

# Operation: Sweet Appreciation Sparks Unexpected Reunion

A recent internet search by U.S. Marine Veteran and archivist Rick LeBlanc of Florida turned up an interesting result. Mr. LeBlanc was searching "Vietnam Veterans" and his search results eventually led him to UAW Local 1050's "Operation: Sweet Appreciation" webpage. He noticed the U.S. Marine T-shirts in the pictures and recognized one of those 1050 members. After 42 years, Rick recognized a team member from his Vietnam CAP team; our own Reginald Childs. Mr. LeBlanc contacted Chris Marotta, President UAW Local 1050, to verify his instinct, and the reunion was on.

USMC CAP (Combined Action Program) teams consisted of 8 Marines and 1 Navy Corpsman which were inserted "to occupy and control areas uncovered by



"Home of the Forgotten" CAP 1-3-9 cir. 1969

the forward movement of the US and ARVN units and to assist in Revolutionary Development efforts within these areas." In other words, after an area was deemed "secure", a CAP team was embedded in a village, worked with and trained the local militia, assisted the village and ran combat operations on their own. CAP teams also implemented a South Vietnamese initiative called "Chieu Hoi", which sought out North Vietnamese combatants and their supporters to defect to the U.S. campaign in Vietnam. Reggie joined the CAP effort which consisted of 30 days of in-country training.

Reggie was inserted into the village of Anphong in the Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam. "It was so far out that trucks couldn't reach us, and if it rained, choppers wouldn't come...so you didn't get supplied... we were the farthest from supply." He laughs when he says "That's why we called it The Home of the Forgotten".

When asked what his CAP team did from day to day, Reggie related "We set up two ambushes per night, L-shaped and (or) U-shaped. During the day we patrolled 1-2 clicks from the village."

Reggie related a bond with his fellow Marine James "Sam" Parker. "I owe my life to him. He was

a southern white kid from Mississippi, the South, and I was a black kid...we were opposites. In one situation (firefight) he could have left me, but he chose to fight our way out with mortally wounded..."



L-R front: Rick Leblanc, Navy Corpsman "Doc" Clodfelter, S/Sgt. Mike Murphy, back row: James "Sam" Parker and Reginald Childs. USMC CAP Vietnam

## Commendations

For his meritorious Service, Reginald Childs was awarded the Bronze Star, a Presidential Citation, a Navy Commendation and various medals from the Vietnamese Government. Mr. Childs was reluctant to talk about his decorations, and attributed it to his Unit: The 1st Combined Action Group, 3rd Platoon, 9th CAP; "CAP 1-3-9".

Back in the world, Reggie earned an Associate's Degree in Labor Relations from Cuyahoga Community College, and is now married. Reggie is a 2nd Shift Chief

By Tim Yody,  
Photos by Reginald Childs

Steward in the Skilled Trades Classification. He has 11 years at Alcoa, and is an asset to the Union Local, and Alcoa Cleveland Works. "This is overwhelming to me" Reggie says about this reunion. It speaks to the bond between our Brothers in arms who've fought in the jungles and deserts of the globe for our great Nation. Job well done.

Operation: Sweet Appreciation is sponsored by the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO) - a Girl Scouts Gift of Caring service project, which sends Girl Scout Cookies to U.S. troops overseas. Operation: Sweet Appreciation sends "a taste of home" to U.S. troops deployed overseas. Local Girl Scouts team up with their cookie customers to send boxes of Girl Scout cookies to service men and women far from home.



L-R: UAW Local 1050 Veterans Cmte. Jesse Deel, Bill Lococo, Reggie Childs, & GSNEO Reps. at "Operation Sweet Appreciation" 2009.

This report is based on interview of Reginald Childs and was reproduced with his approval. Photos are courtesy of Reginald Childs. 1. <http://capmarine.com/>