Rabaul, and the final step in General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines. Pierce's job was simple; land a few hundred yards south of the island, extract a six-man reconnaissance team of Alamo Scouts that had been inserted a day prior to collect information on enemy defenses, and then deliver them to MacArthur's flotilla, which was sailing toward the island.



Pilot Walter Pierce (back 3rd from left) and his PBY crew recovered McGowen Team from the Alamo Scouts first operational mission.

As the morning sun cracked the inky darkness, Pierce and his crew waited anxiously for McGOWEN Team to reach the aircraft aboard their tiny rubber raft. Pierce considered the possibilities. Had enemy spotters detected the landing? If so, why hadn't they opened fire? Or were they simply waiting for the recon team to board? Pierce couldn't be sure. In any case, he kept the engines running. Finally, he spotted the team rowing toward the extraction point. Finally, they arrived, and his crew quickly pulled the scouts into the side door one by one. Pierce revved the engines and the plane jerked to the right and a port side propeller clipped McGowen's cap as he was being pulled into the plane. The

rubber boat was lost, but no matter, all Scouts were safely aboard. The young pilot quickly took off and delivered the team to Langemak Bay, where McGowen was taken by PT boat to report to Major General William Chase, the force commander, aboard his destroyer. The information obtained by the Alamo Scouts helped pave the way for MacArthur to change the reconnaissance-in-force to an invasion force. The rest is history.



Lance Zedric and Walter O. Pierce.

At 98 years of age, Pierce is the only living witness to that first Alamo Scouts mission. His singular experience as the pilot of the craft, and his eyewitness account of the events that occurred that day, are of invaluable historical importance. On 23 July 2017, Alamo Scouts historian Lance Zedric and his wife Ching, and daughter Ariel, visited Pierce at the New Hampshire Veterans Home in Belmont, New Hampshire.



Alamo Scouts returning to the PBY.

"My family and I happened to be touring nearby Dartmouth College, and I thought it the perfect time to

pay Walt a visit,” said Lance. “Erika Willette, Walt’s former caretaker, contacted me on Facebook a couple years ago stating that Walt was doing well, and last summer when we knew we would be in New Hampshire, I asked if she would help arrange a visit.”



Lance surprises Walt.

“When Walt went to the Veterans Home the two most valued things he brought were a picture of his PBY and Lance’s book, *Silent No More*,” said Erika. “But it was difficult for Walt to adjust from living in his beautiful home to living



Back row L-R: Erika Willette, Laura Arsenault (Erika’s mother), Gary Cartier (Walt’s stepson). Front row: Lance, Walt, and Cara (VA home recreation director).



John McGowen on Los Negros Island.

at a nursing home. When Lance approached me about his trip, I just knew that’s exactly what Walt needed.”

“Erika was fantastic,” said Lance. “She and Walt’s stepson, Gary, didn’t tell Walt that we were coming, so our visit was a total surprise. We were waiting for him in the lobby when he finished lunch, and he was stunned—in a good way! The staff graciously provided a large conference room for us, and we were joined by Erika and her mother and a few people from the staff. Walt and I just talked while Ching and Ariel filmed the entire meeting.”

“I got to sit and listen to Lance ask him about his past,” beamed Erika. “It was beautiful watching the two of them connect and bring history alive—an experience that I am forever grateful for and will never forget.”

“McGowen was pissed off at me,” chuckled Walt, recalling the harrowing pick up of the Alamo Scouts that day in early 1944, “but I had to keep the motor running in case we were attacked. Everything turned out okay. I have the greatest respect and admiration for the Alamo Scouts. I was just doing my job. World War II was an unforgettable period in my life, and getting to share my experience all these years later is special.”

“The pure joy and happiness I saw in Walt’s face that day was beyond words!” said Erika. “I feel as though that day was a turning point for Walt. I no longer see him acting sad. He’s always smiling and sharing his book and story with the other veterans—only now he has even more to tell!”

And we all look forward to that!” Thank you, Walt!

25	B-25	—	3.1	I	"	1ST LT. FRYE T-124 PILOT AND NAVIGATOR	3--	+ 2nd Lt. McGowan USA	RECCO. HOP TO LOS NEGROS IS. (ADMIRALTY GROUP) OVER MONTE AIR STRIP - LOOKING FOR SUITABLE POY-5 LANDING AREA TO PUT RAIDERS ASHORE
25	PBY-5	08497	6.0	M	"	ENS. BOWEN " SNEDDEN			2ND LT. MCGOWEN USN. FINCHAM TO ADMIRALTY IS. UNABLE TO LAND ARMY SCOUTS - RADAR OUT - RETURNED TO TENDER
27	PBY-5	08491	5.8	M	"	"			6 ARMY SCOUTS - NO COVERAGE LANDED FINCHAM.
29	PBY-5	08497	8.8	IJ	"	ENS. SNEDDEN			AIR SEA RESCUE TO ADMIRALTY IS. - SEARCH FOR THREE P-51A DOWN OFF N. COAST OF NEW BRITAIN - SIGHTED NOTHING 1200 HRS
THIS MO. 125.4									
Total time to date, 1992.32									
						10-18014	★ = COMBAT MISSION		
							10-18016 GPO		

Log book of Walter Pierce. Note the first three entries.

Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame Induction

Alamo Scout Tom Rounsaville

By Linda Nellist

Driving into Norman, Oklahoma on a windy but bright and sunny fall day, I was pleased to represent the Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation (ASHF) at the 18th Annual Induction Ceremony for the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame held on October 21, 2017. Alamo Scout Col. Tom Rounsaville, a distinguished member of the Alamo Scouts, along with nine other native sons, was being honored. It was a night I'll always remember.



Inductee, Col. Tom J. Rounsaville, Alamo Scout Team Leader, 1919 – 1997

The idea for traveling to Norman arose when I read an ASHF Facebook post by Tom Brown, nephew and namesake of Col. Rounsaville. My father-in-law, Bill Nellist, was one of Col. Rounsaville's best friends. They were classmates during Alamo Scouts training and were each team leaders with significant missions credited to their teams, including the famous "Raid on Cabanatuan" in the Philippines in January 1945.

Although I never had the opportunity to meet the colonel, I'd heard the stories over the years and respected the fact that he and Bill were lifelong friends. Their friendship of 53 years began with Alamo Scouts training in 1944, was tempered by the life and death situations they shared in WWII, and ended with Bill's death in 1997.

The Master of Ceremonies, OMHF President Col. Jerry Shiles, US Army (Ret.), introduced inductees and family representatives. I had the privilege of sitting at the table with the immediate family of Tom Rounsaville, including Glo

and Eddy Ann Rounsaville (brother and sister-in-law); Paul Rounsaville (nephew); Marilyn R. Giles (sister); Ferne R. Brown (sister); and Tom Brown (nephew).



Col. Paul Rounsaville, (nephew), accepts on behalf of his uncle.

Kevin Offel, the OMHF Ambassador, and Col. Paul Rounsaville, US Army (Ret.), accepted the award plaque, symbolic medal, and framed portrait as representatives of the 66 family members attending from Oklahoma, Tennessee, North Carolina, California, and other states. From the posting of the colors to the final moments of the impressive presentations on stage, full honors for the inductees were displayed throughout the evening. But the ceremony wasn't the only memorable event that night.



Col. Paul Rounsaville, (nephew), and Linda Nellist, (ASHF secretary)

A tornado warning and subsequent evacuation of hundreds from the ballroom in the middle of the ceremony added to the drama, but nothing stops the military from

accomplishing its mission. Incredibly, the proceedings resumed after only a 20-minute delay! Fortunately, our hotel was spared damage and the event continued amidst ongoing emergency alert messages arriving on every mobile phone.

Despite the weather, the patriotic theme and heartfelt emotions of the evening ensured that everyone present would treasure the connections they felt to the honorees who served in the many branches of military from 1940-2016. I deeply appreciate their service to our country and am proud to have witnessed the ceremony honoring one of our own Alamo Scouts, Tom Rounsaville.

See more of the ceremony at www.okmhf.org



The Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame

Whereas, Colonel Tom J. Rounsaville was born 23 July 1919 near Durant, OK, and grew up in Atoka, OK. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1940, assigned to the 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. He was selected to Officer Candidate School in 1942; and,

Whereas, as a 1st Lieutenant, he was assigned to the 11th Airborne Division in the SW Pacific. Rounsaville volunteered and was selected to the Sixth Army's new intelligence collection group called Alamo Scouts. For action on 4-5 October 1944, near Cape Oransbari, he received the Bronze Star for heroism with Scout teams that rescued 66 Dutch and Javanese held prisoner by the Japanese. From 21 November to 12 December 1944 Rounsaville would be awarded his second Bronze Star for gallantry on Masbate Island, Philippines; and,

Whereas, in January 1945 the Scouts were part of a Ranger Force that liberated 511 American and Allied prisoners of war, including survivors of the Bataan Death March, near Cabanatuan, Luzon. After a 25-mile night march, an assault was launched with all guards killed. The prisoners were led three miles to safety, with many in poor physical condition being hand-carried; and,

Whereas, while en route, the rescuers encountered and repulsed over 800 Japanese. For their heroic actions, members of the Alamo Scouts and Ranger Force were awarded the Silver Star. The raid is memorialized in books and a movie--The Great Raid. In total, the Rounsaville team would spend 153 days behind enemy lines by the war's end; and,

Whereas, he continued to serve in direct combat during the Korea War. During the Vietnam conflict, he used his knowledge of jungle warfare to design realistic stateside training. In 1966 he received the Legion of Merit Award as Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force 11, U.S. Strike Command; and,

Whereas, his additional awards include another Silver Star, two more Bronze Stars, the Joint Service Commendation, Purple Heart, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Korean Service Medal, and Philippine Liberation Medal. In 1988 the Scouts were awarded the Special Forces Tab for their services in WW II; and,

Whereas, Rounsaville died 14 April 1999 and is buried at Fort Benning, Georgia, Post Cemetery; and,

NOW THEREFORE:

Colonel Tom J. Rounsaville, US Army

is hereby inducted into the

Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame

21 October 2017



Mary Fallin
Governor,
State of Oklahoma



[Signature]
Secretary,
Oklahoma Veterans Affairs



[Signature]
President,
Oklahoma Military Heritage Foundation

Pawn Stars and a Patch

CAST & CREW

The famous Alamo Scouts shoulder patch has been getting a lot more attention recently thanks to Christin Cicippio-Smith, granddaughter of Alamo Scout medic Dominic Cicippio. In Episode 2 of Season 15 of *Pawn Stars*, the hit History Channel television show, Christin walked into Rick Harrison's Gold & Silver Pawn Shop in Las Vegas looking to sell her grandfather's patch. The country was watching.



The Alamo Scouts patch of PVT Dominic Cicippio that was featured on a recent episode of Pawn Stars.

For those who haven't seen the program, the premise is simple. People bring in collectibles and other items to the pawn shop looking to sell them. The owners ask a selling price and offer a little background. The owners provide additional history on the item to make the show more interesting, then counter with a lower offer. The two parties haggle. Then a deal is struck—or not. It all seems rather simple on television, but how does one get on the show in the first place?

"I applied to *Pawn Stars* on-line in October 2016," explained Robert Cicippio, Christin's father. "I did not expect to receive a response. I was surprised when the production company contacted me just a week later. They were very interested."

"When we found out that the show wanted us, we decided to make it a family vacation," added Christin. "The filming took place in January on Friday the 13th. It was the last filming of the season."

"My wife Debby, and I, along with Christin's husband John, son Bradley (age 5), and daughter Lauren (age 3), traveled together to Las Vegas," said Robert. "It was a wonderful family experience. The trip provided me with the opportunity to tell my

family about all the Alamo Scouts reunions I attended with my father, especially the Las Vegas reunion at the Palace Station."

But more about Dominic later. Back to the show!

QUIET ON THE SET!

"I had not been on a television set and nothing was planned," said Christin. "We were just told what time to show up at the store. It was much smaller than it appears on television. We spent about four hours there."

Enter Rick Harrison, the show's bald front man and son of Richard Harrison (aka the Old Man), the grouchy founder of the pawn shop. Rick is an avid reader with a strong interest in history and handles most of the interesting buys on the show. Rick's son, Corey, and his dimwit friend, Austin "Chumlee" Russell, make up the on-air sales team of the show that debuted in 2009.

"The show is 100 percent real," said Christin. "I



Christin Cicippio Smith and her family outside Gold & Silver Pawn Shop in Las Vegas.

was told how to act, but not what to say or do. They talk with you and let you know what's going on, but I didn't talk to Rick at all until it was time to film."



Christin Cicippio (left) and Rick Harrison negotiate on Pawn Stars.

"At the filming, Debby and I are in the background," added Robert. "John and the kids waited in back because there are rules about children being filmed. There was no interaction between us and the Pawn Shop staff before filming. The production company people were professional and really good with the children."

LIGHTS - CAMERA - ACTION!

Finally, it was go time. Christin approached the sales counter and showed the patch to Rick.

"What do we have here?" he asked.

"I have a World War II patch. This is an Alamo Scouts patch."

"Oh," exclaimed Rick. "Where in the world did you get this?"

"My grandfather was an Alamo Scout. This was handed down to me from my father."

Christin sweetened the pot by showing her grandfather's original ASTC Diploma.

"This is cool!" gushed Rick like a kid at Christmas. "They were like Navy SEALs, commandos, Special Forces all wrapped up in one...Probably the most impressive thing about these guys is that in over 100 missions no one got killed. I don't know if it's the most collectible patch from World War II, but it's one of them—and you're looking to sell it?"

"I'm ready to sell it," affirmed Christin.

"How much do you want for it?"

"Sixty-five hundred dollars," said Christin flatly, asking considerably more than the patch's current value.

Rick sighed. The figure stopped him in his tracks, but the show had to go on.

"It's one of those things where a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," he continued, educating the television audience on the finer points of the unauthorized shoulder sleeve insignia designed by another camp medic, Harry Golden. "This is one of the most sought-after World War II patches—and also one of the most faked. I know that that patch is one of the Holy Grails of World War II patches."

We know, too. Only 440 were made by N.S. Meyer Company in late 1944. But wait, there's more!

Rick made his move. "What's your best price on this?"

"Six-thousand," Christin retorted.

"I'm thinking more like twenty-five hundred," countered the host. "Your best price is...?"

Christin retreats, "Five thousand."

Rick grimaces, and like he often does, excuses himself to call in Mark Hall Patton, the familiar bearded expert on everything history and the local administrator of



Christin and her son, Bradley.

the Clark County Museum. Patton examines the patch and verifies that he's 80 percent sure it's authentic. Rick accepts his word.

"The expert was there already," laughed Christin. "That was the television part of the story. He was just sitting off-camera waiting. Other than that, everything was real."

"I'll tell you what," said Rick, "I'll give you three-thousand for it."

"I can't at that price," Christin retorted.

"Okay—thirty-two hundred?"

Christin wobbles, "Forty-eight hundred."

Rick nods and extends his hand. "If you change your mind give me a call."

NO SALE THIS TIME.

THAT'S A WRAP!

"Rick really did want to buy the patch," smiled Christin, "but he couldn't pay what I wanted. He said off camera that if I ever wanted to sell it, to give him a call."

"I would love to have sold it," she said afterwards, "but part of me really wanted to keep it. I didn't expect Rick to buy it at the price I asked."

Ten long months after the filming, the episode finally aired.

"There weren't a lot of conditions," added Christin, "but one was that I didn't tell anyone if they bought the patch or not. And the producers didn't keep us informed as to when the program would air. So much time had passed that I hadn't thought about it much, then a friend calls me and says, 'you're on TV!' It's something I'll never forget. It was a wonderful experience. Really awesome!"

STAR OF THE SHOW

Rick Harrison and Christin may have appeared on camera, but Dominic Cicippio and his patch were the stars of the show. A little rundown on Dominic's service: he enlisted in the U.S. Army in Allentown, PA on 3 September 1942, and following basic training, arrived in the Southwest Pacific on 8 February 1943 with the 24th Infantry Division. He joined the Alamo Scouts Training Center at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea in July 1944 and served with the Alamo Scouts in the Philippines, serving at the ASTC on Leyte and on Luzon. On 19 January 1945, Dominic rejoined the 24th Division where he was wounded in action and awarded the Purple Heart. He returned to the U.S. on 23 July 1945 and was discharged on 21 November 1945 at Camp Upton, NY, having served 38 months and 19 days in uniform. Dominic was a long-time member of the Alamo Scouts Association and attended several of reunions.

"When I was a boy, I wore a jacket with my father's Alamo Scout patch on one shoulder and the 24th Division patch on the other," recalled Robert. "Many men recognized the 24th Division patch and asked for my father's name. Next, they would ask about the Alamo Scouts patch, none recognized it or knew of the unit. How could a ten-year-old explain what the patch symbolizes?"

Years later, Robert came to fully understand his father's service and his deep connection with the Alamo Scouts.



PVT Dominic Cicippio in 1945 wearing his Alamo Scouts patch on the left breast of his uniform. Only two photos have been discovered displaying the patch worn on the breast.

"Dad and I also attended reunions in Asheville, Pensacola and Houston," said Robert. "The people we met at the reunions were welcoming, kind, and some of the most interesting individuals I've ever met. These reunion trips allowed me to share precious time with my father during the last years of his life."

"The patch belonged to my grandfather, and if I didn't sell it, I would just keep it for my son," said Christin. "Now he's interested in the patch and thinks it's really cool."

Although Christin's son never knew his great-grandfather, he now has his patch—a storied and lasting link to him and to a group of other brave men who served nobly in the defining event of the 20th Century. A link made of cloth; strengthened through love of family and time. One that hopefully, he, too, will someday pass down.

Author's note: I had the pleasure of meeting Dominic at the ASA reunion in 2001. He was a gentle, soft-spoken man who seemed to enjoy each second of being with his war-time friends. Dominic passed away in 2004, but his service with the Alamo Scouts and his legacy remains secure. A special thanks to Robert and Christin for sharing their story with the world.



Group photo taken at the Alamo Scouts Association reunion in Pensacola, Florida in 2001. Dominic Cicippio is 2nd from the left.

ALAMO SCOUTS TRAINING CENTER
APO 442

10 March 1945

Dear Sgt Hard:

Yes, it is a personal letter to you, even though it is mimeographed. It had to be, because it is going out to more than 50 other people -- all of them former Alamo Scouts, staff and overhead.

Sometime in April we expect to get the long awaited Alamo Scout shoulder patches. They are being made by N. S. Moyer, Inc., New York, and will be rayon embroidery. The design, if you aren't familiar with it, is circular, a blocked-out Indian Scout head with the old Alamo building as its background. Around the top of the circle are the words, "Alamo Scouts" and around the bottom, the words, "Sixth Army". The patch is in six colors, predominantly red, white and blue.

Since we are having a limited number made, the individual coat per patch is high -- 67 cents, but we raised a little money here and there and have the cost cut down to 50 cents each. Probably there will have to be a limit of ten per man. If you would like some of these patches, please send your money order for whatever number you want and the address to which you want them sent. We'll get them out to you as soon as they arrive. They can be worn on the right shoulder or as a breast patch.

Things are going fine with the Scouts. Joe Johnson has been rotated -- made sergeant. We expect to have all sergeants or better and some of the promotions have already started coming through. Hall, Moon and Ray have been commissioned and proceeding them on commissions were "Red" Roberts who is back in the states, and Chanley. Major Niles is top hand now and such old timers as Bock, Myers, Sukup, Dove, Sumner, Littlefield, Thompson and Stuntz are still on hand. Sombar and McGowan are due to rotate very soon. You'll find an article on the scouts in Saturday Evening Post -- soon -- watch for it. And send your money order.

Lewis B. Hochstrasser
 LEWIS B. HOCHSTRASSER,
 Captain, Cavalry,
 Adjutant.

Letter written by Lewis Hochstrasser, ASTC executive officer, to Harold Hard of Rounsaville Team.

In the Beginning

By Lance Zedric

Everything has a beginning, and so did the Alamo Scouts. Yeah, yeah, yeah, everyone knows that they were formed by Lt. General Walter Krueger on 28 November 1943 on Fergusson Island, New Guinea to perform raider and reconnaissance work in the Southwest Pacific, and to be the eyes and ears of his Sixth Army-- then code-named Alamo Force--to keep out from under the control of the Australian ground forces commander Sir Gen. Thomas Blamey. Some know that the Alamo Scouts were a direct descendent of the Naval Amphibious Scouts-- a joint Army-Navy unit formed on 14 July 1943 to collect information on the enemy. But did you know that three operational Amphibious Scouts and one support officer from Sixth Army units played key roles in helping train the Alamo Scouts? Lieutenants Milton Beckworth, Daily Gambill, Henry Chalko, and Fred Sukup please take a bow!

“Three officers from the 32d Infantry Division were selected if we would volunteer,” said Beckworth. “All three of us jumped at the opportunity...It was a Navy unit under Naval Intelligence, Headquarters, Seventh Fleet. We were hidden away near a secluded spot near Cairns, Australia for about six or eight weeks of training getting ready for a mission in the Gasmata area of New

by Naval Intelligence, then we were put aboard what appeared to be a little luxury craft. The skipper was given his instructions; first, to feed us anything and to secure anything we needed from the quartermaster for food; and, to take us anywhere we wanted to go except Australia. We stayed aboard this craft for four or five days until we got tired of this. We were aware of Sixth Army wanting what information we had. When we finally got back to our base camp, I believe Gen. Krueger made up his mind and said, “heck with this nonsense, I’ll form my own intelligence unit!” Of course, when he pulled the Army officers out of there the Navy did the same, and the Australians did the same. That was pretty much it. The Alamo Scouts took over the same campsite that the Navy had used. I didn’t even have to move out of my tent.”



Milton Beckworth

Britain Island north of New Guinea...the mission was a fiasco--we liked to have starved! It was an eleven-day mission that lasted 22 days. The last eleven days we were eating what coconuts we could snatch from the Japs. Fortunately, we were picked up just before we made up our minds to go inland and survive as best we could before the invasion. We were picked up by a PT boat, taken back directly to Milne Bay for debriefing



Milton Beckworth's ribbon array.

When given the choice of returning to the 32nd Division or remaining with the Alamo Scouts, Beckworth and the others chose to stay. “I had a hand in just about everything that went on in camp,” Beckworth recalled. “My specialty was jungle survival, but I participated in everything that went on--either

planned it or taught it. For a year, Col. Bradshaw wouldn't let me out of the camp! Finally, when we got to the Philippines, I got to participate in some of the activities. Essentially, all the things that we [Amphib Scouts] did wrong, we passed on to the Alamo Scouts so they could do them right."

Beckworth enlisted in the Army in 1937, and was at Wheeler Field on Hawaii when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He then attended OCS and returned to the Pacific for the remainder of war. Later, he fought in the Korean War and retired as a captain in 1957 after 22 years of military service. He died in Orlando, Florida on November 8, 2007 at age 91.



Daily Gambill and Henry Chalko

Fellow infantryman, Daily Gambill, a native of Independence, Virginia, graduated from North Carolina State with a degree in textile engineering six months after the bombing at Pearl Harbor. After completing training, he deployed to New Guinea and was wounded at Buna. Following convalescence in Australia, he joined the Amphibious Scouts and led a mission into Cape Gloucester on New Britain from 24 September through 3 October 1943, for which he was awarded the Soldier's Medal. He served on the Alamo Scouts Training Center staff from December of that year through March 1944, and returned to the states for discharge in spring 1945 due to malaria.

Gambill soon married and raised two children. According to his family, he was a gentle man who rarely spoke of the war. He passed away in Allegheny, NC on December 11, 1991. He was 77.

Henry Chalko was a brilliant enigma, and little is known about him. He entered Harvard in 1931 and graduated in 1935 with a degree in business. The 32-year-old chain-smoking native of Plainville, CT was married and divorced prior to the war, and was known in camp for his intellect, cynicism and glib humor. He was the only one of the Amphibious Scouts to lead an Alamo Scouts mission, that being on Ali Island on 24-

26 April 1944 as part of the Hollandia Operation. The next month he returned to the states on rotation.

Chalko remained in the Army until poor health forced him out in 1948. He then worked on Wall Street as a security analyst and wrote a weekly market letter that was broadcast on radio in New York City. During a visit to his hometown in the spring of 1968, he suffered a massive coronary. Although he was unable to return to work, he continued to work from home on an original theory related to change to business cycles before succumbing to congestive heart failure in September 1969 at the age of 55.



Fred Sukup

Fred Sukup came to the Scouts from the 2nd Engineer Support Brigade and was in charge of the boats used in training. He remained with the Scouts until the end of the war, and then attended the University of Michigan and earned a master's degree in education. Between 1948 and 1950, he coached Milan High School (Michigan) to state championships in basketball and track before entering private business. He passed away in 1981.

Now that everyone has a basic idea of the Amphibious Scouts contribution to the Alamo Scouts, it's a perfect time to quote Winston Churchill, "This is not the beginning of the end. It is not even the end of the beginning." However, it is a good start to understanding some of the incredible men who were both.



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Hybrid Alamo Scouts insignia taken from the original drawing by Harry Golden, and the H.S. Meyer's patch. Created in Adobe Illustrator by Russ Blaise.