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"Fare Fac - Say Do"

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The Fare Facs Gazette

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Spring 2009

Remembering Mike

by William Page Johnson, II



When the Vietnam War ended I was still in high school. I had many friends whose older brothers or fathers had served in Vietnam. As far as I knew, none of them had been killed or even wounded. Three decades later I found out that I was wrong.

Michael Arlin Balzer was born in Dayton, OH, on January 7, 1945 to Hal and Glendola "Glenn" Balzer. Mike spent much of his early childhood in Dayton. However, in 1958, he moved with his family to the Old Lee Hills neighborhood in what was then the Town of Fairfax. He lived at 3511 Brookwood Drive with his younger sister, Sharon and kid brother, Kim. Mike's dad, worked in the defense industry following his service in World War II. Mike's Mom, worked as a cashier at the local Safeway Food Store.

Mike attended Layton Hall Elementary (now Daniel's Run) and graduated from Fairfax High School in 1963. He loved cars and girls, (not necessarily in that order), and hanging out with what he called the "gang" at Tops Drive Inn at



1) Fairfax High School photo of Mike Balzer. 1963. 2) Silver Star posthumously awarded to Mike Balzer, 1967. 3) Grave in Arlington Cemetery. Photo credit 1) & 2) The Balzer Family. 3) Page Johnson.

Fairfax, Virginia, May 2009-

Greetings from the President--



During the past fall and spring we have seen important steps forward for historic resources in the City of Fairfax as well as some significant challenges. Last fall we had a successful opening of the Interpretive Center at Blenheim. Through the hard work of Chris Martin, the City's Director of Historic Resources and the entire staff we had a truly memorable daylong event attended by City and County officials this was capped off with a special presentation by James Robertson, a well known Civil War historian. The Interpretive Center has proven to be a popular site and I would encourage all to visit.

On the challenges side, the City is going through a difficult period with the struggling national economy. This has required that the resources available for Historic Resources be cut to the bone. HFCI appreciates the City's continuing commitment to preserving and enhancing the unique historic assets that we have here in the City of Fairfax. In the coming months HFCI will be examining how it can lend support to enhancing the historic features of the City. To do this we rely on your continuing commitment to our efforts.

We have had several exciting events so far this spring. On May 2, the Historic Homes Tour highlighted several beautifully decorated homes in the City. On May 13 our General Meeting at the Blenheim Interpretive Center featured the results of the oral history project that has been underway for the past year. HFCI volunteers have been interviewing some of the long time residents of the City and produced a video of these interviews which was presented for the first time at the meeting. This video will be shown on Channel 12 during the next month.

On May 31, we will dedicate a marker to Captain John Quincy Marr, the first Confederate officer killed in the Civil War. The marker will be located in front of the new County Courthouse close to the spot where his body was discovered after a short skirmish, the first land battle

between organized Union and Confederate forces. There will be additional Civil War related events at the Blenheim Interpretive Center over the summer and fall. We are working on modernizing the HFCI website (www.historicfairfax.org), so please check it occasionally to find out about upcoming events.

David Pumphrey



Council Reporter

Dog Gone

"Sargent Pitts reported that he had disposed of seven dogs which were unlicensed since the last meeting of the Council, and he was directed by the Council to continue to kill all unlicensed dogs."

Minutes of the Town of Fairfax Council, May 3, 1933.



Improving Streets

"Upon motion duly made, seconded, and carried, the Mayor was requested to employ Mr. J.D. Thompson, to haul the old bricks from the old County Clerk's office to the Town Streets designated by the Street Committee, same to be hauled for the price of .50 per load. Mr. F.N. Larkin stated that he would have men now employed by the County to load said brick without cost to the Town.

Minutes of the Town of Fairfax Council, June 4, 1934.



Mike's house at 3511 Brookwood Drive in the City of Fairfax, VA.
Photo credit Page Johnson.

Fairfax Circle. To pay for necessities such as, gas, cheeseburgers and judging by his picture, *hair tonic*, Mike worked at Virginia Press after school.

Mike was gentle, compassionate, caring, intensely loyal, funny and somewhat of a rebel.

Just ask his sister Sharon, or his former boss, 91-year old, Lehman Young. Lehman will tell you about the times Mike fabricated excuses to get off from work to hang out with his friends or go to get his car ready for amateur night at the Old Dominion Speedway in Manassas. Or about the time he dropped something in Mr. Young's printing press nearly destroying this expensive piece of equipment. Sharon might tell you about the time that Mike, in honor of her birthday, poured soap in the fountain in front of the Mosby Building in Fairfax.

Mike's girlfriend was Dottie Hickok. Dottie was several years younger than Mike and still in high school. Her father, Col. James Hickok did not approve of their relationship. In



Hickok, Dottie

order for them to be able to see each other, Mike enlisted his best friend, Bob Lucas. Apparently, Col. Hickok liked Bob Lucas. Bob would pick Dottie up and deliver her to Mike. In the spring of 1965, Dottie, who was rebellious as a youth, had an argument with her parents and left the house, staying out all night. Having nowhere else to go she slept in Mike's car. The next morning Mike found her. She told Mike of her intention to run away

from home. Mike talked her out of it and drove Dottie home. A grateful Col. Hickok finally accepted Mike.

In September of 1965, 20-year old Mike was drafted into the United States Army. After completing Basic Training at Fort Jackson, SC, Mike was sent to Fort Lewis, WA for Advanced Infantry Training. He was assigned to 4th Platoon, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, of the 4th Infantry Division.

Mike was a prolific letter writer, especially, to his best friend Bob Lucas. Mike's letters to Bob are honest and direct, probably more so than those he wrote to his family. Bob has carefully preserved these letters - a testament to their enduring friendship.

In January 1966, just after arriving at Fort Lewis, Mike wrote to Bob complaining about the Army:

"Now about Army Life (It eats it). There are three ways to do things, the wrong way, the right way, and the Army Way. Here are a few of the dumb things we do. We have to be in bed at 9:30 and up at 5:00 and you do work your ass off every day except Sunday, which, so far, we have had off, but that will not last forever. We get 10 min. to eat, and the food is most of the time bad, bad, bad. You change your clothes about 10 times a day, from wet-weather clothes, to work clothes, to dress clothes, etc. One more



Mike owned a 1960 Pontiac Bonneville Convertible similar to this one. Mike's mother, kept her sons old car for years after his death.

thing since I have been here we have had about 10 shots, one for everything you can think of.

I guess I must just be lucky!

One thing I don't like about being here is that we are being taught nothing but how to Kill – (with) guns, knives, hands and feet.”

Mike made friends easily. Even 40 years later the men of Alpha Co., remember small details about him.



Mike on a training exercise near Ft. Lewis, WA in 1966. Photo courtesy the Balzer family.

“A bunch of us went down to Tacoma one weekend. While we were there we got tattoos. I got a Panther and I remember Mike, who was into cars, got one with crossed pistons and the word ‘Shot Rod’ across it. Not ‘Hot Rod,’ but ‘Shot Rod!’”

Sp4 Kenneth E. Gosline, Jr.
A Co., 3rd Btln., 22nd Inf.
November 10, 2008

In May 1966, Mike wrote to Bob again:

“Well we finally got the word yesterday that

we will be going to Viet Nam. They can't tell us the date yet (it's Top Secret HA! HA!) but it will be either Sept. or Oct. I have put in for leave in July, but don't know when I will get it. They will probably tell me the same day that it starts. We will be in V.C. land for 1 year so I won't be able to be there when your child is born. I sure wish I could. Bob you said the other night on the phone you were going to take off for a week when I came home. Well I don't know when it will be for sure and we will have the nights to raise hell. (But) I want to spend the day at home with Mom & Kim as (who) knows what may happen in the next year.

Love, ‘Uncle’ Mike”

Mike arrived in Vietnam in September 1966, part of the massive build up of American forces. But he was fortunate. He was with his buddies. Friendships cultivated over months of unit training. This unit cohesion was a unique characteristic of the early part of the War in Vietnam and something that future replacement soldiers did not enjoy.

In October 1966, shortly after arriving in Viet Nam Mike wrote to his friend Bob:

“God I am scared and I am scared about killing a man.”

For the remainder of 1966 Mike's battalion was assigned to interdict enemy sampans ferrying supplies up the river deltas south of Saigon. The men of Alpha Company set up ambushes during the day and lay in wait until nightfall when the enemy plied the waterways. These missions were difficult and dangerous as the men spent a lot of time in the “swamps” as they called it, which, were a myriad of salty, dirty tidal waterways leading out into the ocean. One man actually drowned during this difficult duty.

In December, Mike's unit was moved to Tay Ninh province, South Viet Nam, near the border with Cambodia. Their new mission was to seek out and destroy the enemy and interdict supplies coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Briefly, Mike and his buddies were just happy to be out of the swamps and on hard ground once again.



Mike's *Alpha Gator* company shoulder patch. Crafted by the men of Alpha Company following their deployment to the river deltas in South Vietnam. Courtesy of Bob Lucas.

In Vietnam, helicopters were used almost exclusively to move men to places where the enemy was active. Units would spend several days or weeks out in the "bush" performing their mission then return to a fixed point to await extraction. Tired and dirty, the 'chop chop' of the approaching helicopters was always a welcome sound that the men trained themselves to listen for. Mike's hearing was particularly good. According to Sp4 Dave Kautz:

"Mike was always good for comic relief. He would usually be the first to hear the helicopters and would often say, 'Hark! I hear a huey!'"

Helicopters were also used to establish Fire Support Bases (FSB), inserting men and artillery deep into the jungle. Defoliants were used to clear away the jungle to make landing zones or "LZs". The enemy was aware of this and would lie in wait at the edge of these LZs in ambush. The Americans countered these tactics by clearing many LZ sites that were never actually used. It was a game of cat and mouse. Sometimes, however, the enemy guessed right! On March 19th 1967, the 3rd brigade, which included Mike's unit, was ordered to a new LZ designated "LZ Gold or FSB Gold", located near the destroyed village of

Suoi Tre. They were to provide security for a forward artillery base. Ominously, as the first half a dozen helicopters attempted to land, the enemy detonated improvised explosive devices downing three of the helicopters. Dozens of Americans were killed or wounded. Undeterred the Americans continued to unload men, artillery and supplies.

By the next evening, March 20st, the Americans had established a small fire support base consisting of 3 bunkers with approximately eight guns each. Supporting the artillery were the infantrymen of Alpha & Bravo Cos., of the 3/22, with about 450 men.

Mike, with the rest of Alpha Company, spent that night in the open defending the perimeter against an anticipated enemy attack, which usually came at night.

Always the dutiful son, Mike wrote home to his mother that night:

"20 March

"Dear Mom and all!

I got your letter today and was awful sorry to hear that you and Kim have been sick. I am glad you both are better now. Please stay that way! I am fine, just a little tired and sore, but no big thing.



"A" Company, 3rd Bn. 22 Inf., Command, Vietnam, Nov. 1966. (l to r) 1st Sgt. John Senechek, Captain George G. Shoemaker, 1st Lt. John E. "Jack" Sweeney, 4th Platoon Leader. Photo courtesy:

Well we are back out on another operation after a long 2 day rest from 'Junction City' HA! HA! This operation started off very bad as you probably heard on the news. We were to land by Chopper and the landing zone was 'hot' (this means V.C. were probably there and they WERE!)

"B" Company went in first with "A" Co. behind them. When "B" Co. landed the Chopper hit mines and blew 3 of them to 'HELL'. "B" Co. lost 11 men dead and many wounded. When we came in the Chopper I was on was hit but only the pilot was hit in the arm. When the mine went off it threw me and another man out about 20 feet off of the ground but I landed good so wasn't hurt. I guess it was good I did get thrown out as a large piece of the mine went through the seat I was sitting in. I guess someone must be looking after me!! "A" Co. didn't have any men [killed] but 7 were wounded but not bad. I am just glad that we didn't come in first. It is awful to say a thing like that, but that's the way things go over here. Enough about that! I just wanted to tell you as I know you heard about it on the news.

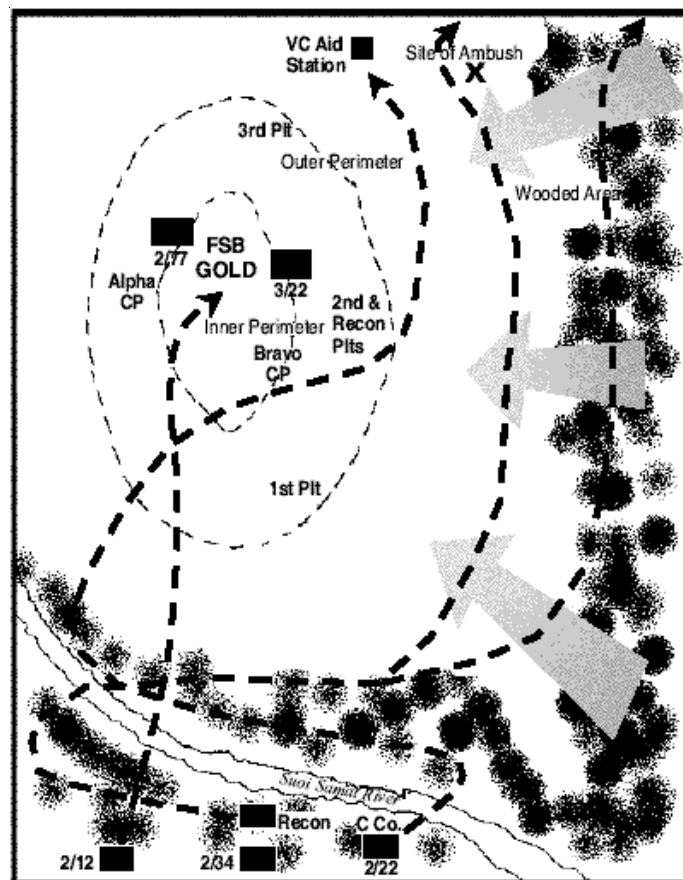
I wanted to get you an Easter card but the PX was out of them. Sorry, but Happy Easter!

About Kim's birthday. I have a little something to send him (a hat). I know he probably won't wear it but it is all I have. Also it will be late. I will write him a real nice letter that should be on time.

Boy, I guess Paul and Betty are very happy, when I get home and get a car we will have to go and see them all. I sure hope you will go.

Well it is getting dark, so take care. Tell everyone I said hello and don't work too hard.

As always, Love, Mike



Map of the Battle of Suoi Tre or FSB Gold, March 21, 1967.

P.S. I know this is a mess, but I'm short on paper. Write soon."

Mike's mother would receive this letter posthumously.

At dawn, Mike and the rest of the men at FSB Gold started to relax a bit. At that moment the enemy launched a surprise daylight attack. Rockets, mortars, and grenades rained down on the surprised Americans. 2,500 enemy soldiers came running out of the tree-line in human wave assaults, firing small arms as they advanced. Under this pressure many members of A & B Cos. were forced to fall back to the safety of the inner perimeter. However, Mike Balzer remained in his advanced position. Wielding an M-60 heavy machine gun he inflicted dozens of casualties on the advancing Viet Cong until he was overwhelmed and killed.

1st Lt. John E. "Jack" Sweeney, Mike's former platoon leader, had the unenviable task of identifying Mike's remains and also writing home to Mike's Mom and Dad. Suffice it to say that Lt. Sweeney's sentiments towards Mike are

Late Election Results in Fairfax, *Very Late*

Results of the election of Town Officers June 12, 1934:

For Mayor of the Town of Fairfax, Virginia

W. Lindsey Carne	25	Votes	Attorney/Editor
Thomas P. Chapman	10	"	None
Thomas P. Chapman, Jr.	10	"	Teacher
Paul E. Brown	3	"	Attorney
Abner C. Ritchie	2	"	Attorney
Beauregard H. Swart	1	"	Retired

For Councilmen of the Town of Fairfax, Virginia

O.B.Campbell	48	Votes	Plumber
Ford Swetnam	45	"	Physician
Edgar Littleton	34	"	Bank Cashier
John M. Whalen	25	"	Attorney
Samuel F. Cooper	25	"	Bank President
James E. Nickell	24	"	Hardware Store
Lewis M. Coyner	24	"	
Charles Pickett	23	"	Attorney
Adelaide Lewis	21	"	
A.R. Sherwood	21	"	House Builder
H.M.Gibson	3	"	Co. Road Force
Beauregard H. Swart	3	"	Retired
R.R. Farr	2	"	Attorney
Henry Ludwig	2	"	
Abner C. Ritchie	2	"	Attorney
James W. Birkett	1	"	Truck Driver
Paul Brown	1	"	Attorney
R.R. Buckley	1	"	
Lindsay Carne	1	"	Attorney/Editor
Thomas P. Chapman, Jr.	1	"	Teacher
Fred Everly	1	"	Pharmacist
Dr. Robert E. Feagans	1	"	Co. Health Officer
Robt. Graham	1	"	Real Estate Agent
Ida Jones	1	"	
Paul Kincheloe	1	"	Grocery Clerk
F.S.McCandlish	1	"	Attorney
Pembroke Pettit	1	"	Attorney
F.D. Richardson	1	"	Attorney
George Robey	1	"	Attorney
John Sisson	1	"	Garage Owner

Signed by the Judges of the Election, H.M. Gibson
 B.H. Swart
 Annie Woodard

Minutes of the Fairfax Town Council July 10, 1934.

The question as to the failure of S.F. Cooper, Councilmen-elect, having failed to qualify as Councilman by taking the oath of office prescribed by law on or before September 1, 1934, and as to whether or not the office should be declared vacant, was discussed by the Council members, and the Mayor ruled that the failure of Mr. Cooper to qualify by Sept. 1, 1934, rendered his office vacant, in accordance with the provisions of Section 2(d) of the Town Charter. On motion of Councilman Nickell, seconded by Councilman Swetnam, Mr. Albert R. Sherwood was elected a Councilman of the Town to fill the vacancy now existing by reason of the failure of the Councilman-elect Cooper to qualify, and it was ordered that Mr. Sherwood qualify as such Councilman within thirty days from this date. The recorded vote on the election was as follows: Councilman Campbell - Aye; Councilman Littleton - Aye; Councilman Nickell - Aye; Councilman Swetnam - Aye; Councilman Whalen - Aye. The Mayor was instructed to immediately notify Mr. Sherwood of his election and to request him to qualify as soon as possible.

Minutes of the Fairfax Town Council, September 14, 1934

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

The Order or business was then suspended in order that the council might hear Miss Ida Jones and Mrs. Thomas P. Chapman, Sr., who then addressed the Council with reference to the noise caused by the chickens of Joseph C. Bennet, in the Town and made complaint that the condition was such that the noise was a nuisance and that they were unable to sleep nights on account of the crowing and other noise caused, by the roosters. Miss Jones and Mrs. Chapman requested the Council to take some action with regard to this condition.

Councilman Nickell then moved the Council to direct the Mayor and Clerk to communicate with Mr. Bennet and inform him that his chickens were causing disturbance in the neighborhood to the extent that they constituted a nuisance and that unless some action is taken by him to abate the same, the Council would be compelled to consider some action, which motion was seconded by Councilman Sherwood and duly carried.

Minutes of the Fairfax Town Council, September 14, 1934

Second Sunday Programs

at the

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center

10209 Main Street, Fairfax, VA

Note: Unless noted, all programs begin at 2 p.m. at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. Programs are free and include light refreshments. Call: 703-385-8414.

June 14 - "Mr. Roosevelt's Tree Army: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Fairfax County," a talk by Mary Lipsey, historian and educator.

July 12 - "What Really Happened at the Constitutional Convention?" living history by Donald McAndrews as George Mason.

August 9 - "Internet Alley: High Technology in Tysons Corner, 1945-2005," a talk and book signing by Paul E. Ceruzzi, curator with the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

September 13 - "School Bells are Ringing," living history with Susan Kelly as the 19th century Yankee schoolmarm.

October 11 - "Virginia Quilts of the 1930s."
November 8 - "Summers with Lincoln: Looking for the Man in the Monuments," a talk and book signing by James A. Percoco, author and West Springfield High School teacher.

December 13 - "Victorian Christmas Ornaments," a talk and demonstration by Linda Lau, Victorian Society of Falls Church.

The City of Fairfax is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all City programs, services, and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations, call Susan Gray at (703) 385 - 8415. Please allow seven working days in advance in order to make necessary arrangements.

City Walking Tours Resume

The third year of the Walking Tours of Historic Downtown Fairfax will begin in May. The tours were started in 2007 by Historic Fairfax City, Inc. Well over 500 people, from all over, came and enjoyed seeing and learning about the rich history within downtown Fairfax City.

The walking tour is held every Saturday night (weather permitting) led by a member of HFCI. The tour, which is approximately 2 hours long, stops at 6 historic sites in the 4 block area of "Old Town Fairfax". One of the sites is open for public view each week and is featured with its own unique story.

Enjoy an early dinner at one of the many wonderful restaurants in historic downtown Fairfax and join us for the the tour afterward. Or take the tour first and reflect on history afterward over a glass of something cool.

Either way you should make reservations as space is limited. Reservations can be made at the Museum and Visitors Center by calling (703) 385-8414. The cost is \$5.00 per person, children under 8 years old are free. All proceeds go to HFCI for the benefit of supporting the historic sites within the City of Fairfax.

Tours begin at 7:00 pm at "The Moore House" (Sweet Life Café) 3950 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA. A preview is given of the tour before the walking begins. For more information call Hildie Carney, Walking Tour Chair at (703) 591-5305.

Continued from page 6

reflected in this letter. Jack was also sufficiently moved by Mike's actions to nominate him for this nation's third highest award for valor which reads:

*Headquarters
25th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco*

*General Orders
31 May 1967
Number 2149*

*BALZER, MICHAEL A. US52659073 Sp4 E-4
Co A, 3d Bn, 22d Inf, 3 Bde, 4th Inf Div*

Awarded: Silver Star

Date action: 21 March 1967

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For gallantry in action: Specialist Four Balzer distinguished himself by heroic actions on 21 March 1967, while serving as a machine gunner on a combat operation. At 0630 hours, a heavily reinforced Viet Cong regiment attacked the perimeter with human wave assaults, rocket fire, and mortars. Specialist Four Balzer was located in a bunker near the heaviest assaults. As the bunkers in his sector were destroyed by enemy rocket and mortar fire, the enemy forces began to overwhelm the entire sector and were attempting to mass toward the center of the perimeter. Specialist Balzer, seeing this critical situation, nevertheless refused to leave his position. Placing his machine gun directly between the advancing enemy and the artillery position he was defending, he continued to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy force until he fell mortally wounded. Specialist Balzer's extraordinary heroism in close combat against a numerically superior Viet Cong force was in keeping with the highest traditions on the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918, and USARV message 16695, 1 July 1966.



Maj. Gen. Charles S. O'Malley, Jr., Mrs. Glenn D. Balzer (Mike's mother), and Kim A. Balzer (Mike's brother) c. April 1967. Photo courtesy of the Balzer Family.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

*Jasper J. Wilson, Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff
Robert S. Young, LTC, AGC
Adjutant General*

Several weeks ago, I was able to locate now Colonel Jack Sweeney, USA, Retired. I called him at his home in Springfield, VA one morning, unannounced. He had this to say about Mike:

"Mike was a fantastic soldier. He was in line to be a Sgt."

Jack paused a moment his voice quavering a bit,

"Mike was a hero you know."

I indicated that I did know. After 40 years and without benefit of notes, Jack Sweeney then went on to relate nearly verbatim the actions I have just related.

Jack then said this, *"I put him in for the Silver Star. I should have put him in for the Medal of Honor. He deserved it. I have been walking around for 40 years regretting that I didn't."*

The following is recorded on one of the many websites dedicated to the fallen from the Vietnam War:

"Michael Balzer was a quiet fellow, very shy, but he was always kind to me, a newcomer from California, a stranger in a new school. He was the first person I knew who had gone to Viet Nam, and the first to die there. I have never forgotten his kindness to me in my first year at Fairfax High School."

- Carren Louise Bersch, December 2, 2001

"There is not a day goes by that I don't remember (The Balls) We were together all the time. I hope his brother and mom are doing well. I live in Clifton, VA with my wife. We have 2 sons Bobby, Jr. and Brian 'Michael' who we named after my best friend."

- Robert W. Lucas, March 27, 2008

It has been said that in war, Uncommon Valor is a Common Virtue! While I certainly believe this to be true, some acts of heroism rise above others.

I have had the privilege of getting to know Mike Balzer, some 40 years after his death. As you now have. Mike and his actions in Vietnam moved and inspired me. As I hope they have for you. Mike's enduring legacy is the power to continue to move and inspire others - future generations of our community.

At this point, a few additional details and postscripts are warranted for this story. I have had the good fortune to speak directly with a number of Mike's Vietnam friends. Nearly all remember him fondly.

When Mike was blown out of the helicopter on March 20th, Sp4 Woody Finzer, also of the 4th Platoon was directly behind him. The concussion knocked Woody back into the helicopter causing him to drop the base plate of the mortar he was assigned to carry. This heavy, 25 pound, piece of equipment fell directly onto Mike Balzer, who was lying on the ground twenty feet below.

On the day Mike was killed, Woody, was standing right

next to him. The two men had actually switched positions during the night, to give Mike a better field of fire with his M-60.

Mike's former company commander Major George G. Shoemaker, USA Retd., is a avid motorcyclist. His Harley Davidson is customized with the names of the 13 men of Alpha Co. who were killed in action in Vietnam in '66/'67.

After more than 40 years several men of Alpha still carry tokens, or reminders of their dead comrade. Sp4 David Halstrom, of New York, carry's one of Mike's Dog Tags in his wallet and Sp4 Woody Finzer, of Ohio, has Mike's cigarette lighter.

In strange coincidence, the day after Mike's death, Jack Sweeney, Mike's former platoon leader, received a last minute R&R to Hawaii. Jack's wife Carol, hastily made arrangements to meet her husband there. She contacted Pan Am Airlines. In the course her conversation with, Arlene, the young Pan Am reservationist, it was revealed that Jack was a soldier serving in Vietnam. After further discussion it became apparent that Jack served in the same unit as the best friend of Arlene's husband, Bob Lucas. This friend was none other than Mike Balzer. Thrilled at the coincidence the two women suggested getting together sometime. Carol Sweeney then excitedly relayed this news to her husband, Jack. Jack then told Carol that Mike had been killed the day before. The news of Mike's death had not yet reached Fairfax.

The village of Suoi Tre, site of the battle that took Mike Balzer's life, is now under 10 feet of water. The Suoi Samat River was dammed a few years ago for irrigation.

When the Vietnam War ended I was still in high school. In fact, I attended high school with Kim Balzer, Mike's younger brother. But I was never aware he had older brother who was killed in Vietnam until I started researching this article. This was probably due to the fact that the Balzer family did not discuss Mike much after his death. Naturally, Mike's death devastated the Balzer family and broke his mother's heart.

We need no longer be silent. Mike was a true hero!

Welcome New Members!

Burrus Carnahan
 David G. Farmer
 Mary Gauthier
 Janet L. Greene
 John L. Lewett
 Anthony Meeks
 Lucinda Stewart
 Betsey W. Taylor
 Larry A. Weaver

The Board of Directors of HFCI extends a hearty welcome



HISTORIC FAIRFAX CITY, INC.

Do you want to know more about the history of where you live?

JOIN HISTORIC FAIRFAX CITY, INC.

Just what is available to you as a member of HFCI?

A newsletter, 4 times a year announcing what is happening with all HFCI projects and events

2 general meetings a year, affording you an opportunity to meet and speak with people behind the scenes working to maintain interest in the history of Fairfax.

We are looking forward to having you join us. We need and value your support. Together we will preserve the heritage that has been left to us.

The Board of Directors of
Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

HFCI MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/ RENEWAL

HISTORIC FAIRFAX CITY, INC. is a non-profit corporation (501©(3) organization)

Membership Classifications:

- Class A Individual\$25.00
- Class A-1 Additional Household Member\$10.00
- Class B-1 Non-profit Organizations\$35.00
- Class B-2 For profit Organizations\$50.00

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership application and check made out to Historic Fairfax City Inc. for: \$ _____

Name or Organization: _____

Telephone #: _____

Contact name: _____

e-mail: _____

Address: _____

Return to: Historic Fairfax City, Inc.,
Attention: Membership Committee
10209 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030

-or-

Website: www.historicfairfax.org
E-mail: info@historcfairfax.org

"Preserving the Past. Protecting the Future."

Return Address -
Historic Fairfax City, Inc.
David L. Pumphrey, President
10209 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030



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The Newsletter of Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

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Website: www.historicfairfax.org