



Daniel Penzien <secretary@vvafla.org>

Vietnam Memorial Wall of Faces Project Update and Path Forward

1 message

Thomstatter, John <john.thomstatter@vva1036.org>

Tue, Mar 7, 2017 at 2:03 PM

To: Cydney Webster <cydneywebster@semtribe.com>, Dan Penzien <Secretary@vvafla.org>, Forest Hope <foresthope@usa.net>, Glayron Faries <glayron@gmail.com>, Hank Bornemann <hbhaggis@bellsouth.net>, Jerry Kervin <Jkerry755@aol.com>, Johnny Byard <jbyard1@comcast.net>, Luis LaLama <lalamaluis@aol.com>, Marc Goodell <vicepresident@vva25.org>, Pete Wagner <Glendalepete@yahoo.com>, Pete Wagner <pete.wagner@vva1036.org>, Ray Breault <Ray.breault@comcast.net>, Ray Miller <rmiller157@brighthouse.com>, Steve Jones <stevevet@aol.com>, art@artyeamer.com, lbrumon@comcast.net, danthunt@me.com, pretext@bellsouth.net, steveg@cfl.rr.com, c4him2@centurylink.net

Cc: Paul Hendee <phendee@att.net>, Craig Tonjes <ctonjes@vva.org>

Group,

It has been a year since we started our focused effort to complete the search for Florida's missing soldiers' photos for the Vietnam Memorial Wall of Faces Project. During the past year we have located and submitted over 400 Soldier's photos. We only have 366 more Florida soldiers' photos to find.

The attached Excel spreadsheet is a summary of the remaining soldiers needed (sorted alphabetically by County and soldier's last name). Some soldiers photos, found in the past week, are highlighted in green. Over the past year we have received a significant amount of assistance from County Public Libraries, Genealogy and Historical Societies. Don't forget to make use of these valuable search resources. Many Marine photos have been found by submitting requests to the St. Louis Government Personnel Records Center.

For the hard to find photos we are building an active research file to reduce redundant search efforts. The attached research files for Gary Gillis and Horacio Fonseca-Vargas are examples.

Thanks for your continued effort in support of the Vietnam Memorial Wall of Faces Project. Based on past performance we should be able to find the majority of the remaining missing Florida soldier photos during this year, 2017.

—
John Thomstatter,
 Secretary
 Vietnam Veterans
 of America
 Chapter 1036
 814-241-8117
john.thomstatter@vva1036.org

3 attachments

 **AA-Florida-Missing-Soldiers-Photos-March-1-2017-S-Delp.xlsx**
60K

 **GARY-GILLIS-Okeechobee-Co-FL-Research-Worksheet.pdf**
535K

 **Horacio-A-Fonseca-Vargas-Monroe County-FL-Worksheet.pdf**
580K

January 17, 2017

Soldier's Photo Wanted !

GARY GILLIS

Date of Birth: 7/22/1946 in Dekalb, Nashoba Co., Mississippi
Date of Casualty: 4/7/1969
Home of Record: OKEECHOBEE
County of Record: OKEECHOBEE COUNTY
State: FL
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: SSGT
ID No: 14967290
MOS/RATING: 11E40: Armor Crewman
Unit: M COMPANY, 3RD SQUADRON, 11TH ARMORED
CAVALRY, USARV
Burial: **Non-Cemetery Burial**
Specifically: Burial location unknown



Background Info:

www.coffeltdatabase.com

Next of Kin: Mrs. Bonnie R Burns (Mother) 26836 East 9th St. Highland CA 92346
Mr. Lonzie C Gillis (Father) 2156 Northwest 86th Terrace, Miami, FL 33147

www.Findagrave.com

Record added: Feb 28, 2012

Find A Grave Memorial# 85941183

Mother Bonnie Ruth Fleming Burns

Birth: Feb. 3, 1924 - De Kalb, Kemper County, Mississippi, USA

Death: Sep. 13, 1998, Lucerne Valley, San Bernardino County CA

AKA Bonnie Fleming Gillis.

Family links:

Parents:

Fredrick Allen Fleming (1900 - 1977) Rosa M Wilson Fleming (1907 - 1959)

Children: Gary Wayne Gillis (1946 - 1969)*

Sibling: Fred Wilson Fleming (1922 - 1980)* Bonnie Ruth Fleming Burns (1924 - 1998)

*Calculated relationship

Burial: Tucker Cemetery, Cleveland, Kemper County, Mississippi, USA

Research Done:

Okeechobee Historical Society (Magi Cable 863 763-8667 - cable.magi@gmail.com) and Dan Hunt (danthunt@me.com - 863 447-3662) VVA Chapter 1086 president could not locate photo. No luck with Texas Tech Vietnam Center Archives, Carlisle Army Heritage Museum, Ft. Benning or Columbus, GA libraries.

Per "Seale, Colleen W" cwseale@uflib.ufl.edu email July 20, 2016, Gary's sister is Mrs. Edward Goggans (address unknown) Colleen provided newspaper clipping.

Contact: John Thomstatter, Secretary, VVA Chapter 1036, john.thomstatter@vva1036.org -
www.vva1036.org

January 17, 2017

Gary Gillis Killed In Action Near Saigon

Word has been received by the News that Sp/6 Gary Wayne Gillis, 22, was killed in action in Vietnam on April 7, 1969 by small arms fire near Saigon.

Gary was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Gillis, former residents of Okeechobee, who now reside in Miami.

Gary entered the Army on June 29, 1966. He received his basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was there until September 3, 1966.

From September 17, 1966 until November 14, 1966 he was stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky where he received Armored training. He left Fort Knox immediately after this additional instruction for Fulda, Germany where he spent 17 months with the occupational forces.

On May 1, 1968 he was ordered to Vietnam where he was officially stationed near Saigon, but since he was thought they would like an Armored Specialist, he traveled from one

with the National Chapels Mortuary in charge of arrangements.

Pallbearers for Mrs. Boromei were Mr. Wallace Hawk, Mr. Frank Altobello, Mr. John Ed Burdeshaw, Mr. Larry Markham, Mr. Curtiss Kicifter and Mr. Albert Boromei.

Leon A. Roebuck, Sr.

Leon A. Roebuck, Sr. of Jupiter died Tuesday, April 15. He was 59 years old. Funeral was held Friday at 3 p.m. in Mizell-Faville-Zern Funeral Chapel, West Palm Beach, interment was in West Palm Beach.

He had been a resident of Okeechobee 23

small village to another.

While there, he received his promotion from Spec/5 to the rank of Spec/6.

Gary was slated to come home on June 19, 1969.

Mrs. Edward Goggans, sister of Gary, stated that the Gillis family lived in Okeechobee for 6 years prior to moving to Miami. She further stated that all of them, including Gary, loved Okeechobee and since many of their friends live here she thought they would like to know about Gary's untimely passing.

(http://www.ktroop.com/Reunions/Chicago%202008/2008_chicago_presidents_message.htm)

Contains a reference to a Scholarship donation:

The annual raffle drawing was held on Saturday evening. The 1st prize of \$1,000 went to Michael Tavares (M Co, 3/11) of Nicholasville, KY. Michael donated the \$1,000 prize money to the Scholarship fund in honor of his friend Gary Wayne Gillis, M CO, 3/11, KIA April 7, 1969. (Further investigation found Michael Tavares is now deceased)

No success with Carlisle Army Heritage Museum or Texas Tech Univ. Vietnam Archives.

Additional Suggested Search Actions:

- Best idea is to find a Ft Benning Basic Training Graduation book September 1966.
- Per "Seale, Colleen W" cwseale@uflib.ufl.edu email July 20, 2016, Gary's sister is Mrs. Edward Goggans - Per Joyce Young's research Sister's address could be Edward A Coggans, 2468 Gene Loper Dr., Decatur, MS 39327-8816 or Edward A Coggans 3415 Palm Rd., Lakeland, FL 33810-0765.

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- Check mother's genealogy on Familysearch – Bonnie Ruth Fleming Burns – (Birth: Feb. 3, 1924 - De Kalb, Kemper County, Mississippi – Death Sept. 13, 1998 - Burial: Tucker Cemetery, Cleveland, Kemper County, Mississippi)
- Could submit SF-180 Request but may not yield a photo.
- Debra Cason (dcason@myhlc.org) unsuccessfully searched Okeechobee HS Yearbooks but the 1966 yearbook was missing. Since Gary entered the military in June 1966, we should try to find the 1966 Yearbook.

1-5-2017 – No luck with Ancestry.com at the local Pinellas Library

1-17-17 Spoke to Diane at TogetherWeServed (TWS) and they did not have a photo.