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February 2011, Issue 24

You can see all issues to date of our newsletter at either of these web sites:
www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~

Stand in the door! Go! Go! Go!!!



C/2/503d troopers practicing door exits in preparation for February 1967 combat jump during Operation Junction City.
(Photo by MG Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d)



THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

By Rev. Dr. Ronald R. Smith
1LT/FO/B/2/503d



What comes to your mind when the month of February is mentioned?

Probably Valentine's Day! Though not an official business or bank holiday, it keeps the candy companies, Hallmark, and florists afloat for a good portion of the year. Every year we celebrate this romantic holiday by giving small tokens of affection to those we love. All of us can recall school days when we sent valentines to our classmates and received a handful in return.

Many of us might not realize that St. Valentine gave the ultimate gift, his life, for the love of Jesus Christ.

Valentine was a Roman priest. In about 270 A.D. he was caught helping other Christians escape the persecution of Emperor Claudius II. Claudius had ordered his Roman subjects to worship twelve gods. Because Christians would not acknowledge his gods, the emperor made it illegal to be a Christian, or even to associate with them. Offenders were given the death penalty. Valentine was caught and brought before the emperor.

He had almost succeeded in converting Claudius to Christianity when the chief magistrate of Rome began to complain, *"The Emperor is being led astray! How should we give up what we have believed from infancy?"*

Claudius was embarrassed and demanded that Valentine be placed in the magistrate's custody until he decided what to do with this troublesome priest. Valentine prayed aloud, asking God to enlighten the magistrate's whole family. The magistrate responded with a challenge, *"If your God can bring light to my blind daughter, I will do whatever you tell me to do!"*

Valentine prayed over the daughter. Suddenly she could see! When they realized only the one true God could perform such a miracle, the entire family became Christians. However, the emperor had decided by this time to have Valentine beheaded. Nothing the magistrate could say or do would change Claudius' mind.

It is said that on the eve of his execution, Valentine wrote a letter to the magistrate's daughter. In it, he encouraged her to remain close to God. He signed the letter *"from your Valentine."*

Valentine became a martyr just outside of Rome on February 14, 270 A.D. He was beheaded near a gate that was later named *Porta Valentini* in his honor. Pope Julius I built a church over Valentine's tomb in A.D.

350. February 15th marked the annual Roman festival of Lupercalia -- a day for lovers. It was celebrated by the young who drew names from a box for partners. The partners exchanged gifts then often continued to see each other and marry.

In 496 A.D., Pope Gelasius changed the pagan Lupercalia feast day to St. Valentine's Day, February 14.

In the 17th century Edmond Rostand's drama *Cyrano de Bergerac* was based on the life of Savien Cyrano de Bergerac, a French soldier, satirist, and dramatist. During the play Rostand writes, *"Cyrano desperately loves the beautiful Roxane, but agrees to help his rival, Christian, win her heart"* by writing tender love letters for him to give Roxane--risky since Cyrano was also smitten with the lady.

God sent the ultimate valentine in Jesus Christ.

God demonstrates his own love toward us.

In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8)

Near the end of the New Testament in the book of I John, the apostle reminds us:

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins. (I John 4:10)

The Scripture is replete with heaven-sent valentines communicated by the One who loves us to the very end. This message comes to us regularly and often--not just in the month of February.

It is not enough, however, that God loves us and we love Him. It is also important that we love one another.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (I John 4:11)

In a month that we think about love, hear again the Good News:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only unique Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Know that you are loved by God. There is absolutely nothing that you can do that will make God love you more than He does right now. At the same time, there is absolutely nothing you can do that will make God love you any less than He loves you right now. Once we come to be embraced and are grasped by that love, we cannot help but love Him and love others in return. May the love of Christ draw you to God.

An object of His grace,

Ron



~ Honoring a Buddy ~

My friend Ernest Asbury died a few weeks ago in his bunker in Joshua Tree, California... his bride Marjorie was at the store. Sergeant Asbury died of a broken heart... a heart minced by years and years of recall... of years and years of wondering why the hell he ever walked up Hill 875... of years and years of asking himself how he could have gotten so far from his family... so far from his home.

An intelligent man, a man steeped in the patriotic nature of America, this veteran became ensconced in a desert outback to find peace with his Marjorie and his horses. Both seemed to know when torment was afoot. He wore his boots constantly... the boots with the extended rear heel to accept his spurs with the large rowels.

Sergeant Asbury was a squad leader in Charlie Company, a 2nd Battalion paratrooper until one day in the mountains... actually the episode lasted several days... until one day he contracted a screaming case of the galloping hab-dabs. Bent over a low branch, with his ass rigged for volleying fire, this once-fine soldier could, with the proper hip rotation, write his name on a screen door at ten paces. Disgusted with this display of lunacy, his squad and his platoon stripped him of his Christian name.

Bednarski, Thompson, Fish, Harmon, Riggs, France, Zaccone, Schreiber, Waddell, Diggs, Baez, Derose, Marsh and a host of other notables declared, and then toasted Sergeant Asbury's new handle... "**Nasty**".

I did get to see Nasty this past June when seven of us got together in the woods of Georgia. Our Company Commander was there... Captain Joe Jellison... Joe made General after being shot to pieces on his second tour. I must say, I did not think the army was smart enough to promote such a good man.



Nasty and Joe talked for hours on end... day and night. They skipped the memorial dedication in order to continue their reunion.

I'm thankful I got to see Nasty one last time and say hello and goodbye.

This past week Tommy Thompson sent me a copy of some lingerings Nasty was struggling with and below I have typed them word for word.

Notes on Narrowness

"I walked tonight on an endless cold silver road, with my head cocked to the side and back watching the clear white-etched stars. It was cold with the air giving a remembrance of the afternoon sun.

I drifted with that road hoping the feeling would never stop." Ernest Asbury, 2010

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"The air was clear and cold that early morning somewhere between midnight and dawn.

I dreaded dawn with a fascination. That night they had dropped bombs on us and I for some reason was chosen to live. About half the battalion was gone. The other three in the knee-deep hole behind the tree were alive also. A funny kind of touchable feeling is in the air. A prayer that you can feel, 'Thank you God for sparing me and taking someone else, and if the choice comes again please take my buddy next to me and spare me again.'

The numbness begins to set in at dawn. The first shock of seeing the blood, guts and disgust. Then happily identifying those still alive. Boredom and looking to see how once were men died. A leg here boot on the foot, knife gone but scabbard still tied onto the thigh. A foot-and-a-half of back bone protruding from the back where the head was pulled off... no sign of the head and the shoulders not touched.

The guys you tried to help that night but you knew would die before first light... had lifeless staring eyes. What had they seen before the man behind them left?

The pall of death is over everything. Is pall a color, feeling or odor? Whichever, it is floating in the air clutching at you with dripping sweet fingers calling you because among the dead you are the minority.

There is still fighting but that is an anti-climax. Go away I want to go home. In this stock-pen, slaughter-house, restaurant (yes some of the choice cuts toward the top of the hill are already cooked) you are starting to go numb. I'm envious of you. Lucky, lucky dead, the waiting is over. I am still waiting for someone to kill me. They will, I'll never get off this hill alive. Yes war is a very personal thing when you are concerned. We made it together. People live with one another, but they are dead alone. So personal, so final."

Ernest Asbury, 2010

For Sergeant Ernest Asbury... also known as Nasty... may he rest easy.

Gary Prisk, Capt.
C/D/2/503d



Medalists' wives continue Soldiers Support on national tour

By Susan R. Anderson



Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta, waving, and wife Jen, along with Staff Sgt. Erick Gallardo and wife Jackie, visit Disneyland, Jan. 12, and take part in a parade prior to an evening ceremony lowering the U.S. flag.

Photo: Disneyland

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Jan. 20, 2011) -- While Medal of Honor recipient Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta visits Army units and Americans around the nation, telling his story from Afghanistan, his closest companion, wife Jen, works nearby to draw attention to issues important to Soldiers and families.

Salvatore Giunta and his wife, along with Silver Star recipient Staff Sgt. Erick Gallardo and his wife, Jackie, visited Southern California as part of an ongoing effort to share the Army story. Both Salvatore Giunta and Erik Gallardo are Soldiers from the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Jen Giunta and Jacqueline Gallardo broke off from the group Jan. 11, to meet with Evan Housley, co-founder of the non-profit group HeroBox. The group provides to Soldiers custom-made care packages designed to truly meet an individual Soldier's needs while in theater.

Jen Giunta initiated the meeting after researching non-profit organizations that help support servicemembers and their families.

"Their work seemed very targeted, and that made me want to learn more," said Jen Giunta of the group. "I know Sal and his buddies would get care packages sometimes, but not often enough. And when they did get them, they didn't always have what they needed. I just wanted to see how they (HeroBox) were making sure that the right people were getting the right things, and if there was any way I could help."

Over lunch, Housley explained how Soldiers can go on the HeroBox.org website and sign up for support by providing their info and indicating their specific needs.

Housley, an Army Reserve Soldier, was deployed to Taji, Iraq in 2007, when his brother first conceived of the idea for HeroBox. Intimately familiar with the need for this kind of support, the Housley brothers take seriously their efforts to ensure every Soldier in need gets the help they deserve.

"If there are any Soldiers left without sponsors, then we plan a 'HeroDay' to make sure they get what they need," said Housley.

HeroDays are events where groups of people spend a day working together to assemble care packages for a unit of deployed Soldiers, he said.

Jackie Gallardo, a Family Readiness Group leader at her home base of Vincenza, Italy, said she knew so many people that wanted to help, but didn't know where to go or what to do.

HeroBox takes the guesswork out of it, and provides the kind of help the Soldiers can really use, she said.

Jen Giunta continues to research other non-profit organizations that support servicemembers and their families, as she plans to choose several to support in the coming years.

"A lot of Sal's buddies had a hard time finding work after they got out of the Army, so sites like HireaHero.org that help connect former service-members with employers really interest me, too," she said.

The Giuntas and Gallardos spent the rest of the week meeting with centers of influence from various companies and organizations, to include a speaking engagement and luncheon with members of the NBC community, and meeting with the Lifetime Television writers and producers of for the television show "Army Wives."

At each meeting, Salvatore Giunta reinforced how grateful he is for the love and support of his wife.

"People will sometimes walk right past Jen and come up to me and want to shake my hand and thank me," said Salvatore Giunta. *"But I couldn't do this without her. She's more important than I am, if you ask me. She's my rock."*

For more information on other homefront nonprofits that support servicemembers and their families, visit www.ourmilitary.mil/help.shtml





COLA Tied to Social Security and Consumer Price Index

WASHINGTON – The Social Security Administration has announced that no cost-of-living adjustments will be made to Social Security benefits in 2011 because the consumer price index has not risen since 2008 when the last Social Security increase occurred.

Like recipients of Social Security and other federal benefits, Veterans, their families and survivors will also not see a cost-of-living adjustment in 2011 to their compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Under federal law, the cost-of-living adjustments to VA's compensation and pension rates are the same percentage as for Social Security benefits.

VA provides compensation and pension benefits to about four million Veterans and beneficiaries. For more information about VA benefits, go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000

New Approach to Smoking Cessation Boosts Quit Rates for Veterans with PTSD

WASHINGTON -- Smoking cessation treatment that is made part of mental health care for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) improves quit rates, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) study published in the Dec. 8 *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"The smoking cessation techniques used in this new approach will give Veterans an important step towards a better quality of life," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. *"Veterans will be at a lower risk for cardiovascular or lung disease if they do not smoke."*



On measures of smoking abstinence for shorter periods of time, researchers found that quit rates were as high as 18 percent for the integrated care group, versus 11 percent for those receiving usual care. When compared to usual care—referral to a standard smoking cessation clinic—the new, integrated approach nearly doubled the rate at which study volunteers stayed smoke-free for a year or longer, from 4.5 percent to almost 9 percent.

Importantly, Veterans in the study who quit smoking showed no worsening of symptoms of PTSD or depression. In fact, study participants averaged a 10-percent reduction in PTSD symptoms, regardless of which treatment they received or whether they quit smoking or not. The findings help dispel concerns that combining care for PTSD and smoking cessation detracts from PTSD treatment or makes it less effective.

Study leaders Miles McFall, Ph.D., and Andrew Saxon, M.D., say the results validate a promising new VA model of care that can make safe, effective smoking cessation treatment accessible to far more Veterans with PTSD. The new approach may also be effective for smokers receiving mental health care for other psychiatric illnesses, they add.

Says McFall, *"One of the most important things mental health providers can do to improve the quality and length of their patients' lives is to help them stop smoking by using proven, evidence-based practices."*

McFall is director of PTSD Programs and Saxon is director of the Addictions Treatment Center at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. Both are professors in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington.

(continued....)





VA smoking cessation care generally involves a mix of group and individual counseling, typically in combination with nicotine replacement therapy or other medication prescribed by a VA health care provider. In VA's study, Veterans in the integrated-care group worked with the same therapist on PTSD and smoking issues. Medication for smoking cessation, if used, was prescribed on an individual basis by the same medical provider managing pharmacologic treatment of the Veteran's PTSD symptoms.

The study followed 943 Veterans at 10 VA medical centers nationwide. Prolonged abstinence from tobacco, as reported by participants, was confirmed using breath and urine tests to detect evidence of smoking. Using such "bio-verification" measures in combination with self-reports is considered the "gold standard" in smoking cessation research, says McFall.

Of some 400,000 Veterans being treated for PTSD in the VA health care system, roughly 30 to 50 percent are smokers, compared to a smoking rate of about 20 percent among VA enrollees and U.S. adults in general. Research shows, also, that those with PTSD smoke more heavily than smokers without PTSD and have an especially hard time quitting.



"We've come a long way in understanding that nicotine dependence for many Veterans with PTSD is a chronic, relapsing condition that responds best to intensive treatment extended over time," McFall says. "These study findings will help us empower more Veterans with the resources they need to quit smoking."

Single-shot, brief episodic care for nicotine addiction is no match for what is a chronic, relapsing disorder for many of our Veterans."

Based on the findings and evidence from prior research, VA has begun piloting the integrated smoking cessation approach as a standard of practice at six VA medical centers. The researchers say they hope to see the new approach further expanded over time.


McFall notes that while most of the participants in the study were Vietnam-era Veterans, integrated smoking cessation care may be especially beneficial for younger Veterans with PTSD, such as many of those returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, who stand to benefit greatly from quitting smoking relatively early in life.

Says McFall, *"Ideally, we can help Veterans quit smoking before it becomes a chronic or intractable condition and causes irreversible health problems such as cardiovascular or lung disease."*

The study was conducted by VA's Cooperative Studies Program. For more information on CSP, visit www.csp.research.va.gov



SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE

Apply for S-DVI Online using our new  application. Follow this link for more information about applying online.

What is S-DVI?

The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program was established in 1951 to meet the insurance needs of certain veterans with service connected disabilities. S-DVI is available in a variety of permanent plans as well as term insurance. Policies are issued for a minimum face amount of \$10,000.


Who Can Apply for S-DVI?

You can apply for S-DVI if you meet the following 4 criteria:

1. You were released from active duty under other than dishonorable conditions on or after April 25, 1951.
2. You were rated for a service-connected disability (even if only 0%).
3. You are in good health except for any service-connected conditions.
4. You apply within 2 years from the date VA grants your new service-connected disability.

Note: An increase in an existing service-connected disability or the granting of individual unemployability of a previous rated condition does not entitle a veteran to this insurance.

How Can I Apply for S-DVI?

You can apply for basic S-DVI online using our new  application! Follow this link for more information about applying for S-DVI online.

You can also download VA form 29-4364, Application for Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance, from our forms page. Be sure to also download VA Pamphlet 29-9 from this site for premium rates and a description of the plans available.

Waiver of Premiums for Totally Disabled Veterans

Under certain conditions, the basic S-DVI policy provides for a waiver of premiums in case of total disability. Policyholders who carry the basic S-DVI coverage and who become eligible for a waiver of premiums due to total disability can apply for and be granted additional Supplemental S-DVI of up to \$20,000.

Supplemental S-DVI

The Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992, provided for \$20,000 of supplemental coverage to S-DVI policyholders. Premiums may not be waived on this supplemental coverage. S-DVI policyholders are eligible for this supplemental coverage if:

- They are eligible for a waiver of premiums.
- They apply for the coverage within one year from notice of the grant of waiver.
- Are under age 65.

To apply for Supplemental S-DVI, you must file VA Form 29-0188, Application for Supplemental Service-Disabled Veterans (RH) Life Insurance or send a letter requesting this insurance over your signature. You must apply for the coverage within one year from notice of the grant of waiver of premiums. Visit:
<http://www.insurance.va.gov/gli/buying/SDVI.htm>

Sharp Lookin' Bulls



In last month's issue of our Newsletter we asked you to identify these B/2/503d troopers in this photo taken in Bong Son in 1968. L-R are Bob Beemer, John Crocker, and Harris. We still need a first name for trooper Harris.
(Photo from Bob Beemer)

LOOKING FOR BUDDIES

The son of **Edrick Kenneth Stevens**, 4/503d, KIA on 6 November 1967, is looking for buddies who knew his father. Please contact the son, **Jonathan (Chad) Stevens** at: jonathan.stevens@dhs.gov





173d REUNION ITINERARY

(Tentative, subject to change)



June 22 -- Wednesday

- 1200 - 2000 Registration
- 1300 - 0100 Hospitality Room
- 1300 - 2200 Vendors
- 1800 - 2000 President's Reception



June 23 -- Thursday

- 0900 - 1200 Board of Director's Meeting
- 1000 - 1700 Registration
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1300 - 2400 Hospitality Room

June 27 -- Friday

- 0730 - 0900 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast
- 0900 - 1500 Registration
- 1000 - 2400 Hospitality Room
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1000 - Board buses for trip to Fort Sam Houston
- 1030 - 1500 Tour Fort Sam Houston
- 1700 - 2300 BBQ, Mariachis, Dance at Maverick Plaza



June 25 -- Saturday

- 0900 - 1100 Registration
- 0900 - 1200 General Membership Meeting
- 1000 - 1200 Ladies' Brunch
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1000 - 1200 Hospitality Room

BANQUET DINNER

- 1815 - 1850 Cocktails
- 1900 - 1910 Post Colors
- 1930 - 2035 Dinner
- 2035 - 2130 Speakers & Awards
- 2130 - Retire Colors
- 2135 - ??? Entertainment & Dancing

Maverick Plaza

June 26 -- Sunday

- 0830 - 1000 Continental Breakfast
- 1030 - 1130 Memorial Service, Arneson River Theater
- 1130 - Reunion closing. Depart or stay and see more of San Antonio.



The Alamo

Reunion web site: <http://www.skysoldiers.com>





173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION ~ REUNION 2011 ~



22 June – 26 June 2011, San Antonio, TX

Hosted by Texas Chapter 13

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Unit served with in the Brigade _____ Dates served _____

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL Male/Female _____

Exact hat size _____ (Note: A cowboy hat will be given to the 173d member above if Registration Form and hat size are received by March 1, 2011.

Guests:

Circle Male or Female and Shirt Size for each guest

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Registration/ Event Fees

- ___ \$173.00 per Association Member
- ___ \$125.00 per Guest
- ___ \$125.00 per Gold Star Family Member
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)
- ___ FREE Active Duty Soldiers on Orders (i.e., Command, Color Guard)
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Vendor Table
- ___ FREE Gold Star Brunch – 173d Gold Star Families
- ___ Brunch Ladies Brunch (Included with registration)
- ___ Please check if planning to attend.
- ___ \$ 15.00 Trip to Fort Sam Houston per person
- ___ \$ 15.00 Sky Soldier Adoption Program “Have a meal on me” for active duty soldiers



Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, Texas

\$ _____ Total Enclosed

Make Checks Payable to: [Texas Reunion 2011 – 173d Airborne Brigade](#)

Mail Checks to: John Rolfe, 100 Oleander Road, Comfort, TX 78013



For Hotel Reservations: Hilton Palacio del Rio, \$119 + tax per night. Call 1-800-HILTONS and request the group rate for The 173d Airborne Brigade Association, Inc., or use the unique group code ABA.

Overflow Hotel: Menger Hotel, \$119 + tax per night, Call: 1-800-345-9285 and request the group rate for the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.

To Register Online, visit www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011



~ CORRECTION ~

THE 503RD P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION **Online**

OUR NEWSLETTER IS NOW ON-LINE!

There's an enhancement to the Online versions of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* -- a "flipping book" presentation. For those unfamiliar with the "flipping book," it's an online book with an animation effect which allows you to turn the page just as you would were it a magazine. It makes reading an Adobe *.pdf file just like reading a magazine -- click on any page corner or edge and draw your mouse across the book and the page will turn in a way which reflects the speed of your movement.

The program also enables you to zoom in on any photograph or portion of the text just by a double mouse-click.

Another display page has been added for those who use Apple Mac, iPods or iPads (which do not utilize the mouse-over and flash animation effects available to the standard Windows operation systems).

Our thanks to Paul Whitman who created the display as part of his continuing support for the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* on the **503d PRCT Heritage Bn Website**. The effect has been created for ALL of our newsletters issued to date. The direct page link to try the "flipping book" presentation is:

http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

It can also be found through the <http://503prct.org> website. And click on the Rock Regiment patch. Now there's a web address you shouldn't have any problem remembering!

It turns our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* into an online publication with true magazine style and access.

Thanks Paul!! Ed

See Web Page Layout on Next Page.....



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L-R: Don Phillips, Ed Carns, Ken Kaplan in Bn formation

Dave Griffin sent me an email telling me to look at page 8 of the last newsletter (January). The picture of Dr. Ed Carns and the write-ups are super. Well done!! The guy standing to the right of Ed is me. The Major to Ed's left is Don Phillips who was the S-3 of the battalion.

One slight correction. Since both Don and I are in the picture, it had to have been a battalion formation and not a company formation as the caption below the picture indicates.

Ken Kaplan, LTC
CO, B/2/503d

24TH ANNUAL FLORIDA VIETNAM AND ALL VETERANS REUNION

May 5-8, 2011

Wickham Park

Melbourne, Florida

<http://floridaveteransreunion.com/>



http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

Dick Winters, of 'Band of Brothers' fame, dies

January 9, 2011

PN

By Monica Von Dobeneck
The Patriot-News

Dick Winters, the former World War II commander whose war story was told in the book and miniseries "Band of Brothers," has died.

Dick Winters led a quiet life on his Fredericksburg farm and in his Hershey home until the book and miniseries "Band of Brothers" threw him into the international spotlight.

Since then, the former World War II commander of Easy Company had received hundreds of requests for interviews and appearances all over the world.

He stood at the podium with President George W. Bush in Hershey during the presidential campaign in 2004. He accepted the "Four Freedoms" award from Tom Brokaw on behalf of the

Army. He was on familiar terms with Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, producers of the HBO mini-series, the most expensive television series ever produced.

Winters was always gracious about his new-found celebrity, but never really comfortable with it. He never claimed to be a hero and said that he had nothing to do with the national effort to get him the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

When people asked him if he was a hero, he liked to answer the way his World War II buddy, Mike Ranney, did:

"No," Ranney said. "But I served in a company of heroes." That became the tag line for the miniseries.

[Sent in by Jerry Sopko, D/4/503d
and Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d]



Oldest 'Brother' dead at 94

Ed Mauser, 94, died on Friday, January 21. He was the oldest living member of Easy Company, which is often better known now as the "Band of Brothers" during World War II.

His role came to light only after his brother-in-law got him a copy of the HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*, said Terry Zahn, who met Mauser during a 2009 Honor Flight trip to Washington, DC, to see the World War II memorial.



Rest easy Screaming Eagles. You did well.



WHODAT?



Who is this grungy lookin' grunt guarding those sandbags? Hint: goes by the name "Airborne".



~ The Combat Jump ~



The Combat Jump

(Photo by Bill Nicholls)

I do not recall Frenchy Pellerin (hanging up in a tree) but I definitely remember Robert Hill. He was in weapons platoon C Co. and got stuck in the top of the biggest tree on the DZ. He was up there about 30 minutes or so. Col Sigholtz's chopper flew right over his chute to try to suck him up out of the tree since we couldn't get him to cut his risers (at first). He was up there yelling and we were down on the ground yelling. After 30 minutes or so he finally cut the chute and fell to the ground -- no worse for wear and nothing hurt but pride. I am really surprised there is very little said about Hill's bad luck in the stories about the jump. With all your contacts see if you can find him or anymore versions of this.

Barry "Bear" Hart
C/2/503d

Believe Frenchy hung-up in a tree on one of the practice jumps, Bear. We always like to remind him of that. ☺ Ed

Well, we were going to have a combat jump long before Junction City, but that got scrapped, probably because they were selling combat jump wings in Bien Hoa to commemorate the jump, long before any of us even knew.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503d

Roger that, Larry. My understanding is the bad guys knew where the DZ was planned. Coulda been another bad day. Ed

I was with C Company 2nd Bn 173d Abn. I made the jump on Feb. 22, 1967. I'm on the jump roster. Now retired and living in AZ.

Bruce Demboski
C/2/503d



The first practice jump was cancelled as Charlie had put punji stacks on the DZ. As I remember someone saying, we made the second one and Cunningham got his arm caught in the risers of the guy in front of him. His arm looked bad for a while but wasn't broken. When we made the jump all passes to town were cancelled. We got on the trucks at about 3:00 a.m., then loaded on the plane for the trip north. It was really quiet on the C-130; then came stand-up, hook-up and green light...and airborne we were. After landing we went to the trees. I was standing between two trees -- people started hollering at me to move, and as I was moving I heard a noise from up above, a 3/4 ton truck came down between the two trees I had been standing under. They were doing the heavy drops later that day. They tried to drop pallets of water in five gallon cans; when they hit the DZ it looked like a geyser. We went out and saved as much water as we could.

Leonard (Ray) Tanner
2nd Platoon, 2nd Squad, B/2/503d

Early in the morning of 22 February 1967, I was down at the Personnel Unit for the 4/503d in Bien Hoa getting some orders to go and visit my brother Philip in a hospital in Okinawa, Japan. Philip and I both attended Jump School together in September of 1965, and he had been serving with A/1/327th, 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div. While getting my orders, I saw a little French



lady with pigtails and big jump boots getting put on the Manifest for the Combat Jump. Her name was Catherine Leroy, a French photographer and a Sky Diver who had gotten permission for the jump.

In 1996, we had a 173d reunion in Anaheim, CA, and we invited her and her French male friend, who was also a photographer in Viet Nam, to come to the formal banquet. We had a jump planned at the Skydiving Center at Lake Elsinore, CA, as part of the reunion, but we did not have a driver available to go to West LA and pick her up for the Jump Class and the Jump. Catherine lost her driver's license to the court and LA PD for having a little bit of wine one night.

(continued....)



A few years later, we invited Catherine to a dinner meeting of Chapter 14 that we held in a nice Mexican restaurant in Uptown Whittier, CA. Nacho Zarate, of HHC 3/319th, who jumped on 22 Feb. 1967, had some photos taken with her at this function and a independent reporter showed up and ran a news story in the Pacific Edition of the *Stars & Stripes*.

Years later, Catherine Leroy passed away in Santa Monica, CA, from lung cancer and her remains were returned to Paris, France. She had a Viet Nam photo collection for sale on the internet and some persons never received their copies because of her death.

Ray Ramirez
Recon/4/503d

It is hard to believe it has been 44 years, but I remember it like it was yesterday -- the pucker factor was running high that day. I was pretty busy on the day of the actual jump and did not have a chance to take photos.

Pat Bowe
HHC/Recon/2/503d

We went on jump status in October 66. We made our first practice jump 30 Oct 66 on a Sunday at 8 a.m. out of a Hercules C-130 at Tuc Duc, a little ways from Bien Hoa and off Highway One which connects Bien Hoa with Saigon. I was the 5th man out the left door in the first chalk of the first lift. Some 802 troopers made the first practice jump. Were scheduled to jump again 7 Nov 66 but not sure if we did on that date, although we did make two total practice jumps. Believe the second took place in December. Operations Attleboro, Waco and Canary Duck all took place during that time period after the first practice jump.



Briefing at DZ Charlie

(Jerry Hassler)

Believe it was the first practice jump, maybe the second, but after I landed and was pulling in my chute, I watched a paratrooper land and go straight into the ground with his chute flattening out against the ground -- turned out he had landed in a dry well. Ran over and shouted down into the darkness (it was that deep) if he was okay. He

shouted back that he was but wanted out quickly as those damn spiders were all over the inside of the well. Myself and another trooper pulled on the risers of his chute and he made it out. It was quite a sight to watch him hit and go straight into the ground.

The "briefing picture" was taken on DZ Charlie after the jump. I'm on the extreme right puffing on a weed.

Jerry Hassler
HHC/Commo/Recon/2/503d

I was in jump school when it took place. The DI's made out like it was a hotel jump, but after I got to the 2nd Batt and met some of the guys who made it, I realized they were just jealous.

Bill Wyatt
HHC/2/503d

Hell, Bill, I'm jealous!! Missed both the practice jumps too, was in 3rd Field Hospital. Sadly, have come across more than a couple guys who claim the jump but didn't make it. Guess they never heard of a jump manifest. Then again, army paperwork... Ed

I was in C/2/503 -- July 1966-July 1967. When we went to the corner of the C Company area and all 2nd Bat was there. There was a stirring excitement in the air. We were blocked from going into town. When the Col. said we were going to make a combat jump, most of all the EM troopers starting hollering, the Sergeants did not jump up. They realized what we were heading into. They did not let us know where the jump was going to be. Some of us started thinking about Hanoi, and this was going to be all the rest of the Airborne units. I know I did not sleep, mostly getting our chutes and cleaning our weapons, and equipment. I did not write any letters home, others did.

It was hard getting all our gear on, and taking little steps. We needed help in getting up, and getting on to the C-130s, we were packed in. When we were Airborne, they started giving us the information on the jump area, a place I never heard of. I didn't care, all I was doing was saying a prayer that I would be down there helping out and doing what we can to secure the area.

Just to let you know I did not 'jump', I fell forward out of the plane. It was quick and we were down fast and securing the area, receiving sniper fire and firing into the wood lines. We saw one of our troopers hanging on the tree, about 200-250 feet up. His last name is Hill, from weapons platoon I believe. The Jump Manifest is located at: www.173airborne.com/manifest.htm

Jaime (Jimmy) Castillo
C/2/503d

(continued....)



I was gone before the jump. However, I think most paratroopers all wish to make a combat jump. After all, that's what we volunteered for, trained for and practiced for. Of course, being a bit older now, I have to wonder about the practicality of going into combat with all the attendant confusion via a method that usually gets a bit confused. I believe the "fog of war" raises pretty high. That said, I wish I had one of those little gold stars.

You asked about practice jumps in Vietnam. I have a really shitty story to tell and have told it several times previously. But you can use it if you want. Perhaps in June or July of 65 we made a practice jump. The rumor mill had us jumping into Pleiku. We ended up walking out the tail ramp. But back to my shitty story.

I believe I was the lowest ranking officer in the brigade and was told that, I would be the "pusher" as we prepared to load the caribou's, that we were to jump. Everything was normal until the jump-master gave the order to "stand up". At that, my fellow jumpers thought it would be fun to entertain the pilots by jumping up and down, in unison and then bouncing side to side, in unison. For those of you lacking aeronautical experience, a caribou is a small plane, and was being thrown around in the air by the jumpers. Pilots think this is cute when they do it. But they get the ugly face when the aircraft gets yanked out of their hands by a bunch of crazed killers.



Junction City

The green light came on and we all headed toward the tailgate. I did not have to push anyone. For the non jumpers (legs) out there, it is very important to wait until the static line of the guy in front of you pops up before you exit, because if you get hit with the static line it will feel like a file. The guy in front of me jumps out and

spins around and is holding a little point and shoot camera with a built in flash. The flash goes off and I'm blinded. I can only see to the side, straight ahead is big black spot. I'm trying to see his static line with no success. Out of the corner of my eye I see the green light go out and the red light come on. I'm in no mood to return to the base with the pissed off pilots and perhaps miss out on the big bucks they paid us for jumping, so I jump.

I solved the mystery of the missing static line. It found my left forearm, scraping a layer or two of skin off. After confirming that I had a parachute over my head and not someone's laundry, I began looking around, trying to find the drop zone. Off in the distance I can see a row of trucks and parachutes in the paddy near them. Looking straight down I see some high tension wires and a river between where I'm headed and the drop zone. I think I made 7 slips and managed to just clear the river, landing in the bottom of the paddy.

You will recall that the paddies were fertilized with "night soil" (shit). Being on the downhill side and the fact that I came in fast as a result of slipping, I was buried up to mid-thigh in that stuff. No PLF. Getting out necessitated not collapsing the chute and wallowing around until I was completely covered. Eventually I got unstuck and back to the trucks where the First Sergeant said, while trying to maneuver down wind, *"Sir, you'll be riding in the back"*.

Jim Robinson
FO/B/2/503d

I was on the operation, but arrived by Huey. I remember the C-130s coming over at low altitude and tailgates down. My exact thoughts were *"Shit, somebody jumped in and it wasn't me"*.

Bruce Deville
C/3/319th FO for 2nd Batt

I and others made the jump but there is no record of us as we were in country for 6-7 days before "Junction City 1". Names like Jack Croxdale, Doug Carpenter, Bill Boehm, myself and others were left off by the queers in the rear. One guy that came in with us was named Leyva.....his name was added to the list on Charlie Co. years later. Don't know how it was done, but someone pursued it. I described the jump in the book, *"Blood On The Risers."*

John Leppelmann
173d

(continued....)



On February 22, 1967 I participated in the Brigade's historical first combat jump, in South Vietnam spear-heading the operation, "Junction City."

As I recall we were told of the operation a few days before the event. The day before the jump, our squad leader informed us how we were to assemble once we landed on the Drop Zone. We were told to assemble according to a specific color of smoke. Early on the morning of the jump (it was a very dark morning), we were trucked to the airport with all our personal gear, 3-5 days "C-rations," grenades, ammo for our weapons, plus extra M-60 ammo.

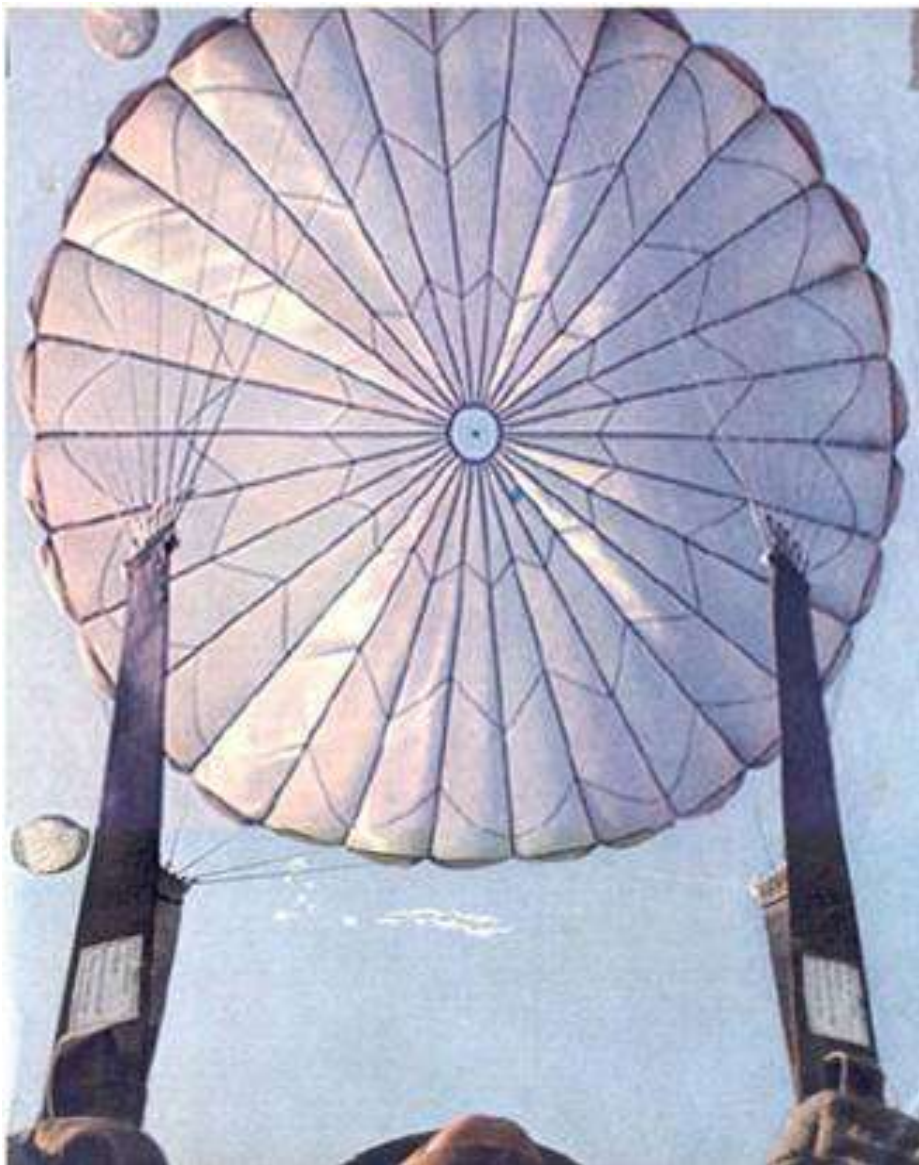
The trucks took us directly onto the tarmac behind the parked C-130's with the tail gate down. We had a parachute-reserve-large bag with a long cord (quick release just before landing). A special holder for our weapons was also issued. All our personal gear-food-ammo-water was packed in the large bag, with our weapon in the special holder. The parachute-reserve was the first equipment we put on. Next came the weapon holder which was tied to our right leg, the big bag dangling in front, from our waist to our knees. We were now ready to board. We assembled in two single parallel lines and began to walk. We were hunched over by all the weight. It appeared as if we were walking on all fours. When all were aboard, the tail gate lifted and the plane began to taxi. When seated, it felt as if our backside was elevated.

From the moment we climbed onto the trucks, until the actual jump, I was impressed by the total silence. There was no talking, even while in flight, the silence continued. You looked at the troopers opposite you and saw the seriousness, the concern, the controlled fear on their faces. I'm sure I had the same look.

The actual descent lasted about one minute. Our recon platoon assembled quickly, and just as quickly we were on our way into the surrounding jungle beginning the 2-3 day mission.

It wasn't until years later that I realized February 22d was George Washington's birthday. A coincidence?

Augie Scarino
C/2/503d



Junction City -- Life Magazine

Note

See February 2010,
Issue 12 of our
newsletter for a
Special Edition
featuring *Operation*
Junction City and the
combat jump. Ed



WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?

By John Arnold

1RAR



“Moving in 5” outside a small ville. John Arnold, on left back to camera, Keith “Pommie” Newman with bandolier, Paul Israel smoking, Kevin “Cricket” Lester right rear.

On October 23, 1965 Charlie Company 1RAR passed through the wire on another bloody job but none of us really knew why or what we were looking for. The job had no operational name and although somewhere in War Zone “D”, none of us had much of a clue as to where we were heading and why we were going there. I THINK this was an independent company operation but can’t recall if this was to assist another unit not belonging to The Herd.

The thought among we who were not deemed important enough to be told anything was that it was a bastard of a thing so soon after returning from Ben Cat and The Iron Triangle and then securing the of AO for the incoming Big Red 1. That particular job (if you remember dear reader) started around September and had carried on until about mid-October. During that period of time my platoon, 8 Pl ‘Body Snatchers’ C Coy 1RAR, had almost been blown to extinction by booby traps, mines and “a bit of gunplay”. We were down to around 14 men for the whole platoon.

On this little skip to the ‘ULU’ (Malay for Jungle) we had been divided up into almost 2 full strength sections (US Squads) and were kept as the ready reaction force for company headquarters. It started off fairly routine on that first day and our boss on that trip was a Lieutenant in the company, Michel Le Barr who, because of his surname, was affectionately referred to as “Frenchy Le Barr,” apparently was from a French line and had served in the British army before joining the Australian army.

He was a good bloke and a good officer and had the most remarkable stable of stories one could ever wish to develop. You could be sitting with this man and he would ask you to say the first word that popped into

your head and using the word you chose he would regale you with a truly riotous (and ribald) story.

Anyhow, later in the afternoon we were waddling along through an area and I moved to my right quite quickly to avoid the attention of a Krait snake suspended from a low bush and right where I had intended to walk. In doing this I bumped into Frenchy. He looked at me and I just said “Krait” and he nodded his head with a comment that they were nasty little bastards, with which I readily agreed.



Well that bloody snake put me in a spot as the incident must have alerted Frenchy to the fact that I was in close proximity to him and shortly after that he called me up to him and pointed to a small signal parachute that had become snagged in a tree. I said something like; “*Just as well it didn’t set the tree on fire when it got caught,*” thinking nothing more of it. A minute or so later he said “*Arnold, shimmy up that tree and retrieve that ‘chute.*” I looked at him and said; “*Who, me Sir?*” He said “*Yes, you sir.*” I thought. “*Oh you bastard, and here I was thinking you were a good bloke.*”

Anyway, I kept my thoughts to myself and started out for the tree but by this time all the other blokes in the platoon had stopped for a smoke, watching out while they watched me.

Now, this tree was only about 5 meters high with no branches or limbs on the first 3 meters or so, topped by a substantial outburst of growth around the trunk, then the remaining 2 meters just a stand of denuded branches and limbs reaching up to the sky with the chute draped over most of them. Just as well I grew up in the bush as I was able to get up the almost smooth trunk, reach the foliage and get beyond that until I could reach the chute and pull it down around me. Now, I don’t have to tell you my thoughts at this time as I just knew that every damn VC and/or NVA soldier within a 20 mile radius was just zoning in on this inoffensive little Aussie soldier and they were going to take my poor government-owned arse out of the picture.

With great relief I got back down the tree, rolled the chute up under my arm, which was no problem even with my rifle, M79, M72 and ruck all hanging off me at varying degrees of position, weight and pain. I walked back to Frenchy and said; “*Here you are boss,*” and he said to me; “*Oh I don’t want it, I thought that you might like it for your car when you get home!*” Hello, I am a 20 year old baggy arse grunt in the Aussie army and I DIDN’T EVEN OWN A BLOODY CAR at that time.

(continued....)



Well I carried that chute with me until we arrived back at Bien Hoa and eventually took it back home and did get to use it for a few months until some bastard who liked it took it off my car one night and I never saw it since.



A quiet moment in the boonies near Bien Hoa. L-R: Fred "Tassie" Watson, Alan "Two Feathers" Wilson-Brown, John Arnold wearing watch, and Bill Beattie.

After that little interlude the job quickly deteriorated so that it became something of a nightmare for many of us in different ways. That same afternoon we were making our way to a night harbour position when mortars started dropping in among us. Naturally this caused a bit of concern among the company and there were several very close calls. Apparently we had been caught in a 'Friendly Fire' situation but I never was able to find out from whom this particular little bit of excitement was initiated.

I recall our OC, Major Jim (GENTLEMAN) Tattum, calling up on the company radio requesting an immediate ceasefire. After a couple of tries with no result he called again and breaking every conceivable rule of radio communications, gave an extremely heated message to whoever the culprits were by demanding that they cease fire immediately or else he was personally going to join up with them and knockout whoever was giving the fire orders. Very quickly after that message the mortars stopped but, unfortunately, not before some of our blokes had been affected from the experience.

That night we harboured up in a company position and maintained our usual night time routine during which there were a couple of attempts by Charlie to probe our perimeter. It is marvelous what a well-placed hand grenade can do to disturb such antics while not giving away our true position.

The next morning while moving out our 9Platoon had just started their patrol when they spotted a group of 20 or so VC and they went into an immediate ambush which resulted in about half of the group of VC being killed and a number of blood trails indicating there

would have been several more wounded and dragged away. The end result of this incident saw a section commander awarded a bravery medal for his actions in the contact.

Sometime later our platoon was ordered out and our 14 stalwarts shook out ready to have a bit of a stroll in the scrub. My mate, Al Hansen, and I were the scout team on this day and we were at the front of the platoon getting instructions and compass bearings from Jock McKillop, one of our platoon section commanders. We three formed a sort of triangle with each of us probably 12 inches apart.

We had just checked the bearing and looked to the direction in which we would be moving to find reference points when Al turned to me -- I thought he was going to ask which of us was going to lead out. As I looked at him waiting for him to speak, I saw a small trickle of blood come out of his throat just under the Adams Apple and he began to slump to the ground. I didn't even hear the shot that got him, and as I looked to where the shot may have come from I could see nothing other than the trees and bushes.

Brian Collet, the platoon sergeant, came up with the company medic and while the remainder of the platoon gave covering fire we carried Al out to a casevac. I don't recall much more of that day or the next and we returned to Bien Hoa soon after this and our next warning for operation was given for November 5th which, as we all know, was the beginning of that wonderful event known as THE BLOODY HUMP.



Funeral escort for my mate and scout and partner Al Hansen KIA 10/25/65

After Al's death I carried what my doctor's diagnosed as "Survivors Guilt" for many years until I met Al's only living blood relative, his sister, Denise, and her husband around 2006 in Brisbane Qld.



~ Spectacular Artwork by a Sky Soldier ~

Sky Soldier Henry Galindo, HHC/1/503d, '64-'66 was kind enough to share some of his fantastic sketches and graphics he personally produced, such as this fine piece here. We'll run more of Henry's excellent work in future issues of our newsletter. *Airborne Henry!*



Is Paratrooper-Sex Work?

A 2/503d battalion commander, we'll call him Dexter, who had just returned to Camp Zinn, Bien Hoa from Okinawa, was about to start the morning briefing. While waiting for coffee to be served, he decided to pose a question to his staff officers assembled in the mess hall.



COL George Dexter

He explained that his wife had been a bit frisky the other night on the island, and he failed to get his usual amount of sound sleep before catching his flight back to Vietnam. He posed the question of just how much of sex was "work" and how much of it was "pleasure?"



LTC Bob Carmichael

The S-1, a rather rotund Major from Texas, we'll call him Carmichael, chimed in with 75-25% in favor of work. Then a Captain, the Bn commo officer, we'll call him Goodwin, said, it was 50-50%. A prematurely balding 2nd Lieutenant anti-tank platoon leader, we'll call him Vose, responded with 25-75% in favor of pleasure, depending upon how much cheap wine he had been drinking at the time.



MAJ Tom Goodwin

There being no consensus, Dexter turned to a Private standing nearby, we'll call him Gettel, who was in-charge of making the coffee.



CPT Bill Vose

"Private Gettel, what do you think?" asked the Colonel. Without hesitation the young Private responded, *"Sir, it's gotta be 100% Pleasure."*



Somewhat surprised with the answer, the Colonel asked, *"And why do you say that, Private?"* SP4 Jim Gettel

"Well Sir, if there was any work involved, you officers would have me doing it for you."

A silent shock filled the room, when the Colonel replied, *"Airborne, Private!"*

[Note: Photos shown are purely coincidental]



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BEGINS PROJECT FOR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

By Terri Moon Cronk
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- More than three decades after the war's end, the Defense Department has begun a project to pay tribute to the nation's Vietnam War veterans.



LTC Holliday

The **50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration** was spawned from the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

"It was a very important time period for veterans, because most Vietnam veterans as a whole never received the homecoming that our troops receive now," said Army Lt. Col. Hunter Holliday, public affairs officer for the commemoration.

At the center of the project is a website, **"50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration,"** at www.vietnamwar50th.com which will serve as a clearinghouse for information on commemoration activities once it is fully functional, a milestone expected this spring.

Information gleaned from the website is expected to be used for myriad purposes, such as to chronicle facts, provide educational materials, and offer resources for a commemorative partners program, Colonel Holliday said.

The partners program will comprise guidance and materials for agencies, veterans groups, local government and nongovernment organizations to conduct their own Vietnam War commemoration activities.

The website is expected to play a major role in the campaign, said Jeff Wilson, who handles marketing for the project, noting it will be highly interactive and will include content on historical events, a timeline, photos, documents, video and audio. A calendar will list major Defense-sponsored events.

(continued....)



The website offers a prelude of activities and ceremonies to:

- Honor Vietnam War veterans and their families -- including prisoners of war and those listed as missing in action -- for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States.
- Highlight armed forces service during the Vietnam War, in addition to contributions made by government and private organizations.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by U.S. citizens.
- Highlight the advances in technology, science and medicine in military research made during the war.
- Recognize contributions and sacrifices made by U.S. allies during the war.

"Hopefully [the commemoration] will be a healing process for the veterans who were never recognized properly when they came home," Colonel Holliday said, noting the volatile political landscape that surrounded the war.

For more retiree news and information, please visit www.retires.af.mil

[Sent in by MG Jack Leide, CO, C/2/503d, '66-'67]

FBI Arrests Alleged Phony SF Colonel

By Bryant Jordan
Military.com

A man who claimed to be a retired Green Beret colonel and an expert in the international sex-slave trade has been arrested in Maryland by the FBI.

An FBI spokeswoman said William G. "Bill" Hillar was charged with mail fraud in connection with a scheme to use bogus military and academic credentials toward teaching and training employment.

For years Hillar allegedly scammed universities, non-profit groups and law enforcement organizations by claiming his daughter was kidnapped by human traffickers in Asia and that he spent months in a failed effort to rescue her. He parlayed his "expertise" and faux Army Special Forces career into thousands of dollars in teaching and lecture fees.

[Sent in by my older VN vet SF brother Bob Clark, different dads. Ed]

"This asshole had the guts to show up at our convention last year."

Bob (Big Bear) Clark, 1st/5th/7th SF

BB. I suggest you and your guys invite him to your reunion in Orlando this year for a *special* Special Forces welcome. You know, drinks, slaps on the back. Ed

FAREWELL TO ONE OF OUR TROOPERS



LTC Dick Noonan

This past Saturday I attended a Memorial Mass for Richard B. (Dick) Noonan, LTC (Ret), who served in the 82nd, the 5th Special Forces, and the 173d. The Mass was held in North Hollywood, just down the street from Toluca Lake, CA, where Bob Hope lived. A grandson of Richard Noonan spoke about his grandfather and how he respected Major Charles Watters, a Chaplain who was serving with the 2/503d in Dak To in June and November of 1967, and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

As a member of the Army Airborne Infantry, Dick served with the 82nd Airborne (Ft Bragg NC) , 5th Special Forces, (Berlin for the US Commanders Office and Heidelberg for Commander in Chief's Office). He served in Vietnam with the 173d Airborne, retiring at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1974. His commendations were many over his career including Silver and Bronze Stars for valor in combat and the Purple Heart.

Did Richard Noonan serve in the 2/503d? It sure sounded like it, but his son and daughter did not have his military records nor did they know which battalion he served with in Vietnam. LTC Noonan died on December 11, 2010, of bladder cancer and he was buried at the Williamette National Cemetery in Oregon, he was 78 years old.



The Colonel was involved with a documentary film company called "44 Blue Productions", in Studio City, CA. His son-in-law is Rasha Drachkovitch and he runs the film company now. His email is: rdrachkovitch@44blue.com. If anyone from the 2/503d knew an officer by the name of Richard B. Noonan, they would like to hear some stories about him.

**Ray Rameriz
Recon/4/503d**



Mortarmen and Their Piss Tubes

Good buddy A.B. Garcia (the *Aussino*) of 4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, '65-'66, found himself in Australia after the war and discovered, "Hey! They have a lot of beer here!!" That was enough for him to take his lovely bride Ursula to Oz where they've made their home all these years. On our trip together back to Vietnam in '01, I gave A.B. the nickname "*Aussino*", a cross between an American Chicano and an Aussie....it seemed to fit.

Here's our cammo'd hero below doing his best impersonation of an Aborigine Tribesman. It's amazing what beer makes people do at times. Ed



A.B. (the *Aussino*) down under blowing his big didgeridoo

THE CHAPTER EXCURSION TO THE WILD MURRAY RIVER AT "THE HOUSES BY THE WATER" 'WAHGUNYAH'

(Excerpt) "The chapter's end of year get together for 2010 was held in the border towns of Wahgunyah, Victoria and Corowa, NSW basing ourselves at the Victorian TPI units in Wahgunyah and roaming the countryside to harass the local inhabitants and plunder their treasures.

After some people did a taste test on the chocolates on display, the group converged on the 'Tea Room' for morning break. There was a good selection of fare and I think the scones were the highlight due to their size. So much that I don't think anyone finished their "Devonshire Tea" completely, with Garcia even buying a couple just so he could study them and regale his grandchildren on the size of them.

We are not sure what the sign REALLY refers to or means "Are you in the Club?" but trust there are Surprises on the way for the GARCIA'S! The only Mexican American Comanche Australian to ever be seen playing the didgeridoo using a plastic tube with rainwater down the pipe. As he never checked what was inside it first it was just as well Garcia BLEW instead of SUCKING the pipe!"

John Arnold
1RAR

(Photo and excerpt stolen from the Newsletter of the Southern Hemisphere Chapters "*SITREP*", Vol. #3, Issue #11, Feb. thru May 2011. Thanks Ray & John]



"I love the infantry because they are the underdogs. They are the mud-rain-frost-and-wind boys. They have no comforts, and they even learn to live without the necessities. And in the end they are the guys that wars can't be won without."

Ernie Pyle

[Sent in by Jim Jackson, B/2/503d]



173d Airborne Brigade Marker at Arlington Cemetery

As most of you know, the Association leadership has assigned Chapter I (Sigholtz Capital Chapter) operational and financial responsibility for updating (replacing) the 173d Airborne Brigade Marker in Arlington Cemetery. The upgrade, approved by Association President Roy Scott, will reflect that fact that the brigade was reactivated in 2000; other than changing the wording, the new marker will closely resemble the original marker including both the New Zealand and Australian Army Crests.



In order to replace the marker and conduct appropriate protocol events, Chapter I needs to raise \$3,000 - \$3,500. The stonecutter has not yet provided a definitive price for the marker and the cost of installment. The Chapter will also provide a wreath appropriate to the dedication ceremony. In response to an appeal sent out to each of you some weeks ago, donations of more than \$2,400.00 have been received. Contributions include \$800.00 from our Australian brothers (Chapters 23 and 27), and \$900.00 from members of Chapter 1 plus a number of donations from individual Sky Soldiers. Chapter VII (Florida-Jim Bradley) has indicated that a donation will be forthcoming soon.

The generous donations and pledges from this small group of people is greatly appreciated but does not reflect the nature of this memorial stone nor its importance to those gold star survivors and veterans who come to Arlington to remember their fallen, as well as our collective service. Large donations are not required if our many Chapters would pitch in and contribute a share of the total cost -- the job can be done.

Chapter 1 intends to dedicate the new marker on May 7th 2011 in conjunction with the annual "Reading of the Names." Specific information will be placed on the Chapter 1 Website and circulated to the Association Chapters through Sky Soldier newsletter, this newsletter and the Association Webpage.

Please send your checks made payable to the "Sigholtz Chapter" to: Chapter 1, P.O. Box 15133, Arlington, VA 22215-0133. www.173dabnchap1.org

Ken Smith
Chapter 1, Treasurer

A Brother Coming Home....Again

Here are a couple of recent photos of me assisting the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC) School of Excellence (SOE) Commandant in awarding recent Commando graduates of an advance skills course at Camp Morehead, Afghanistan.



Col. James Velky, center, with his Commandos

I'm due to redeploy to CONUS (back to Virginia Beach, where I reside) and back to Joint Warfighting Center as a SOF Instructor/Controller for Modelling and Simulation this month (January), but meanwhile am keeping about as safe as I can inside the wire... however, we've all taken our chances every time outside the wire on convoys.



James on left in Afghanistan

James L. Velky, COL (Ret)
Former SGT D/2/503rd Inf and SP4 Door Gunner,
Casper Platoon '69-'70

"First In, First Out"

James

Welcome home, again, brother!



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The Commander In Chief at Tucson Memorial



"The loss of these wonderful people should make every one of us strive to be better in our private lives - to be better friends and neighbors, co-workers and parents. And if, as has been discussed in recent days, their deaths help usher in more civility in our public discourse, let's remember that it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy, but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to our challenges as a nation, in a way that would make them proud.

It should be because we want to live up to the example of public servants like John Roll and Gabby Giffords, who knew first and foremost that we are all Americans, and that we can question each other's ideas without questioning each other's love of country, and that our task, working together, is to constantly widen the circle of our concern so that we bequeath the American dream to future generations."

President Obama

And Old Trooper Suffering From Battle Fatigue, Shell Shock & PTSD

Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don't do the following he will surely die. Each morning fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal. No chores. No nagging. Oh yes, and make love several times a week. Do this for the next year and he'll regain his health completely!



[Sent in by Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d]

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me; I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long way, and some of the roads weren't paved.

Will Rogers



~ Drop on Corregidor ~

**By Major Thomas C. Hardman
503rd PRCT**

The lead bombardier spotted his target through a break in the clouds that hung over Manila Bay. Seconds later, a B-24 load of 500 pound bombs whistled down on "The Rock". The air blitz of Corregidor had begun.

One by one, Liberators of the 13th Air Force's 307th Bomb Group passed over cloud-obscured Cavite, made 180 degree turns over Manila's docks and came in for their bomb runs on the tiny island bastion that stands like a sentry at the entrance of the harbor. The Libs dropped their 500-pounders from 17,000 feet, and 85 percent of them blanketed the target. Tremendous blasts tossed smoke and debris more than 3,000 feet into the air. One string of bombs found an underground dump, and the resulting explosions appeared to race along an L pattern as the earth erupted.

This strike was made shortly after noon on January 23. By the 17th of February, Corregidor was to become the most heavily bombed island per square foot of any invaded area in the Southwest Pacific.

The green light for the air blitz on "The Rock" had been flashed several days earlier in the form of an unqualified compliment to airpower. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, and General George C. Kenney, commanding general of the Far East Air Forces, were discussing ways and means of capturing Corregidor, held as a bloody symbol since its day of surrender back in May of 1942.



The Signal Station Topside
(Signal Corps photo)

"General," remarked the FEAF commander, "Let me take Corregidor from the air."

General MacArthur hesitated but a moment and replied, *"All right, George, go to it."* And the discussion ended.

The 13th's Liberators, which had gashed the jugular vein of Jap supply arteries to the south with strikes on such "out-of-reach" targets as Truk, Yap and Balikpapan, were the first of the big parade of heavies, medium and

fighters to be thrown against the three and three-quarter mile long island.

Next came three veteran groups of the 5th Air Force — the 90th's Jolly Rogers, the Ken's Men of the 43rd and the 22nd's Red Raiders. These were the boys who had pasted the Japs almost daily since the 1942 days at Port Moresby. B-24s of the 7th Air Force joined in from their bases in the Central Pacific.

For two weeks, the heavies poured it on in rotation. Enemy anti-aircraft batteries, feeble from the start, were knocked out in short order, and by the first week in February, B-24 photo-recons could circle unmolested 3,000 feet over the island.

The Japs had dug in. This called for the A-20s of the 3rd Attack Group. The Grim Reapers they are called. These low-level bombers and strafers rounded out General Kenney's team for the first half. 7th Air Libs in the morning, 13th Air Force B-24s at noon, 5th Air Force A-20s in the afternoon, and 5th Air Force Libs just before evening chow.

Ton by ton, the bombs rocked "The Rock." The heavies with their 500 and 1,000-pounders blew up gasoline dumps, neutralized artillery positions and dug deep into the underground labyrinth, while the A-20s skimmed in low with bombs and .50 caliber bullets to pound away at the cliffs and ridges where Jap troops were burrowing in for a stand against inevitable invasion.

Then came the fighters....P-38s, P-47s and the newly arrived P-51s....with 1,000-pound bombs shackled under each wing. Buzzing the island from every conceivable angle, they made 134 sorties and dropped 133 tons of bombs. They dropped them into cave mouths, barracks building doorways, gun pits, and, just to make sure, they fired 3,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition into the targets.



Ruins of San Jose Barrio, looking from Malinta Hill toward Topside. (Signal Corps photo)

(continued....)





Post Hospital, Fort Mills

In 25 days, Corregidor had been shaken by 3,128 tons of bombs in target areas totaling little more than one square mile....a record unmatched in the Southwest Pacific. By contrast, Lae, in the two months prior to its invasion, had taken less than 1,000 tons. During the weeks preceding the Finschafen landing, Allied bombers had expended 134 tons over that target, Cape Gloucester had taken 5,000 tons of bombs, but they had fallen on an area of over nine square miles. Nearly 2,000 tons had blasted Hollandia, but here again the area covered at least ten square miles. Wake Island, with its two square miles, probably had been Corregidor's closest statistical competitor, absorbing almost 2,000 tons of bombs during a relatively brief bombardment period.

Now, with Corregidor's surface defenses and much of its underground installations battered to a pulp, the time had come for one of the most difficult operations in airborne military history.

At 0830 on the morning of February 16, a C-47 appeared over the hazy horizon, flying at 1,000 feet. Lt Col John Lackey, CO of the 317th Troop Carrier Group, was at the controls and behind him sat 24 hardened veterans of the 503rd Parachute infantry Regiment. The smoke of the final combined naval and air bombardments still billowed over Corregidor as the C 47 neared "Topside" -- a rocky plateau with its two tiny "jump" areas, the largest of which was 1,700 by 700 feet and perilously close to 500 foot sheer cliffs. Eight paratroops tumbled from the big transport.

Other C-47s followed close behind, flying in two strung-out trains. They came in nosed slightly downward on a gentle glide at about 110 miles an hour, a thousand feet above sea level but less than 600 feet above the bomb shattered terrain. Jumpmasters counted four seconds at the "go points" before loosing their eight-man "sticks." The areas were so small that to drop nine men at a time would have the last man falling into the bay.

The wind velocity increased and the Jumpmasters' counts went up to 10 seconds as the two sky trains

passed the dropping area and diverged north and south, swinging in two great counter rotating circles for their second and third eight man runs.


For one hour and 20 minutes, 50 C-47s sowed their human cargo on the plateau until the ground was literally blanketed with white parachutes.

All during the paratroop operation, A-20s had made strafing runs over the neck of the chop shaped island, erecting an effective wall between the main portion of "The Rock," where our men had landed, and the tail of the chop where surviving Japs had formed into a strong pocket.



Colonel George M. Jones, CO of the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, stands beside the original Fort Mills Plaque.

(Signal Corps photo)

Paratroops of the 503rd Regiment alone held Corregidor for 40 minutes, and at 1030 the first waves of landing craft hit the island's only beach. The men walked ashore with their rifles on their backs. It took some hard, hand-to-hand fighting to dig the Japs out of the holes they had burrowed into, but on March 1, General MacArthur announced that the destruction of the enemy garrison on Corregidor had been completed for all practical purposes. Four thousand, two hundred and fifteen enemy bodies already had been counted while hundreds of others had been sealed in the tunnels and caves of "The Rock." Our losses: 136 killed, 531 wounded, 8 missing. 



Individual Efforts ~ Our Memorial

Since the Dedication of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial in June, 2010, I have received a number of emails and notes regarding the Memorial, its appearance, and its appropriateness as well as a few personal accolades. While I appreciate all these messages and well wishes, I would like to make one thing clear and wish that you would forward it on to your Chapter Members and friends.



The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation Board of Directors consisted of eight members. It was my privilege to be designated as the "public face" of the Foundation and it was easy to fill that role because of the number of talented people that had my back. But the Memorial never would have been built, much less be as magnificent as it is, without the individual efforts of so many dedicated individuals.

First, there would not be a Memorial if **Terry Modglin** had not picked up the torch in 2005 and won approval to establish a separate Foundation at the 2006 reunion. Aided by **Jean O'Neill**, Terry was the enabler who opened the door to this project.

Don Dali, one of the most talented and creative people I know, pulled together the Memorial's conceptual design based on foundation member input and his own vision of what it could and should be. He translated this vision into plans, did the contracting, spent countless hours examining each detail of every plan, and then provided needed oversight of construction activities. He worked with our lawyers to ensure that all contracts were appropriate and in his spare time designed the memorial Coin that we cherish and carry. We would not have the beautiful structure that sits at the entrance to the *Walk of Honor* without this creative and dedicated Foundation Board member.

Bob Wolfgang, Director of Heraldry, was drafted to supervise the vital task of determining what data would be on the granite panels. He put together a team of dedicated researchers and sent them back into the archives again and again to verify names of KIA's and the accuracy of records. No detail was so insignificant that it was not double checked. Once the data was assembled, Bob worked extensively with the Columbus Monument artists to develop and lay out the panels and with his wife's assistance, read, reread and reread again the proofs of each table. His contributions are reflected in the almost flawless work on the granite tables that we dedicated on 1 June 2010.

Craig Ford, the Foundation treasurer, pinched each dollar until George Washington cried. Despite the unpopularity of the job, he was our fiscal watchdog. In addition to managing and investing the Foundation's finances, he undertook the enormous task of keeping us squared away with the IRS and the State of Georgia, an unglamorous but

vital function. Craig also doubled as a logistician for the Foundation both in facilitating event execution and obtaining needed supplies.

Floyd Riester did a tremendous job on special projects, using the experience he had gained in the construction of the Rochester Memorial to move the Foundation's progress along. His now famous "*Rawhide Rides*" not only generated needed income but also brought us the publicity we needed to enlist support for our cause from a variety of donors. Floyd's liaison with the Fort Benning Garrison facilitated the pageantry that was evident at the dedication.

Karen Riester, who joined our Board late but had been an active supporter of the Board for many years, put together in a short amount of time all the protocol for the Dedication and accompanying events (not an insignificant task given the scope and delicacy of protocol endeavors), and also served as the vital link with our Gold Star families. The excellence of her planning and execution was evident in the flawless ceremony and events throughout the dedication weekend.

Ray Ramirez served as utility infielder, taking on every small task that did not fit into anyone's portfolio. Among other endeavors, Ray was instrumental in spreading information to veterans organizations and publicizing events. He made key inroads into obtaining corporate sponsorships, including our good friends from Avis and Delta Airlines. He established contacts with news media outlets and was our "public face" at numerous events, producing income that moved us toward our financial goal.

Sharon Goens, Gold Star sister of MOH recipient Don L. Michael, served as Recording Secretary for the Foundation.

Although not formally a member of our Foundation, I would be remiss if I did not mention the contributions of **General John R. Deane, Jr.** to the Memorial effort. "Uncle Jack" served as adviser and mentor, and devoted considerable effort in raising funds for our project. His wise counsel and advice was invaluable.

I am sure that I have overlooked many accomplishments of Board members and supporters, and for this I apologize. However, every Sky Soldier and friend of the Memorial Foundation needs to realize that our striking Memorial was the result of a collegiate organization dedicated to accomplishing this vital task, and not the product of a single individual. It was my privilege to work with this talented team.



Ken Smith

Memorial Foundation President



173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

~ National Memorial ~

Fort Benning, Georgia



Former G.I. Awarded DSC for Afghan Ambush

Knight Ridder/Tribune

January 24, 2011

MOORESVILLE, N.C. -- Former U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James Michael Takes, 27, has a difficult time putting into words the brotherhood that forms between Soldiers deployed overseas.

That bond is so strong, that when members of the 173d Airborne Brigade were ambushed during a mission in Afghanistan on Nov. 9, 2007, he risked his own life to help his friends and fellow Soldiers.

In recognition for his bravery in combat, Takes received the Distinguished Service Cross -- the Army's second-highest military decoration after the Medal of Honor -- during a ceremony at Mooresville Town Hall on Saturday morning.

"I am proud to be here in Mooresville to recognize a true American hero -- a hometown hero to Mooresville," said Col. William Ostlund, former commander of 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment.

During the ambush, Takes was providing cover gunfire so the rest of the unit, which was made up of American and Afghan troops, could make it to safety. He was shot in the arm while firing.

Takes later said that the group was nervous about the mission. It took place in an area they nicknamed Ambush Alley for its rugged and steep terrain. The terrain practically lends itself to that purpose, he said.

Even though he was knocked unconscious at one point, he continued to assist others once he recovered. He was shot in his other arm while trying to get another Soldier to safety. Unable to carry him any further, Takes administered first aid and gave the Soldier his own helmet to keep his head protected before once again going to assist others.

"Despite a completely desperate situation, the calm and decisive action from Staff Sgt. Takes saved his brothers-in-arms," said Maj. Matt Myer, who was Takes' company commander during the battle....

"Acting selfless and ensuring their safety above his own, knowing, if they were able, they would do the same for him."

Six American Soldiers were killed during the ambush, and Takes made sure to memorialize them during the ceremony.

"Thank you for a job well done in defending our freedoms," said Maj. Gen. Rodney Anderson.

After the ceremony, Takes expressed humility at being recognized.

"I feel like the third-string punter that someone handed the Super Bowl trophy to," he said. *"When it was a group effort, I'm just the one holding the trophy at the end."*

Takes said he believes the other Soldiers in his unit would have done the same thing for him. He said the situation dictated itself, and he simply did what he knew was right.

"I remember the majority of it, and I'm glad I do," Takes said. *"I embrace those moments. They changed my life."*

Born in Danville, Va., in 1984, Takes comes from a family of strong supporters and participants in the military. His sister, Jessica, is a Marine Corps recruiter and his father is also a Marine, said Takes' mother, Cindy Anderson.

Anderson said her son didn't tell her all of the details of the ambush. She has been learning more and more about what happened to him that day.

"That is James because he is so selfless," she said. *"I couldn't be prouder."*

Takes joined the Army in 2003 and was honorably discharged in 2009. He lives in Mooresville and is one of the partners at Ace Hardware on Brawley School Road.

Currently, he is attending classes at Mitchell Community College and plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to obtain his Masters of Business Administration.

**[Sent in by Buzz Cox, C/D/2/503d and
Larry Hampton, A/1/503]**



The *Love Love* was built to look as if it is sinking

French artist Julien Berthier has designed a fully functional boat to look as if it is sinking. The 6.5m (21ft) yacht was cut in half with a new keel and motor added so it remains in the sinking position while being fully functional. He describes it as *"the permanent and mobile image of a wrecked ship that has become a functional and safe leisure object."*



The Love Love. French drinking way too much wine again.

~ The Little Con Artist ~

This is little Kim from the village....she was a real shyster and con artist. She ran the whole group of kids with an iron fist. She would whip all of them with a bamboo switch and line them up if we were passing out any candy, trinkets, whatever. She also used to collect 3 C-Rats for washing a set of jungle fatigues. Went to the ville one day to see that she gave all the pants to one, all the shirts to another, all the underwear, handkerchiefs, whatever, to yet another. She would give them one can, period, for all their work, and she'd reap all the profit. She'd get so ticked at us for popping them open with a P-38! I don't think they wanted to sell them as much as having food to last for a while.



Jerry with his little friend Kim in An Do Valley north of North English.

I gave up my M-16 when one of the squad left the field--carried the 79 for a while until we got someone who would be grenadier. I liked carrying it. We had a guy named Johnson who could put 14 M-79 rounds into the air before the first one hit. Of course, that was under ideal conditions while in the perimeter. He'd bend over a box of rounds and go to town when we got fired up. It was like having your own mortar support!

We would periodically fire off a round in the night as H&I fire. We started playing games with those things, and what began as a random shot into a suspected VC trail or wet line became a game of *"I'll bet I can get one closer to the perimeter than you can."* There were some tense moments after that "thunk" sound. Eventually, we were getting a little too dangerous for our own good and the LT made us stop.

Jerry Sopko
Team Leader, D/4/503d, '69-'70





MEDALS

Here is the web site address where our guys can get all the information on how to obtain their medals, a new DD-214 if needed, etc.



Web Site: <http://www.archives.gov/>

It takes a while to get any medals you were awarded but the government will send them to you at no cost.

Individual Awards you should be eligible for:

1. If you were wounded you should get a Purple Heart.
2. Vietnam Campaign Medal (you have to buy this one the Government does not give it to you)
3. US Vietnam Service Medal
4. RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm Medal
5. National Defense Service Medal
6. Good Conduct Medal
7. Combat Infantry Badge (if you had an Infantry MOS)
8. Parachute Wings
9. Army Shooting Badges (Sharpshooter, Marksman or Expert on weapons you qualified with and noted on your DD-214)

Unit Ribbons:

1. Presidential Unit Citation
2. Meritorious Unit Citation

There may be more but you need to get an updated DD-214 to see if you have any others coming. I know I qualified on more weapons than the M-14 but only received the shooting badge for Sharpshooter on the M-14 as that was all that was on my DD-214. I am not sure when you were in Nam but in the first year we never got Air Medals or a Bronze Star. If you were there after '65/'66, you may be eligible to receive both those medals as most guys I know who were there in later years were awarded them automatically.

I hope this helps. Just remember the government works slow so expect it to take several months before you get everything.

Take care brothers,

Airborne, All The Way!!

Craig Ford

C Company, 1/503d

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

3/64 to 4/66

Email: cdford1503@frontier.com



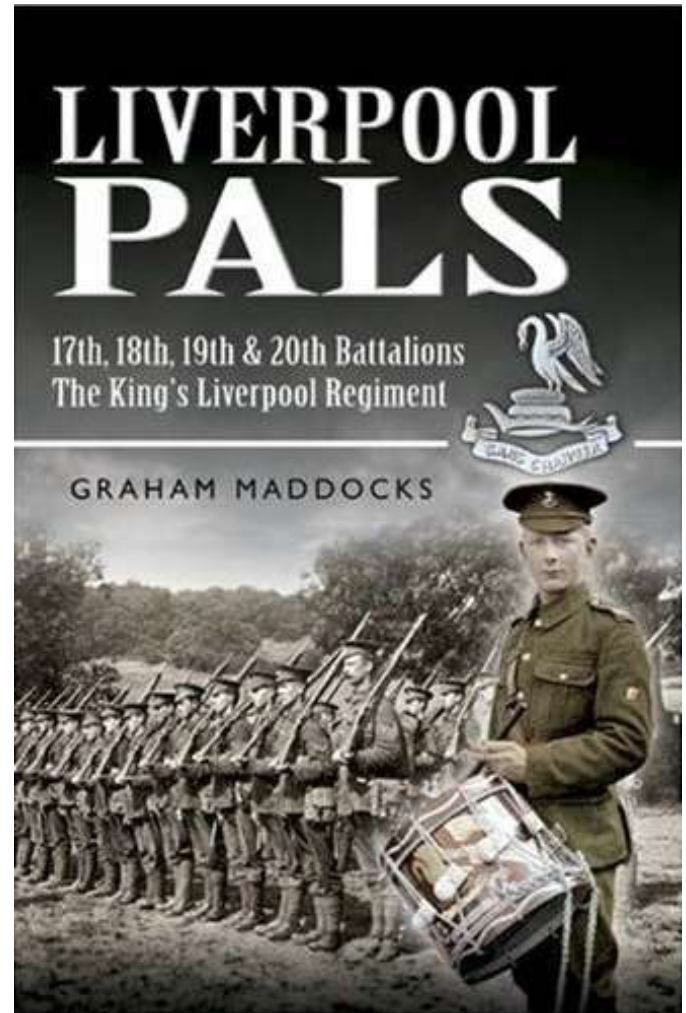
Craig in Sydney '05

Thanks 1st Bat Guy!

The Pals Battalions

[Sent in by Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP]

PALS is a poignant name from the First World War. Had to Google it and there are a lot of references to the PALS battalions, the following excerpt is from Wikipedia.



The **Pals Battalions** of World War I were specially constituted units of the British Army comprising men who had enlisted together in local recruiting drives, with the promise that they would be able to serve alongside their friends, neighbors and work colleagues ("*pals*"), rather than being arbitrarily allocated to regular Army regiments.

At the outbreak of World War I Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War) believed that overwhelming manpower was the key to winning the war and he set about looking for ways to encourage men of all classes to join.

(continued....)



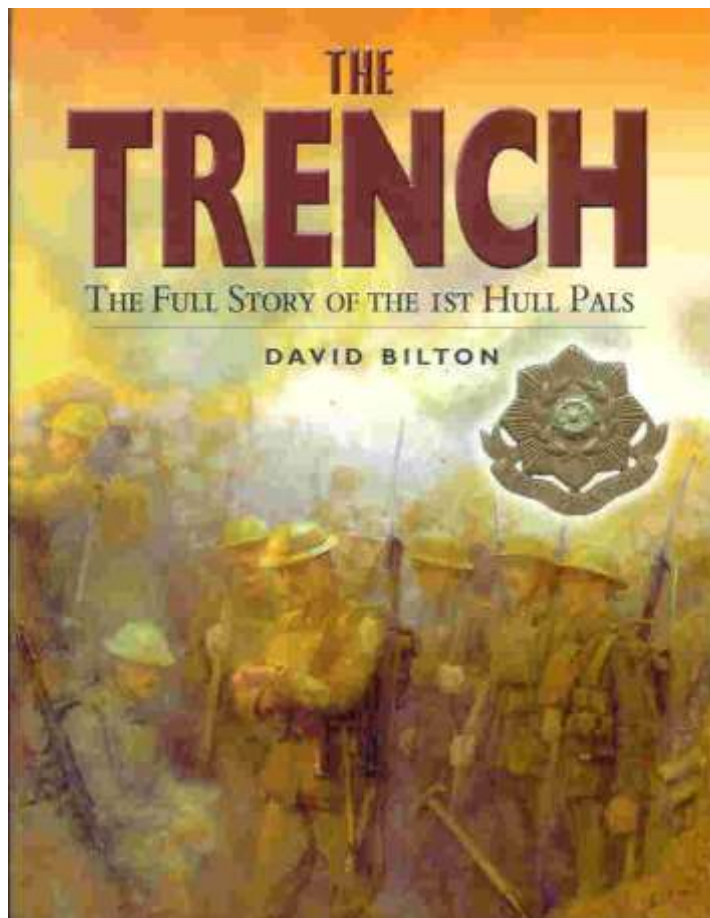
General Sir Henry Rawlinson suggested that men would be more inclined to enlist in the Army if they knew that they were going to serve alongside their friends and work colleagues. He appealed to London stockbrokers to raise a battalion of men from workers in the City of London to set an example. 1600 men enlisted in the 10th (Service) Bn Royal Fusiliers, the so-called "Stockbrokers' Battalion", within a week in late August 1914.

A few days later, Edward George Villiers Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby decided to organize the formation of a battalion of men from Liverpool. Within two days, 1500 Liverpudlians had joined the new battalion. Speaking to these men Lord Derby said: *"This should be a battalion of pals, a battalion in which friends from the same office will fight shoulder to shoulder for the honor of Britain and the credit of Liverpool."* Within the next few days three more battalions were raised in Liverpool.

Encouraged by Lord Derby's success, Kitchener promoted the idea of organizing similar recruitment campaigns throughout the entire country. By the end of September 1914, over fifty towns had formed Pals battalions, whilst the larger towns and cities were able to form several battalions.

The 'Grimsby Chums' was formed by former schoolboys of Wintringham Secondary School in Grimsby. Many other schools, including some of the leading public schools, also formed battalions. Several sportsmen's battalions were formed, including three battalions of footballers (17th and 23rd (Service) Bn Middlesex Regiment) and 16th (2nd Edinburgh) (Service) Bn Lothian Regiment Royal Scots, the last-mentioned battalion containing the entire first and reserve team players, several boardroom and staff members and a sizeable contingent of supporters of Scottish professional club Heart of Midlothian F.C. Out of nearly 1000 battalions raised during the first two years of the war, over two thirds were locally-raised Pals battalions. Some pals battalions were trade/background linked rather than area linked: i.e. "artists battalions", "sportsmen's battalions," etc.

Several of these battalions suffered heavy casualties during the Somme offensives of 1916. One of the most notable was the 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington) East Lancashire Regiment, better known as the Accrington Pals. The Accrington Pals were ordered to attack Serre, the most northerly part of the main assault, on the opening day of the battle. The Accrington Pals were accompanied by Pals battalions drawn from Sheffield, Leeds, and Bradford. Of an estimated 700 Accrington Pals who took part in the attack, 235 were killed and 350 wounded within the space of twenty minutes.



The policy of drawing recruits from amongst a local population ensured that, when the Pals battalions suffered casualties, individual towns, villages, neighborhoods, and communities back in Britain were to suffer disproportionate losses. With the introduction of conscription in January 1916, further Pals battalions were not sought. Most pal battalions were decimated.

Decimated my ass, that is one out of 10. I figure that when you take 80% casualties in twenty minutes that's being decimated eight times. By the end of 1917 or start of 1918, most were amalgamated into other battalions to regularize battalion strength. Cripes, this meant that most of the young men in a community were dead or maimed.

We were in France about 15 years ago and even the smallest towns had dozens of names for those killed in WW I on their war memorials. The one in Chamonix noted that there were no surviving graduates of the local school for half of the classes from 1908 to 1915. We really do not comprehend what the French and Germans (and Russians and UK) went through in WWI.

**Reed Cundiff
173d LRRP**



RANGERS WITH THE MAN



L-R: MAJ Jeff Streucker, SGT James "Buck" Lambert, Me SGT James "Jimmy" Bruinsma, the President, SSG Corey Remsberg, I can't remember the guy next to him for the life of me, and CPT Menendez.

By Jimmy Bruinsma
3/75th Rangers

President Obama is a class act. I got to meet him in France, and he wasn't even supposed to come and talk to us. His aid kept trying to get him to go over and socialize with the other big wigs, but instead he looked over at us and told his aid he was going to come and chat with us because the last thing he wanted was a *"bunch of pissed off Rangers."*

I also had the honor of being the protective escort to Michelle Obama, and she was so polite. I told her that my girlfriend loved her. The First Lady then asked her aid for a coin to give me for my girlfriend, but the aid didn't bring any. Michelle then asked me if she could call her (my girlfriend). Of course, I told her, and they talked for a good 5 minutes, and the whole time she was just really sweet and nice.

As soon as he walked in we were instructed to stand in the corner where the pictures were taken because President Obama was going to talk to the WWII vets who were receiving the French Legion of Merit -- so we did. His aid was pretty hard set on him going to say hello to the other world leaders who were there, including Prince Charles, Gordon Brown, and Sarkozy.

The President kept looking over at us, and when his aid tried to direct him over to the rest of the crew who was there he pulled away and said he wanted to come talk to us. He said, *"These guys can kill me with their bare hands,"* and came over and asked us where we were from and had a little conversation with each one of us.

The crazy thing was, he knew a little something about each of our home towns. I told him I was from Katy, Texas, and he knew about how we had a bad ass football team.

I have been so lucky in my career. The right people always saw me doing the right thing at the right time. I got a medal in Iraq from General McCrystal, and another one from General Miller. I had General Petraeus and General Powel come down to Fort Benning for a leadership conference at the Infantry School. I was down at the airfield directing a detail of lower enlisted to help out the guys coming back from deployment and they were standing right behind me the whole time. I felt a tug at my sleeve from behind and said *"What's up man?!"* and when I saw who it was I snapped to attention and said *"Oh shit... Sir!"* They laughed, and General Petraeus

handed me a coin and told me that I exemplified what he had come down there to talk about.

I totally enjoyed my time as a Ranger, and getting out was one of the hardest things I have done. I got to know some of the greatest men anyone could ever meet in their lives. I was deployed by the best combat leaders the Army has ever seen. I became brothers with some of the strongest guys ever. What was I thinking, getting out? The good definitely outweighed the bad. I love that in 6 years I lived more than most will have lived in an entire lifetime.



First Lady with the Troops

I honestly cannot say enough good things about all the Rangers who were picked to go to France. Words just don't do these guys justice. To be frank, the only reason I got to go was by a stroke of good luck. So many other guys deserved to be there in my spot, and I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.



Deadline Approaches for Some Combat Veterans

Department of Veterans Affairs



WASHINGTON -- Certain combat veterans who were discharged from active duty service before Jan. 28, 2003 have until Thursday to take advantage of their enhanced health care enrollment opportunity through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The enhanced enrollment window was provided for in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. That law gave combat veterans who served after Nov. 11, 1998 but separated from service before Jan. 28, 2003, and did not enroll before Jan. 28, 2008, three years, beginning on Jan. 28, 2008, to apply for the enhanced enrollment opportunity.

These veterans will still be able to apply for health benefits with VA after Jan. 27, 2011, but will have their status for receiving VA health care determined under normal VA procedures that base health care priority status on the severity of a service-connected disability or other eligibility factors.

Veterans can apply for enrollment online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez or by calling 1-877-222-8387.

Treasury Department Says No Paper Checks for VA Benefits After 2013

Department of Veterans Affairs



WASHINGTON -- The Department of the Treasury announced a new rule that will extend the safety and convenience of electronic payments to millions of Americans and phase out paper checks for federal benefits by March 1, 2013.

On that date, VA will stop issuing paper checks. People who do not have electronic payments for their federal benefits by that time will receive their funds via a pre-paid debit card.

Another deadline affects people receiving VA's compensation or pensions for the first time after May 1, 2011. Those people will automatically receive the benefits electronically.

For more information or to change VA benefits to direct deposit, visit www.GoDirect.org.

Distinguished and Honorary Members of the 503d Infantry Regiment



Honorary CSM of the Regiment Loren Storjohann and I are pleased to announce the following nominations, forwarded to the Department of the Army in December, for designation as Distinguished or Honorary members of the Regiment.

To be designated as Distinguished Members of the Regiment:

SSG Salvatore A. Giunta, assigned to B/2/503d, for conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty during OEF VIII.

CSM William H. Acebes, assigned to B/1/503d, 1965-1966, Vietnam, and subsequently served as CSM of the Infantry School, for superior leadership and multiple contributions to the Regimental heritage.

BG Wesley B. Taylor, Jr., assigned to 4/503d, Vietnam, and subsequently served as Commanding Officer of the First Ranger Battalion and then the Ranger Regiment, 1987-1989, for gallantry in action and for multiple contributions to the heritage of the 503d Infantry Regiment and that of the United States Army.

Major Jack K. Tarr, Commanding Officer of C/4/503d, 1966, and Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade Jungle School, 1966-1967, Vietnam, for sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment.

Captain J. Robert Wolfgang, assigned to Headquarters Company and C/4/503d, Vietnam, 1966-1967, for sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation.

To be designated as Honorary Members of the Regiment:

Sebastian Junger, for Journalistic excellence and sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment, 2007-2010, and the United States Army.

Leta Carruth, for providing sustained physical, moral and substantive support to the warriors of the 2/503d from 2007 forward.

CSM Storjohann joins me in wishing you a rewarding and prosperous 2011.

Kenneth V. Smith
COL, USA (Ret)
Honorary Colonel
503d Infantry Regiment



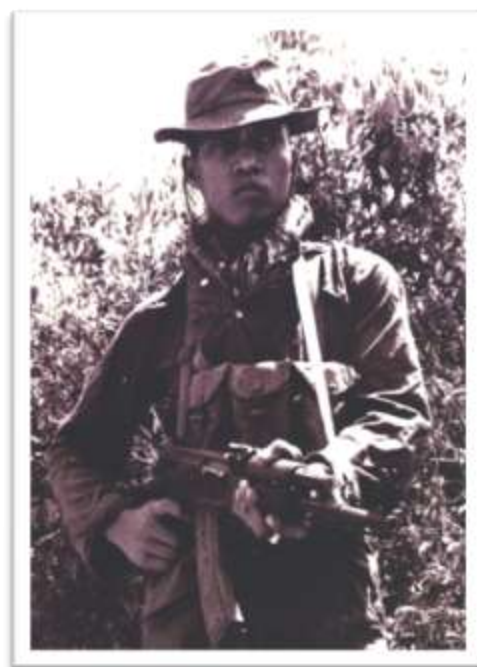
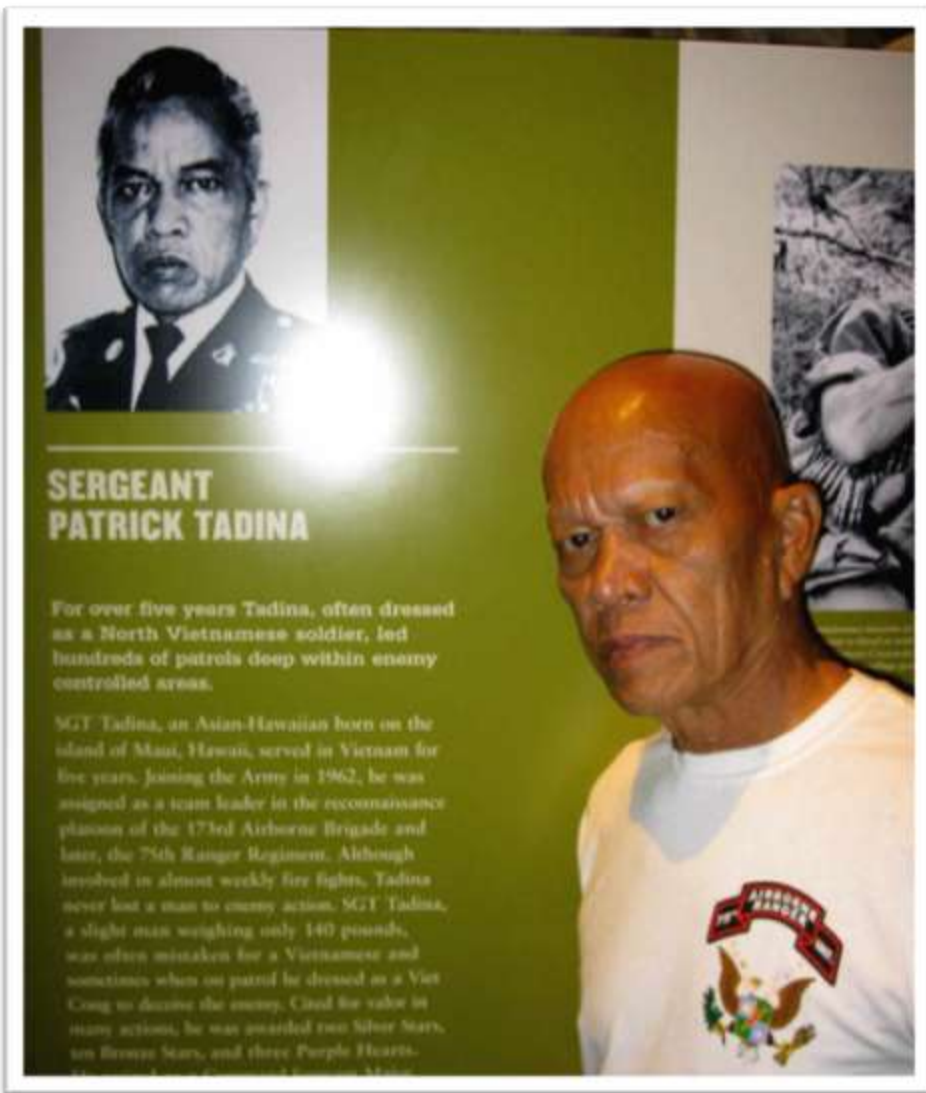


~ SKY SOLDIER EXTRAORDINAIRE ~



Patrick “Tad” Tadina, CSM Recon 1/503d, LRRP & 75th Rangers

After all these years Tad is still soldiering for his buddies, keeping them safe and out of harms’ way. Just the other day after learning a fellow trooper was undergoing some desperate moments and was at risk, the Command Sergeant Major drove from North Carolina to South Carolina specifically to pull the trooper in from the bush. *Airborne Tad!*



In the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, GA this tribute to Tad reads:

“For over five years Tadina, often dressed as a North Vietnamese soldier, led hundreds of patrols deep within enemy controlled areas.

SGT Tadina, an Asian-Hawaiian born on the island of Maui, Hawaii, served in Vietnam for five years. Joining the Army in 1962, he was assigned as a team leader in the reconnaissance platoon of the 173d Airborne Brigade and later, the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Although involved in almost weekly fire fights, Tadina never lost a man to enemy action. SGT Tadina, a slight man weighing only 140 pounds, was often mistaken for a Vietnamese and sometimes when on patrol he dressed as a Viet Cong to deceive the enemy. Cited for valor in many actions, he was awarded two Silver Stars, ten Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts. He retired as a Command Sergeant Major.”



National Infantry Museum



Last week I met Neil Duncan, the brother-in-law of a young man who I work with. He lost both legs in Afghanistan...and was in the 173d Airborne, 2/503d. He is a great guy with a great attitude and is in his second year of college at Denver University making straight A's. I sent his brother-in-law a copy of your awesome recent newsletter, and he was going to forward it to Neil. So I thought I would tell you about a great man of the 2/503d.

Neal Stanley
326 Med

Three Disabled American Veterans Summit Mount Kilimanjaro

Associated Press
August 11, 2010



Aug. 6: Showing from left, Kirk Bauer, 62, of Ellicott City, MD, Neil Duncan, 26, of Denver, CO and Dan Nevins, 37, of Jacksonville, FL, as they pose together at Gilman's point before making the last push to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

NAIROBI, Kenya -- The three American veterans from three different wars had only one good leg among them. But that didn't stop them from summiting Africa's highest mountain.

The three soldiers -- veterans of Afghanistan, Iraq and Vietnam -- scrambled, clawed and plodded to the top of Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro, hiking up the domed mountain's scree-filled paths on one human leg and five prosthetics made of titanium and carbon fiber.

They skidded. They fell. They removed their legs to adjust their shoes. And after six days of climbing they stood at 19,340 feet (5,895 meters) -- Africa's highest point.

"The message we're trying to send back to the USA is no matter what disability you have you can be active," said Kirk Bauer, the executive director of Disabled Sports USA and a 62-year-old Vietnam veteran who lost his leg in 1969. Bauer, of Ellicott City, Maryland, was one of the triumphant climbers.

"If three amputees from three different wars and two different generations with literally one good leg can climb Kilimanjaro, our other disabled friends can get out and go hiking or go biking or swim a mile, can get out and lead a healthy life," he said.

The youngest of the veterans, 26-year-old Neil Duncan, lost both legs to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in 2005. The Denver, Colorado resident tried to summit Kilimanjaro last year, but poor planning and a fast ascent schedule doomed the trip.

This time a different guide planned a route specifically for the veterans. The group took six days to ascend, instead of three or four, and a special permit for the disabled allowed them to spend the night in tents at 19,000 feet (5,800 meters). Last Saturday morning they made it to the top.

"It was evidence that with the right planning and right preparation and right execution anything can be done," Duncan said. *"That was why I was so set on coming back. I knew it was attainable. It was proof that you can bounce back from a failure in anything. You can regroup, recuperate, re-plan and use your previous experience and be successful."*

The third veteran, Dan Nevins, a 37-year-old from Florida, who lost his legs in Iraq, developed a pressure boil on one of his leg's stumps, which may have lead to his developing of a high fever, coughing and congestion. After reaching the summit and descending to 15,000 feet (4,570 meters), Nevins was evacuated down on a wheeled stretcher.

That illustrated just one of the challenges the amputees faced. On Day 5, the group hiked from 15,500 feet (4,724 meters) to 19,000 feet (5,800 meters), a 12-hour day in thin air that left everyone struggling to breathe.

(continued....)



Kilimanjaro's lower paths are flat dirt, but higher trails turn to a rock and scree blend difficult for prosthetics. In the loose rock the artificial legs slid backward, leading Duncan to feel like he was climbing the mountain twice.

"It's an incredible amount of work as you can imagine but one of the most difficult portions of the whole deal was the ascent from 15,500 to 19,000," said Duncan, a student at the University of Denver. The rocks were *"real loose, real steep. With having no feet or ankles I was lacking the ability to grip into that dirt."*

Going down -- the part many climbers say is the hardest on the body -- was no easier for the amputees. Duncan lost his footing and somersaulted. Bauer's artificial leg fell off.


"I have only one real knee, and it takes an incredible amount of stress from falling," Duncan said. *"It's more of a controlled fall down the mountain. It's not a graceful process I assure you."*

Duncan, who retired from the Army in 2007, ran with former President George Bush that same year. He hopes to run the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, D.C. in October.



2/503d Trooper Neil Duncan on left with buddy during run with President Bush in 2008.

The Kilimanjaro trip was sponsored by Disabled Sports USA and other donors. The group's mission is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, fitness and confidence through sports and recreational programs.

"The feeling was total exhaustion and total exhilaration," Bauer said of his 45 minutes on the summit. *"It was absolutely spectacular."* 

An Untrue Story From The Jungles of the "D" Zone circa 1966

Sturges:	<i>Man, I'm outta C's.</i>
Ribera:	<i>Yeah, me too.</i>
Healy:	<i>Mine are all gone.</i>
Gettel:	<i>Ditto. Hey, LT, when's the next resupply chopper coming in?</i>
LT Vose:	<i>Two days from now.</i>
Dog Handler:	<i>I ain't got nuttin' to eat either.</i>
Davis:	<i>Not one cracker left.</i>
Lucas:	<i>We're starving LT, whatta we gonna do? Whatta we gonna do?!!</i>
LT Vose:	<i>I have an idea....</i>



No disrespect intended to our dog handlers and their wonderful partners who regularly saved our lives often at the expense of theirs. But, this is a damn funny photo. Ed



**Australian Army
Awarded the Victoria Cross to
Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith,
VC, MG**



For the most conspicuous gallantry in action in circumstances of extreme peril as Patrol Second-in-Command, Special Operations Task Group on Operation Slipper.

Corporal Benjamin Roberts Smith enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1996. After completing the requisite courses, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment where he saw active service in East Timor. In January 2003, he successfully completed the Australian Special Air Service Regiment Selection Course.

During his tenure with the Regiment, he deployed on Operation VALIANT, SLATE, SLIPPER, CATALYST and SLIPPER II. Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in Afghanistan in 2006.

On the 11th of June 2010, a troop of the Special Operations Task Group conducted a helicopter assault into Tizak, Kandahar Province, in order to capture or kill a senior Taliban commander.

Immediately upon the helicopter insertion, the troop was engaged by machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire from multiple, dominating positions. Two soldiers

were wounded in action and the troop was pinned down by fires from three machine guns in an elevated fortified position to the south of the village. Under the cover of close air support, suppressive small arms and machine gun fire, Corporal Roberts Smith and his patrol manoeuvred to within 70 metres of the enemy position in order to neutralise the enemy machine gun positions and regain the initiative.

Upon commencement of the assault, the patrol drew very heavy, intense, effective and sustained fire from the enemy position. Corporal Roberts Smith and his patrol members fought towards the enemy position until, at a range of 40 metres, the weight of fire prevented further movement forward. At this point, he identified the opportunity to exploit some cover provided by a small structure.

As he approached the structure, Corporal Roberts Smith identified an insurgent grenadier in the throes of engaging his patrol. Corporal Roberts Smith instinctively engaged the insurgent at point-blank range resulting in the death of the insurgent. With the members of his patrol still pinned down by the three enemy machine gun positions, he exposed his own position in order to draw fire away from his patrol, which enabled them to bring fire to bear against the enemy. His actions enabled his Patrol Commander to throw a grenade and silence one of the machine guns. Seizing the advantage, and demonstrating extreme devotion to duty and the most conspicuous gallantry, Corporal Roberts Smith, with a total disregard for his own safety, stormed the enemy position killing two remaining machine gunners.

His act of valour enabled his patrol to break-in to the enemy position and to lift the weight of fire from the remainder of the troop who had been pinned down by the machine gun fire. On seizing the fortified gun position, Corporal Roberts Smith then took the initiative again and continued to assault enemy positions in depth during which he and another patrol member engaged and killed further enemy. His acts of selfless valour directly enabled his troop to go on and clear the village of Tizak of Taliban. This decisive engagement subsequently caused the remainder of the Taliban in Shah Wali Kot District to retreat from the area.

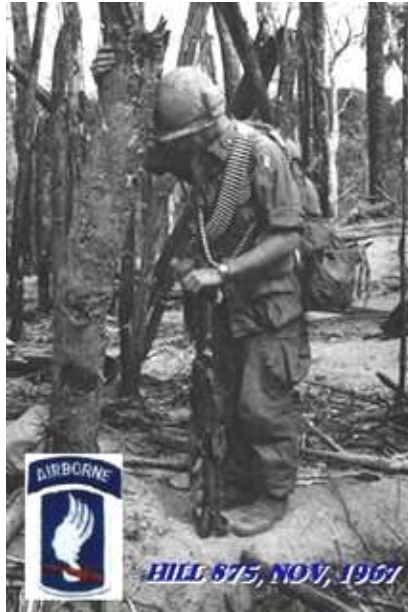
Corporal Roberts Smith's most conspicuous gallantry in a circumstance of extreme peril was instrumental to the seizure of the initiative and the success of the troop against a numerically superior enemy force. His valour was an inspiration to the soldiers with whom he fought alongside and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.



A Trooper at Dak To

By **Rock Stone**
B/4/503

I was with Bravo 4th Battalion and I was the first machine gunner up Hill 875 when we arrived. It is a powerful picture and appears all over the net in one way or another. Most people don't know it's me, perhaps a few in the Herd and some of my Charlie Ranger brothers, and of course my family, but most others don't have a clue. You will note in the head band of my helmet is a plastic cigarette case, would you believe I still have it?



This picture was taken on the last day of the battle for Hill 875 just after our final assault.

Rocky

LT Larry Moore had come up to me and informed me that there were only 6 out of our platoon left on the Hill and that everyone else was gone, either KIA or evac'd. I walked away in tears and ended up leaning against that tree and crying for my brothers.

Some guy from *TimeLife* took the picture which I did not know about for years until I saw it in one of the *TimeLife* books. When I got a computer I started seeing it all over the place.

Amazingly, decades after the war a buddy found this picture of a vet's arm. He had had the image from the *TimeLife* picture taken of me at Dak To tattooed on his arm!

Airborne brothers!



A Brother of the War Một người anh em của cuộc chiến tranh



I am involved in creating the drawings necessary to replace the electronic control system at Grand Coulee Dam. In the process it has been necessary to coordinate with the engineering department of the Dept. of the Interior in Denver, Colorado.

The "go to" guy in Denver is Vince Hoang and he had occasion to fly out here to familiarize himself with the layout and that's when I met him.

Vince was a fighter pilot in the South Vietnamese Air Force and flew F-5 Skoshi Tigers. On a mission in 1975, he was hit by a SAM missile in the right engine -- it just blew the tail-pipe all to hell. He was fortunate enough to be able to nurse the plane back to Bien Hoa, AFB.



Vince with his sick Tiger

According to the web site where I got his picture his is the only known case of an aircraft surviving a direct hit from a SAM. The photo shows him standing at the tail of the plane.

He knows of the 173d and directed me to a website about Vietnamese Paratroopers (text in Vietnamese of course). I get the impression that, like us, he keeps in touch with his wartime comrades.

Vince is an Electrical Engineer and very sharp.

Jim Bethea
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66



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~ Sky Soldiers March ~

Bend your head, and shed a tear,
for your son, who serve so dear.
Faith and Guts and Rifle Butts,
left a trail, of blood stained dust.

Chorus:

So here we are, where we belong,
173d, so proud and strong.
Lift your head, and hold it high,
173d is passing by.

Aussie Diggers, fight with us too,
"Duty First" they say, their words are true.
In jungles deep, they showed us how,
we say "VC come fight us now".

Chorus

Sweat upon, their sun-burned brows,
173d has shown them how.
War zone "D" we met our test,
Mekong Delta, we are the best.

Chorus

To Nui Dat, the "Tigers" came,
with the "HERD" they won great fame.
Dak To and Tet, we won and died,
"Jungle of screaming souls" the NVA cried.

Chorus

My wife who waits, at home so true,
I sing this song, my dear for you.
Tell our son that I fight brave,
for Freedom Land which we must save.

Written in Vietnam by a Sky Soldier



**Lift your head and hold it high, 1st Platoon, B/2/503d,
is passing by.**

(Jim Quick photo)

VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange in Korea

VA Media Relations
January 25, 2011

WASHINGTON – Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final regulation that will expand the dates when illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange.



Brothers....we haven't forgotten.

"VA's primary mission is to be an advocate for Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "With this new regulation VA has cleared a path for more Veterans who served in the demilitarized zone in Korea to receive access to our quality health care and disability benefits for exposure to Agent Orange."

Under the final regulation published today in the Federal Register, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any Veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to Veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969.

In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

Go to this web link to learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp>

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]



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Picked-up *FloridaToday* the other day, the local paper here in Central Florida, and found a 2/503d Sky Soldier smiling back at me. Steven hails from Rockledge, FL, just across the river from Merritt Island, where I live. Hoping he or one of his buddies sees this and hooks us up. *Steve: Send me an email at rto173d@cfl.rr.com and I'll buy the beer on your next trip home!* Smitty Out

Specialist follows in family footsteps

By R. Norman Moody



Steven

Steven Williams spent his early years traveling to Europe with his military family. His father was in the U.S. Army.

Now, Williams, an Army specialist stationed at Vicenza, Italy, who hadn't flown in an airplane since he was a small child, is getting to do it all over. He's seeing Europe again, but this time he's the one serving in the Army.

Williams, who was born in Germany where his father was stationed while in the Army, said one of the benefits in the military is getting to travel, not only overseas, but also in the United States.

"I wanted to get out and see the world," he said. "It's also paying tribute to other veterans in my family."

Williams' father, aunt and several uncles have all served and retired from the Army.

"We're a military family," his mother Helen Williams said. "He's following the family footsteps."

Williams, who said he lingered after high school until he decided to join the Army, is not sure how long he will serve in the military.

The 24-year-old returned in November from a one-year deployment to Afghanistan.

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne, Army

Home base: Vicenza, Italy

Experience: Williams has been in the Army since October 2008. He returned in November after a year deployment to Afghanistan.

Background: Williams, a 2005 graduate of Rockledge High, is following in a family tradition of serving in the Army. His father, uncles, aunt and others in his family have served.

PRIVATE BREGER

By Sgt. Dave Breger



"That soldier's here, Sir, about a new paratrooper uniform to deceive the enemy."

~ Hooking Up! ~

Looking for email addresses for (then) Majors **Don Phillips** and **Willard Christensen**, and Bob **"Doc" Beaton**, all HHC/2/503d. Thanks.

Lew "Smitty" Smith, HHC/2/503d, '65-'66, rto173d@cfl.rr.com



The son of **Edrick Kenneth Stevens**, 4/503d, KIA on 6 November 1967, is looking for buddies who knew his father. Please contact the son, **Jonathan (Chad) Stevens** at jonathan.stevens@dhs.gov





Report: VA Overpaid Disabled Vets by \$1B

By Leo Shane, III
Stars & Stripes
January 27, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Poor oversight and missing medical follow-ups led to nearly \$1 billion in overpayments in veterans disability benefits over the last 18 years, and could lead to another \$1 billion in improper payouts in the near future if left unchecked according to a new investigation.

The report, from the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General, found mistakes in the processing of an estimated 27,500 cases before the Veterans Benefits Administration, resulting in individuals receiving a 100 percent disabled rating for years longer than they should have.

"Despite numerous audit and inspection reports since FY 2004 stating that the staff was not consistently processing temporary 100 percent disability evaluations correctly, VBA has not fully corrected the problem," the report stated. "If VBA does not take timely corrective action, they will overpay veterans a projected \$1.1 billion over the next 5 years."

At issue are temporary 100 percent disability ratings, given to veterans with service-connected disabilities requiring surgery, convalescence or specific treatment. In some cases, those payouts may be reduced or ended after veterans recover and are able to return to work.

IG officials found that in nearly half of the problem cases, officials simply forgot to schedule follow-up medical visits or update related paperwork, allowing veterans to continue their full payout even after recovery. In about 6,500 cases, those medical exams were delayed or canceled, causing the payouts to continue.

Researchers said the average overpayment for veterans receiving extra benefits for less than a year was about \$10,500., but rises to about \$66,000. for veterans receiving overpayments for one to five years.

"For each year the overpayment continues, the cumulative financial effect becomes increasingly more significant," the report said.

Benefits officials disputed the findings, calling the cost estimates and total number of problem cases exaggerated.

"VBA makes every effort to ensure that veterans are paid correctly and disability evaluations are assigned appropriately at all levels," Michael Walcoff, acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits, said in a statement to the IG office. "VBA is actively working to resolve these types of errors through system modifications. These system safeguards will ensure correct future review of temporary 100 percent evaluations."



In a statement to *Stars and Stripes*, Tom Murphy, director of the Compensation and Pension Service, said the VBA is committed to making sure veterans receive the proper disability benefits.

"VBA modified training for claims processors to ensure timely oversight responsibilities are completed," he said. "Further training on evaluating evidence to determine permanency for a total evaluation is also being created."

The report does not recommend the VBA attempt to recoup any of the overpayments,

but does urge a review of all 100 percent disability claims to ensure that proper payouts are being awarded. In cases where the mistakes have lingered for more than 20 years, the VA by law cannot change the disability ratings.

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

Incoming!!



Ask the guys if anyone remembers being in a pineapple grove in '66. I had a flash from the past about eating them with some Aussies while out in the bush??

Harry Cleland
HHC/B/2/503d '66-'67
hcleland@nc.rr.com



A 2/503d buddy, who is referred to here as G.I. Joe, not his real name of course, who lives with PTSD sent me a note today describing a dream he had recently. Initially, I thought to include only excerpts from our buddy's dream, but instead decided to include his entire recollection of it. Ed

~ MY DREAM ~

By G.I. Joe, 2/503d
7 Jan 2011

I was at a restaurant dining with other people whom I didn't know. It was set in a cathedral but smaller with the place packed with people.

Some silver-haired guy with a voice like Perry Como was the waiter taking orders with ladies doing the same. I ordered soup of some sort and it seemed to take hours for my meal to arrive.

All of a sudden some oriental guy appeared in front of me and taunted me. I didn't like his manner and I attacked him as everyone looked on. I grabbed him and slammed his head against the floor but all he did was smile at me. Somehow a knife appeared in his hand and I grabbed it and stabbed him in the stomach. He grimaced, sat up, pulled it out of his stomach and green fluid seeped out. He pulled it out of his stomach and somehow disappeared. All this time the place was thumping with sound.

The Chinaman reappeared in some school by a sidewalk where the gutter had sludge for water with mud mixed in looking like concrete looks. We had a tussle; I grabbed him by the neck, and put his head in the gutter choking him. He didn't resist with my strength. I put his head in the gutter and splashed the mud into his nostrils and mouth till he stopped breathing. He stopped convulsing. An oriental looking woman drove by, stopped and saw what had just occurred. She told me she didn't want to get involved and wouldn't say anything to the authorities. The man just lied there motionless. Dead.

A crowd gathered and I told them it was self-defense. I asked if anybody had called the police. All of a sudden a doctor of Asian appearance with a stethoscope around his neck said it was a suicide. I knew that forensic science would prove otherwise and I would be found guilty. The doctor had a device he spoke into and it seemed quite funny the way he was talking into it. The crowd just mingled around.

I was back at the restaurant waiting for my food I had ordered. The place was still rocking and the gentleman waiter still taking orders. I had waited about 3 hours it seemed and still no food. I wondered what the hell was the delay? The place then changed into a garden-type of restaurant, like in a winery.

All of a sudden, the waiter appeared in garb similar to a preacher and started preaching and I couldn't hear a thing, but people were responding to his actions and words. Some young boy near me was given some slivers of sharp types of grass with a knife. About 4 of these slivers were placed into his upper arm, sharp enough to cut into his skin. I thought this was a ritual which I didn't want to partake in. The crowd started chanting and laying down on the ground.

I made myself disappear into the toilet where some Polynesian looking men were in there urinating and talking amongst themselves. The language was foreign to me and I didn't understand at first, yet as they talked to me I understood. I said nothing. It was so real.

The urinal was like an open ditch with water in it. The men walked out and I was alone. I went outside and some lady came out with the preacher and walked up to a pulpit, and she had a rope around her neck. I walked out of the toilet as she apparently had done something towards her religion that wasn't acceptable like the Muslim religion. All the time, the crowd chanted and they lay on the grass.

I immediately thought that the Chinaman was an undercover agent and not my enemy.



I tried to leave the place, but the gates into and out were blocked by the Polynesian-like men, about 3 at each gate. Somehow, I escaped and some other fellow and I started to walk, and walk and walk. I don't know who he was, but he was there with me.

(continued....)



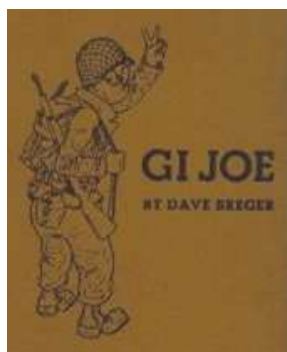
I walked into a Native American Village. There were tee pees all around and the streets were lined with buffalo horns and different colored rocks. I didn't see many people.

We walked until we came upon some Chiefs with buffalo horns on their heads. They spoke, but I didn't understand the language. The Chief motioned for us to sit down. He sat in front of us and had an antler or something in his hand. As we sat crossed legged, he beckoned for us to follow what he was saying. It seemed he wanted us to understand what he was telling us and mentioning things I didn't understand. He motioned with his arms up and down and speaking in his language. I wiggled in my place until I made a small hole with my butt in the ground. His words inspired me, and his words and actions excited me as my body quivered with excitement. I had never before been so inspired or felt this way in my life. I seemed to understand what he was telling me.

He raised his arms up and down and his words sounded so beautiful and authoritative. What he was mentioning seemed like "to be one's self." To not be afraid of my actions. To speak the truth and not have to defend my words. To take risks as warriors often have to in times of danger. As he spoke, it seemed like about 5 minutes, he continued waving his arms around, it was so vivid. His skin was red like the others standing by. He faded with his words and his spirit.

After the ceremony, I had to go to the toilet. I asked one of the men if I could go to the toilet. He asked me if I could wait. I said I couldn't and had to go. He told me I could go in a house. There was a toilet outside this house which had music coming out of it. It was Native American music. It was beautiful music. The toilet was basic and earthy in appearance. There was like a big cavern type hole with clear water in it. There was toilet paper alongside which was wet. There was a tap with a small amount of water dripping out of it which wet my pants. One had to straddle the toilet with foot placements etched into the stone. It was a fall of about 6 feet or so. There were buffalo horns and other regalia all around the toilet.

When I awoke, my mind was fresh with this amazing dream and the feeling it gave me. I lay awake for a while and felt it was fresh enough to remember and put it to paper. I went into my computer room as my grandson slept there. This is what my dream was like on this morning.



G.I. Joe, 2/503d

~ REPLY TO G.I. JOE ~

Yeah, I know those kinds of dreams. You wake up and you can recall every detail. And, like you, I'll get up and write them down sometimes. For decades I had a recurring nightmare, you've probably had it too. It's always about being overrun in combat and feeling totally helpless and terrified. I would often wake up screaming and kicking and sometimes hitting my wife in my sleep. I'd occasionally dream of being overrun by the entire Nazi army, and I wasn't even in WWII.

When I finally got treatment for PTSD the psych told me he could help me to stop having that dream, I sarcastically said "sure".

One day he sat me down in front of a small machine comprised of horizontal neon lights with the lights slowly tracking back and forth, left to right, left to right. He had me don headsets then told me to follow the lights with my eyes. As I did that he spoke into the headset recounting the dream I had described to him, the lights increasing in speed as the story became more intense.



At one point I yanked the headsets off -- my heart was racing. I told him I couldn't do it anymore. He said he "couldn't leave me there" and told me to put the headsets back on, which I did. The lights moved slower this time and he put me on a boat in calm waters of some bay, a serene setting, relaxing me.

Get this, Joe. That very night I had the nightmare again, but that was the last time I ever had it....that was about 3 years ago. It's called Rapid Eye treatment or EMDR. It seemed more like voodoo at the time, but damn, it worked bro. If those fucking dreams continue to invade your sleep, ask your doc about the treatment. Another of our buddies is undergoing EMDR and it's working for him too.

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

P.S. Last night my wife told me I was screaming in my sleep again, something I haven't done for quite a while, but she didn't wake me. I don't recall it being the dream I described. Back to EMDR?

(continued....)



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The Eyes Have It: Treatment for the Invisible Wounds of PTSD

By Scott Fairchild, PsyD
LTC (Ret), 82nd Abn. Div.

All too many of you know the symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and you eat them for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can't outrun it. You can't hide from it. It has become a part of who you are. You can't beat it, even if you try, and then after the explosion of emotion, you walk away feeling the wave of guilt.

You may be out in traffic and someone cuts you off. You feel the tension of the flight or fight response that kicks in immediately. You may sit up straight in the middle of the night and be right back in the jungle or the sandbox, breaking out in a cold sweat with all of your senses dialed up to max. It all takes its toll on your body, shortening your life as well.

Or, you may be like a veteran patient I saw this morning, who was at a get-together where someone was talking trash about the military. He politely asked the man to stop and when the dirt bag continued, the former trooper hit him so hard he broke his hand.

It doesn't have to always have to involve hitting someone. Sometimes the PTSD demon sneaks up on you and you unload verbally on your wife or your kids, those closest to you, or on someone on the other side of the store counter, without even knowing why.

There are so many times you wish there was something you could do to ease the intensity or overcome the power of these symptoms. There is something that can help. It is called **EMDR**.

What's EMDR?

Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing or EMDR has been around since 1987, when Francine Shapiro discovered it quite by accident. There are now over 130,000 EMDR therapists in the world and the proof is in the results. Although the process sounds complex, EMDR is a rather simple and very effective tool.



The Doc

It is recognized by the American Psychological Association as the most effective tool for the treatment of PTSD and other diagnoses.

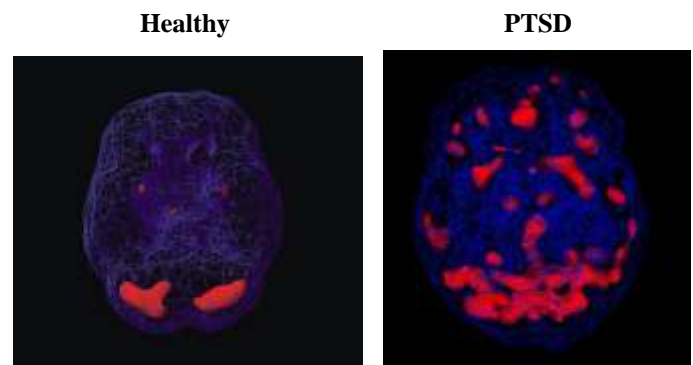
How does trauma affect the brain?

The brain is involved in all we do. Unless we inherit a brain disorder, we are all born with a relatively intact and healthy brain. Throughout our lives we tend to insult the brain with our life experiences. We insult it with physical trauma, such as falling off a horse, physical fights, playing football and bicycle accidents. We insult the brain with toxic trauma, such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, drugs, paint fumes, inhalants. And throughout our life from childhood on, we insult the brain with psychological trauma, like robbery, rape, assault, hurricane and combat and the loss of a loved one.

When we experience psychological trauma, our brain actually changes chemically. Modern science has allowed us to see those changes in the brain. We refer to those changes as *invisible wounds* -- the wounds you may not see, but the wounds which don't end when the war ends.

The *Rand Study 2008* predicts that over 300,000 of our Iraq and Afghanistan warriors will experience or are experiencing PTSD.

Note a healthy brain compared to a brain with PTSD



The image on the right shows the evidence of the depression, the anxiety, and your inability to let go of it. This is the stuff that causes you to be the person you are everyday. This is known as PTSD.

You have carried it for so long. It is time to find a way to let go.

(continued....)



In a manner that parallels our natural way of processing negative emotion (dreaming), EMDR allows us to let go of the demons of the past (the negative emotion connected to our bad memories) in short order.

When we normally experience a negative event, say for example when, in our daily routine of events, we witness an intense car accident that results in the loss of life, we normally dream about the event. It is our brain's natural way of seeking healing.

As we dream, we toss and turn, our eyes move from side to side in what is called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. The emotion is released from the memory and the negative event is "processed". The processed memory of the event is then stored in a different part of the brain, where you can remember it, but doesn't carry with it the disabling emotion.

Unfortunately, when you experience something as life threatening and overwhelming as combat, the memory and the emotion gets stuck and you get to relive that experience in your dreams and in your memories over and over, day after day and night after night. It is as if your projector is stuck in replay and it keeps showing the same damn movie or bizarre movies every night. Your brain is desperately trying to heal itself, but it is literally looping, sometime stuck on fast-forward. As you well know, any little trigger can bring it all back.

If you have been hit by shrapnel, you know how it can continue to work its way out of your skin for years to come. Well, it is similar with your negative emotional experiences. They continue to attempt to work their way out of your mind and EMDR is like a magnet that rapidly frees you of the sharp emotional fragments that plague you.

What happens during EMDR?

During EMDR, the therapist will ask you to focus on a distressing event from the past. As you focus on the event, they will ask you to put a caption on the picture, a one-line summary that incorporates the emotion connected with the event. The therapist will also ask you to identify a caption which would be appropriate for the picture if in some way it were all resolved.

You will also identify the emotion related to the event and where you feel the tension in your body and then follow the therapist's finger or a specially designed light bar. After several sets, the negative emotions are released and the memory is freed. Most participants report remarkable relief.

What EMDR is not.

EMDR is not hypnosis. While participating in EMDR you are in full control. EMDR is like having a focused

discussion. You may leave feeling tired and drained, like having a nightmare in the waking state, but you leave feeling relieved and like something has been lifted -- and it sticks, never to return. In the future, as you think about the event, you remember it, but it is like reading about it in a newspaper or book. It no longer has an emotional charge.

I have been working with EMDR for over 10 years and I was trained by the founder Francine Shapiro in one of the early trainings. I have used EMDR with over 800 clients, to include 9/11 survivors, combat survivors, robbery, rape, assault and multiple trauma victims, and Sky Soldiers and their wives, and I can honestly say that it is an extremely effective tool for relieving PTSD victims of the negative emotion connected to the haunting and interfering events of the past.

An example of using EMDR to free yourself from the demons, you may wish to visit this web site; a great video showing how a combat veteran got relief from his childhood trauma, his combat trauma and his recent trauma. www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBtqWrs2-K0

If you as a reader of the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* have participated in EMDR, please consider sending in your experience with EMDR to share with your fellow troopers.

Do yourself and those who live within a grenade's throw of you a favor, and seek out some assistance from an EMDR trained therapist.

How do I find an EMDR therapist?

Enter your local data into this link and interview a trained provider from the list. Make sure they have worked with combat trauma. www.emdr.com/clinic.htm

Airborne! All the way!

Doc Scott



Note: Dr. Scott Fairchild is a licensed psychologist who operates Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, Florida, and was the founder and co-director of the Stress, Trauma and Acute Response (STAR) Team for Kennedy Space Center. Doc Scott conducted much of the early research and work on PTSD for the U.S. Army at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Additionally, he founded Welcome Home Vets, Inc., a not-for-profit organization in Brevard County, FL, which supports returning veterans with their transition and reintegration into the community. The Doc has helped countless Sky Soldiers and other vets from throughout the country with PTSD treatment and evaluations in support of their VA claims. He can be reached at: BaytreeBehHlth@aol.com Ed

