



July 2012, Issue 43

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

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



“Pfc. James F. Duro of Boston, Mass., a member of C Company, (2/503d) 173rd Airborne Brigade, lies exhausted on a canal dike in the swampland of the Mekong Delta near Bao Trai, about 20 miles west of Saigon, on Jan. 4, 1966 (during Operation Marauder). Duro survived friendly fire from a misdirected artillery bombardment that, in addition to enemy fire, left fellow soldiers dead and wounded.” (AP Photo/Horst Faas)



Chaplain's Corner

Leave No one Behind...

Welcome back and let me greet you with that familiar theme from Shakespeare's King Henry V play; *"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,"* I'm using that as a theme in each of my messages for the time I have with you.

In this issue, my mind goes back to an old saying and a commitment I recall from our days in Vietnam... *"Leave no one behind."* As real as that was to me in those days it's just as applicable today. Stay with me and see if you don't agree.

Looking back, to June 29th 1966, I recall that Alpha Company was engaged in a tough struggle with a Viet Cong Main Force Battalion during Operation Yorktown. There are many memories and a host of stories concerning the heroism of *Clem Green* (that name we used for the troopers in A/2/503). The key one for me was the conduct of SSgt Charles Morris. For those of you who were there, you'll recall in our search for the enemy battalion that the 3rd platoon was the first to encounter the enemy, who was in a perimeter defense and well dug in. My two key memories from that day where the actions by Morris, and his words to me as we prepared him for a dust off evacuation. First, a few words from a citation that covers his actions on that day: *"He unknowingly crawled within 20 meters of an enemy machine gun, where upon the gunner fired, wounding him in the chest. Morris instantly returned the fire and killed the gunner. Continuing to crawl within a few feet of the gun, he hurled a grenade and killed the remainder of the crew...finding the platoon medic dead, Morris administered first aid to himself, and was returning to treat the wounded members of his squad with a medics' first aid kit when he was again wounded, knocked down and stunned. He regained consciousness, continued to treat the wounded, reposition his men...wounded again when an enemy grenade shattered his left hand, he armed and threw several grenades which killed a number of enemy soldiers. Seeing that an enemy machine gun had maneuvered behind his platoon and was delivering fire upon them, Morris and another man crawled toward the gun to knock it out. His comrade was killed and Morris sustained another wound...he silenced the enemy machine gun."*

This is just but a part of the citation. The rest of the company closed on the 3rd Platoon with Lt Vose's 1st Platoon coming from the north, S/Sgt Nat Brown's 2d Platoon from the south, and Lt. Vendetti and the Weapons Platoon from the east. I remember as we were getting our casualties out by "dust off", I reached down to Morris and told him we were lifting him out next. He reached up and grabbed my collar and said, *"Captain, don't let them take me out of here until all the others are out first. Sir, we can't leave anyone behind".* And we didn't. I thought he



Cap



Charlie

was going to die immediately and we got the others out who looked as if they would survive. I was wrong about Morris...he lived, and the following year on November 16th, 1967 at the White House, the President presented him with the Medal of Honor, *"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."*

Don't leave anyone behind -- that's a call for us to respond today.

Not long ago I read some recent thoughts from General John R. Deane (our Brigade Commander back then), and the following are a few of his thoughts that I have put together. He said, *"We need to reach out to our brothers... we have brothers returning home now from multiple deployments to the war needing lots of help. They really need brothers to watch their backs, and we need to search out these brothers in our communities and give them support and hope...These guys and sometimes their wives, for whom the burden is more than they can bear, need help...The only way out they see is suicide. If we can save one of these soldiers we are not only generating a great sense of personal accomplishment and an inner warmth, we are doing the work of God."* (Jeremy Staat points out that each day 18 veterans commit suicide -- 6,500 a year). *"While the average trooper does not have the connections or does not have the influence, we can support a guy who needs help...We can accompany him to the VA. We can use our clear minds to be a spokesman for our brother in presenting his case and demanding answers...There are a lot of people who followed us in war, in the Herd or elsewhere in the Army, who are seemingly 'forgotten'. They need help if only in the form of an encouraging word...this applies equally to women facing the responsibilities of motherhood, and to businessmen whose decisions or lack thereof impact the lives of their employees and perhaps people in their communities."*

I was thinking of the many organizations that you and I might and do belong to that do and can carry out the thoughts that the General gave: your 173d Chapter, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, The Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars -- to mention a few. Let me encourage you to find an organization where you will fit in with brothers to help meet these needs. Remember the Scripture..Jesus said, *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me."* (Matthew 25:40 NIV). Good words, but also the words that you and I have seen and used...***Leave No One Behind.*** It's a demanding call and one that truly belongs to us...yes, to us...***"We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers."***

Rev. Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret)
Former CO, A/2/503d





Memorial Day, 2012, at *The Wall*

Remarks by the President at the Commemoration Ceremony of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War Memorial National Mall, Washington, D.C.

The President: Good afternoon, everybody. Chuck, thank you for your words and your friendship and your life of service.

Veterans of the Vietnam War, families, friends, distinguished guests. I know it is hot. But you are here — to honor your loved ones. And Michelle and I could not be more honored to be here with you.

It speaks to the complexity of America's time in Vietnam that, even now, historians cannot agree on precisely when the war began. American advisors had served there, and died there, as early as the mid-'50s. Major combat operations would not begin until the mid-'60s. But if any year in between illustrated the changing nature of our involvement, it was 1962.

It was January, in Saigon. Our Army pilots strapped on their helmets and boarded their helicopters. They lifted off, raced over treetops carrying South Vietnamese troops. It was a single raid against an enemy stronghold just a few miles into the jungle — but it was one of America's first major operations in that faraway land.

Fifty years later, we come to this wall — to this sacred place — to remember. We can step towards its granite wall and reach out, touch a name. Today is Memorial Day, when we recall all those who gave everything in the darkness of war so we could stand here in the glory of spring. And today begins the 50th commemoration of our war in Vietnam. We honor each of those names etched in stone — 58,282 American patriots. We salute all who served with them. And we stand with the families who love them still.

For years you've come here, to be with them once more. And in the simple things you've left behind — your offerings, your mementos, your gifts — we get a glimpse of the lives they led. The blanket that covered him as a baby. The baseball bat he swung as a boy. A wedding ring. The photo of the grandchild he never met. The boots he wore, still caked in mud. The medals she earned, still shining. And, of course, some of the things left here have special meaning, known only to the veterans — a can of beer; a packet of M&Ms; a container of Spam; an old field ration — still good, still awful.

It's here we feel the depth of your sacrifice. And here we see a piece of our larger American story. Our Founders — in their genius — gave us a task. They set out to make a more perfect union. And so it falls to every generation to carry on that work. To keep moving forward. To overcome a sometimes painful past. To keep striving for our ideals.

And one of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam — most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there. You were often blamed for a war you didn't start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised. You came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that's why here today we resolve that it will not happen again.

And so a central part of this 50th anniversary will be to tell your story as it should have been told all along. It's another chance to set the record straight. That's one more way we keep perfecting our Union — setting the record straight. And it starts today. Because history will honor your service, and your names will join a story of service that stretches back two centuries.

Let us tell the story of a generation of servicemembers — every color, every creed, rich, poor, officer and enlisted — who served with just as much patriotism and honor as any before you. Let's never forget that most of those who served in Vietnam did so by choice. So many of you volunteered. Your country was at war, and you said, "send me." That includes our women in Vietnam — every one of you a volunteer. Those who were drafted, they, too, went and carried their burden — you served; you did your duty.

(continued....)



You persevered though some of the most brutal conditions ever faced by Americans in war. The suffocating heat. The drenching monsoon rains. An enemy that could come out of nowhere and vanish just as quickly. Some of the most intense urban combat in history, and battles for a single hill that could rage for weeks. Let it be said — in those hellholes like Briarpatch, and the Zoo and the Hanoi Hilton — our Vietnam POWs didn't simply endure; you wrote one of the most extraordinary stories of bravery and integrity in the annals of military history.

As a nation, we've long celebrated the courage of our forces at Normandy and Iwo Jima, the Pusan Perimeter and Heartbreak Ridge. So let us also speak of your courage — at Hue and Khe Sanh, at Tan Son Nhut and Saigon, from Hamburger Hill to Rolling Thunder. All too often it's forgotten that you, our troops in Vietnam, won every major battle you fought in.

When you came home, I know many of you put your medals away — tucked them in a drawer, or in a box in the closet. You went on with your lives — started families and pursued careers. A lot of you didn't talk too much about your service. As a consequence, this nation has not always fully appreciated the chapter of your lives that came next.

So let us also tell a story of a generation that came home, and how — even though some Americans turned their back on you — you never turned your back on America. Like generations before you, you took off the uniform, but you never stopped serving. You became teachers and police officers and nurses — the folks we count on every single day. You became entrepreneurs, running companies and pioneering industries that changed the world. You became leaders and public servants, from town halls to Capitol Hill — lifting up our communities, our states, our nation.

You reminded us what it was like to serve, what it meant to serve. Those of you who stayed in uniform, you rose through the ranks, became leaders in every service, learned from your experience in Vietnam and rebuilt our military into the finest force that the world has ever known. And let's remember all those Vietnam veterans who came back and served again — in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. You did not stop serving.

Even as you succeeded in all these endeavors, you did something more — maybe the most important thing you did — you looked after each other. When your government didn't live up to its responsibilities, you spoke out — fighting for the care and benefits you had earned, and, over time, transforming the VA. And, of course, one of these Vietnam veterans is now our outstanding Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Ric Shinseki. You looked after one another. You cared for one

another. People weren't always talking about PTSD at the time — you understood it, and you were there for each other. Just as importantly, you didn't just take care of your own, you cared for those that followed. You've made it your mission to make sure today's troops get the respect and support that all too often you did not receive.

Because of you, because our Vietnam veterans led the charge, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is helping hundreds of thousands of today's veterans go to college and pursue their dreams. Because of you, because you didn't let us forget, at our airports, our returning troops get off the airplane and you are there to shake their hands. Because of you, across America, communities have welcomed home our forces from Iraq. And when our troops return from Afghanistan, America will give this entire 9/11 Generation the welcome home they deserve. That happened in part because of you.

This is the story of our Vietnam servicemembers - the story that needs to be told. This is what this 50th anniversary is all about. It's another opportunity to say to our Vietnam veterans what we should have been saying from the beginning: You did your job. You served with honor. You made us proud. You came home and you helped build the America that we love and that we cherish.

So here today, it must be said — you have earned your place among the greatest generations. At this time, I would ask all our Vietnam veterans, those of you who can stand, to please stand, all those already standing, raise your hands — as we say those simple words which always greet our troops when they come home from here on out: Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Thank you. We appreciate you. Welcome home.

Today, we're calling on all Americans, and every segment of our society, to join this effort. Everybody can do something. Five decades removed from a time of division among Americans, this anniversary can remind us of what we share as Americans. That includes honoring our Vietnam veterans by never forgetting the lessons of that war.

So let us resolve that when America sends our sons and daughters into harm's way, we will always give them a clear mission; we will always give them a sound strategy; we will give them the equipment they need to get the job done. We will have their backs. We will resolve that leaders will be candid about the risks and about progress — and have a plan to bring our troops home, with honor.

(continued....)



Let us resolve to never forget the costs of war, including the terrible loss of innocent civilians — not just in Vietnam, but in all wars. For we know that while your sacrifice and service is the very definition of glory, war itself is not glorious. We hate war. When we fight, we do so to protect ourselves because it's necessary.

Let's resolve that in our democracy we can debate and disagree — even in a time of war. But let us never use patriotism as a political sword. Patriots can support a war; patriots can oppose a war. And whatever our view, let us always stand united in support of our troops, who we placed in harm's way. That is our solemn obligation.

Let's resolve to take care of our veterans as well as they've taken care of us — not just talk, but actions. Not just in the first five years after a war, but the first five decades. For our Vietnam veterans, this means the disability benefits for diseases connected to Agent Orange. It means job opportunities and mental health care to help you stand tall again. It means ending the tragedy of veterans' homelessness, so that every veteran who has fought for America has a home in America. You shouldn't have to fight for a roof over your heads when you fought on behalf of the country that you love.

And when an American does not come back — including the 1,666 Americans still missing from the Vietnam War — let us resolve to do everything in our power to bring them home. This is our solemn promise to mothers like Sarah Shay who joins us today, 93 years old, who has honored her son, Major Donald Shay, Jr., missing in action for 42 years. There she is. Sarah, thank you for your courage. God bless you.

This is the promise we're fulfilling today to the Meroney family of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Forty-three years after he went missing, we can announce that Army Captain Virgil Meroney, III, is coming home, and he will finally rest in peace.

Some have called this war era a scar on our country, but here's what I say. As any wound heals, the tissue around it becomes tougher, becomes stronger than before. And in this sense, finally, we might begin to see the true legacy of Vietnam. Because of Vietnam and our veterans, we now use American power smarter, we honor our military more, we take care of our veterans better. Because of the hard lessons of Vietnam, because of you, America is even stronger than before.

And finally, on this anniversary and all the years to come, let us remember what binds us, as one people. This is important for all of us, whether you fought in the Vietnam War or fought against it, whether you were too young to be shaped by it. It is important that our children understand the sacrifices that were made by your troops in Vietnam; that for them, this is more than just a name in history books. It's important that we know the lesson of a gift once left at this Memorial.

It was towards the end of the day, and most of the tourists and visitors had departed. And there it was — a football helmet, black with white stripes, and a wristband. And with them was a handwritten note. And it was from a young man, still in high school. And mind you, this was more than two decades after Vietnam. That high school student was born years after the war had already ended. But in that short, handwritten note he captured the reverence — the bonds between generations — that bring us here today.

The letter began, "*Dear Vietnam Veterans, here are two things from me to you that I think you should have.*" He explained that it was his helmet from midget football and his wristband from his senior year. So today I want to close with the words he wrote:

"In these two pieces of equipment, I was allowed to make mistakes, correct them, grow and mature as a person. However, that was on my battlefield. You didn't get the chance to do that on your battlefield. Some of you were forced to grow up too fast; all of you died too soon. We do have many things in common, though. We both have pride, heart and determination. I'm just sorry you guys had to learn those qualities too fast. That is why I'm giving you what I grew up with. You are true heroes and you will never be forgotten."

That's from a high school kid, born decades after the end of the war. And that captures the spirit that this entire country should embrace.

Veterans, families of the Vietnam War, I know the wounds of war are slow to heal. You know that better than most. But today we take another step. The task of telling your story continues. The work of perfecting our Union goes on. And decades from now, I hope another young American will visit this place and reach out and touch a name. And she'll learn the story of service members — people she never met, who fought a war she never knew — and in that moment of understanding and of gratitude and of grace, your legacy will endure. For you are all true heroes and you will all be remembered.

May God bless you. May God bless your families. May God bless our men and women in uniform. And may God bless these United States of America.



50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

I was able to put a contingent of Sky Soldiers together to attend the initial *50th Vietnam War Anniversary Commemorative Event* on Memorial Day. This commences 14 years of 50th Vietnam War Anniversary Commemoratives. Our Sky Soldier comments are noted below.

Robert Getz
Task Force CO, 2/503d

Robert, the ceremony was excellent and designed to say thank you for the dedicated service from a Nation that never took the time to do so. It was fairly well attended by many Veterans and I believe it left me with a sense of gratitude and closure. It was a somber occasion with an opportunity to reflect back over the years and begin the process of healing.

Jerry Harper
C/3/503d

I was glad I got an invitation to this historic event. Units were not mentioned but all vets were honored. My son came with me and his take was that we finally got the honor and respect from the nation. We both felt the speech by the President was not political or part of a campaign. It was all about us and a grateful nations' applause. I felt for the first time in 45 years that it was ok to be a Vietnam Vet. I actually had people step back and give me their place in a crowd or line. Many said thank you and welcome home with meaning. It was the best place for a Vietnam Vet to be. I met some new friends from the 173d who also came to the reunion. We'll stay connected now. Rolling Thunder was awesome. I'm glad I got to see it while Vietnam Vets are still riding. Truly inspiring and patriotic event that should not be missed.

Terry Aubrey
E/2/503d

I thought it was great! It was a great surprise to see President Obama, VP Joe Biden and the 1st Ladies arrive. The President gave a heartfelt speech. My wife and I felt honored to be there. The Honor Guards passing out water during the whole event was a great thing too. We were treated with great respect from all hosting staff. It was truly a pleasure to be there. Of course the heat was extreme and I felt like I was going to drop out. That was a tough part. The Herd wasn't really singled out and noted. It was all Vietnam Vets as a whole recognized.

David Evans
B/3/503d

I am attaching (below) a copy of the first draft of an article on our attendance there that day. On behalf of all of us, thank you for helping make this great and historic opportunity possible.

Terry Modglin
E/4/503d, D/1/503d

SKY SOLDIERS AT 50th COMMEMORATION OF VIETNAM WAR ON MEMORIAL DAY

The Unifying Theme:

*Vietnam Veterans Help the Country Welcome
Iraq-Afghanistan Vets Proudly*

A Sky Soldier contingent that included numerous Chapter 1 Members attended this year's historic Memorial Day Ceremony at the Wall. This year's observance centered around the Presidential Proclamation marking the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The commemoration of the Vietnam War will span 13 years, the number of years of U.S. involvement from 1962 to 1975.

The core thrust of the Commemoration is to reset the perception of the Vietnam War veterans in America's history through events and initiatives at the national, state, and local level. President Obama characterized the period as an opportunity to "set the record straight – and it starts this day" to "let us speak of your courage." The President told the assemblage "America turned its back on you, but you never turned your back on America." He called the treatment of the returning Vietnam vet as a "national shame, a disgrace that should never have happened."



My Friend Paulie

My friend Paul H. Catozzi died October 18, 2011 in Oakhurst, New Jersey. Paulie is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He served multiple tours in Vietnam, first with "C", 2/503; 3/503; and "N" Co. 75th Rangers.

Paulie and I grew up together in the Bensonhurst area of Brooklyn, New York in the 1960's. We were neighborhood buddies. We spent many days exercising on the monkey bars and playing hand ball in our neighborhood park. We also shared many cold winter nights playing pool at a local pool hall, and in a covered entrance of a neighborhood Kosher butcher shop after the candy store closed, "just hanging out."

We both entered the Army in 1965. Eventually, we were both sent to Vietnam; Paulie in 1966, and me in 1967. Unknown to me at the time, we were both assigned to 2/503; Paulie as a member of Charlie Company, and me as a member of Recon Platoon. In one of those inexplicable events, Paulie and I met in the jungle of Vietnam about three days after the Combat Jump of February 22, 1967.

Returning to Battalion Headquarters, which was set up near the original drop zone, Recon happened to be crossing Charlie Company's perimeter. I was the last one in our platoon line of march. As I got closer to Charlie's line, I observed a soldier standing upright with one leg on a rotting tree trunk, with an M-60 resting on his thigh. My first thought was, "*he looks familiar.*" As I came nearer to him, we both recognized each other, and at the same time shouted our names. We hugged and kissed and enjoyed our brief encounter.

Back in Bien Hoa we spent what time we could together reminiscing and catching up with news from back home. The first night together, we did the bar hopping scene in Bien Hoa, and we were photographed while drinking in one of the bars.

After our discharge and living back in our old neighborhood, we saw each other frequently for a couple of years, but lost contact for many years. Approximately five years ago on a visit to the PTSD program at the Brooklyn V.A. Hospital, while walking in the hallway, I

met Paulie as he was coming out from one of the rooms. Smiles, shouts, hugs and kisses once again. Our friendship was rekindled.



L-R: Augie and his friend Paulie, March 25, 1967

The last years we had the opportunity to talk, share memories and just be buddies again. Paulie was my friend.

Augie Scarino
Recon/2/503d

Note: Along with his tribute to his buddy, Paulie, Augie sent along this photo of the two of them. My wife picked up the picture and said, "*These are two good looking guys.*" Yeah, honey, we were all good looking guys. Ed



Incoming Commander

The command of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division changed command on June 21st for the first time since the brigade activated at Fort Knox in the fall of 2009. Col. Chris Toner relinquished command to Col. William Ostlund in a ceremony on Brooks Field. In addition to senior Fort Knox leadership, leaders from the 1st Infantry Division headquarters at Fort Riley, Kansas, were in attendance along with family members and friends.



Col. Bill Ostlund, on left, as Col. Chris Toner turns over command.

Enlisting in the Army in 1983, Col. William B. Ostlund served with the 1st Battalion, 75th Rangers and was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield through 1987. As a Staff Sergeant he transitioned to the Nebraska National Guard's Long Range Surveillance Detachment and simultaneously enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and joined their ROTC program.



Taking command, Bill Ostlund, one of ours.

Col. Ostlund was commissioned as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1990. He served as a Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer in 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment – 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). This tour included service in Operation Desert

Shield and Desert Storm. He was then assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment where he again served as a Platoon Leader and a Company Executive Officer. Col. Ostlund next commanded B Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry (mechanized) in the Republic of Korea. He subsequently attended graduate school at The Fletcher School, Tufts University prior to being assigned as an Associate Professor in West Point's Department of Social Studies where he taught American Politics and International Security Studies.

In 2001, Col. Ostlund was stationed in Vicenza, Italy where he served as the Southern European Task Force's Chief of Operations, Operations Officer – 1st Battalion (Airborne) 508th Infantry, and Operations Officer – 173d Airborne Brigade; this assignment included service in the Balkans and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He then served in the Strategic Command's Plans and Policy Division as the Chief, European Support Section and Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction Planner.

In 2006, Col. Ostlund returned to Italy to command 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment of the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. The battalion formed Task Force ROCK, deployed for 15 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and the Valorous Unit Award. Col. Ostlund served as the Deputy Commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment from 2008-2011; from this position, he twice served as the Commander for a Joint Inter-Agency Special Operations Counterterrorism Task Force in Afghanistan. Col. Ostlund most recently completed a Senior Service College Fellowship at Tufts University. He is a graduate of the Joint and Combined Warfighting School, Command and General Staff College, and the Ranger, Jumpmaster, Pathfinder, and Air Assault Courses.

Col. Ostlund's awards and decorations include the Presidential Unit Citation, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with three oak leaf clusters, Combat Infantryman's Badge (2nd award), Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge w/combat jump star, and the Ranger tab.

Col. Ostlund is married to the former Heather Clark. They have three sons – Will, Sam and Brenget.



Bill & Heather

Congratulations Colonel! You Sir, make us proud.



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Here Ya Go Lady

I recently went to the grocery store the other day and as I was loading the car up, someone saw a sticker on another car's window that said,

**"Medicated for your protection-
Veteran with PTSD".**

My husband and I have always maintained a good sense of humor and not been ashamed of his injuries including his PTSD. We recently ordered such a sticker for our vehicle and obviously the owner two cars down, had the same sense of humor as us. As a lady walked past with her husband, she said, *"I wonder what it's like to live with someone with PTSD?"* with the same disdain in her voice as if she asked *"what's it like to live with a monster?"* I hung my head in shame as they walked on chatting about what they thought our lives would be like, but as for me, I didn't even have an answer at that time and so I let them walk on by.

Normally, the Mistress would be the first to stand up and educate, erase stupidity and hope like hell that the media hadn't completely ruined someone's idea of what these invisible wounds are. I just couldn't and didn't have the strength that day.

On the drive home, I asked myself "what *is it* like to live with PTSD and TBI?" and the answers flooded me as the silence of the car wrapped its safety blanket around me. I had to pull the car over to the side where I could rest my weary head against the steering wheel and just let the tears come. Why could I have not stood up and said

"You want to know what it's like? Here ya go, Lady":

- It's waking up every day not knowing who you will wake up beside or what kind of mood he will be in.
- It's living with a total stranger that you must care for and be treated like the enemies they fought against in Iraq.
- It's eating breakfast, lunch and dinner at home or out always every day, by yourself even when your Veteran is with you.
- It's never having your spouse to talk to.
- It's trying to soothe the fears of people he can see on the side of the road even when you don't even know why he is so afraid or what to say to make it all go away.



- It's assuring him that bags of trash or dead animals on the side of the road are not roadside bombs.
- It's not being allowed to enjoy happiness, love, or things you can enjoy because he gets jealous and ruins it.
- It's being blamed for everything that went wrong, including what happened in Iraq.
- It's sleeping next to someone who never goes to bed without nightmares and you learn to expect each and every sleep walking move he makes.
- It's watching someone every day who gets worse with OCD behavior that you can't explain or understand.
- It's lying to your friends, family, co-workers, and acquaintances that *"everything is just fine"* including yourself.
- It's being challenged in *every way possible* with some obstacles so difficult that you don't know how to get past them.
- It's loving someone who hates everything about you no matter how hard you try or how much you help them.
- It's fighting for someone and loving them so much that you sacrifice it all only to have them push you away.
- It's having someone be so terribly cruel and know it, but finds it easier to walk out the door than saying *"I'm sorry"*.
- It's knowing medications, appointments, and his VA medical records like the back of your hand and not know when your last or next doctor's appointment is, or even when the last time you had a break to yourself.
- It's taking care of them every single day when they are sick, but never get the same in return.

(continued....)



- It's a game of pleasing, soothing, calming and redirecting twelve or more hours a day just to keep some sort of peace in the house.
- It's being a single parent and having to explain to your smaller children that their daddy really isn't mad at them, he is just sick.
- It's juggling parenthood trying to be both mom and dad at the same time.
- It's having every special occasion ignored, sabotaged or completely forgotten about.
- It's having everything taken away from you and not understand where it went.
- It's not being allowed to cry, grieve, be angry or have feelings hurt because you are supposed to be what they want you to be. Mine would rather have us all miserable than enjoy anything he can't.
- It's fighting against something *much larger* than yourself and wounding yourself in the process.
- It's having to take care of yourself without help from your partner because they just don't care and don't want to.
- It's not being able to have civilian friends or even normal military friends because they just don't get it.
- It's finding comfort among others like us because we don't have to explain or be ashamed of their behavior.
- It's walking a crumbling walkway and losing your footing with no one to catch you if you fall.
- It's talking rationally with an irrational person.
- It's having your heart trampled on every single day but still finding the strength to keep going.
- It's saving their life only to have them blame you for it every day thereafter.

Source:

<http://armyreservistwife.blogspot.com/2012/03/whats-like-to-live-with-ptsd-and.html>
(photos added)

The report above was sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D, of Melbourne, Florida, former LTC with the 82nd Abn who helps vets and their spouses from throughout the country re-adjust after their wartime experience. The Doc is a recognized authority on PTSD and TBI, and has helped countless Sky Soldiers and other vets and their family members.

The wife of one of Doc's veterans added:

I will add:

- It's struggling with the horror of burying every ambition you thought you could share with him.
- It's lying or avoiding telling anyone how you're doing because you don't want to end up making him feel worse.



- It's getting accidentally kicked, punched, or pushed in bed during the nightmares he won't remember in the morning.
- It's balancing the budget while you listen to him drone on and on about his latest obsession.
- It's biting your tongue as he accuses you of being just as PTSD/TBI as he is and that your ambitions are "obsessions".
- It's him not believing in you when you talk about *your* hopes and dreams.
- It's allowing his every sexual fantasy and crying when he sleeps because he doesn't even remember what yours are.
- It's feeling obligated to everyone but yourself, and when given the time, you end up catching up on everything else that's a mess.
- It's the humiliation of anyone coming to the house and seeing a million details left undone and they ask, "*Why don't you have time?*"
- It's hating yourself at night for not doing better, not helping him more, and questioning God's power.
- It's letting yourself fall apart so he can keep going.
- It's the guilt of trying to explain to professionals something you can barely understand yourself.
- It's treasuring the happy moments all the more because you know it won't last long.
- It's keeping the dog in his crate for hours because you are afraid he'll kill him.
- It's watching all your systems of organization come tumbling down because you're maintaining his mood.
- It's romantic suicide with an unshakeable sense of fortitude.

You feel like crying, laughing, screaming, and dying all at the same time. Every day. No breaks.

*The only thing harder than being a soldier,
is loving one.*



A belated tribute from a Sky Soldier

Because we emailed last month's newsletter earlier than usual to give everyone a chance to register for the reunion in Lexington, this fine tribute by good buddy Steve Welch came in too late to be included. Ed

As Memorial Day approaches, we, the brothers of the 173d Airborne Brigade, remember with respect those friends and brothers who didn't make it back to the world.

We of the Herd who served in Viet Nam are older now because time stops for no one. Our memories are the only time capsule we have for remembering those of us who didn't make it home. I spend Memorial Day remembering those friends and brothers who died in that long ago distant land. Some memories of their dying never leave us even with the passing of time because that is "*All the Way*" of the Airborne Soldier.

We, the honored members of the 173d, have a great history of never giving up no matter what the odds are against us. That is our legacy and that is why during this time of the year we pay our respects to those brothers who will live always in our memories.

Steve Welch
C/2/503d

Jan. '67 – Jan. '68
"We Try Harder"



Steve, a young trooper



SGT. MAJ. ASTOR TERRY *A Sky Soldier*

FAYETTEVILLE - Retired Army Sgt. Maj. Astor Terry passed away Saturday, January 28, 2012, in Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, at the age of 71. Sgt. Maj. Terry retired from the Army in 1989. He then started *All The Way Driving School* in Raeford, teaching driver education. He was born in Vest, Kentucky, to the late Johnnie Terry and Lonzo Sparkman. Also preceding him in death were his brothers, Olie Terry and Howard Terry; and his sister, Edna Terry. Astor touched many lives, and he will be greatly missed. Survivors include his wife, Virginia L. Terry; two daughters, Paula Jencks and her husband, Guy, of Hope Mills, and Vickie Hinton and her husband, Rex, of Virginia; two granddaughters, Barbara Hinton of Virginia and Kimberly Jencks of Hope Mills; and siblings, Olive, Estie, Zella, Tom, Tramel, Elizabeth and Martha Jo. Burial with full military honors took place in Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery in Spring Lake.



The Resourceful GIs

BEER CARRYING SPITFIRES IN WORLD WAR II



In the lighter moments of World War II, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy.

During the war, the Heneger and Constable brewery donated free beer to the troops. After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments.

Some men, often called *sourcers*, were able to get wine or other niceties from the land or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea.

The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs. According to pictures that can be found, various sizes of kegs were used. Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival.

A variation of this was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel. The modification even received the official designation *Mod. XXX*. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the official designation.

As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons were often sent back to Great-Britain for maintenance or liaison duties. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings.

The Spitfire had very little ground clearance with the larger beer kegs.



A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.



Typically, the British Revenue of Ministry and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks. Most often, this was done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons.

In his book *Dancing in the Skies*, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelancer pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week.

Note: What is even more amazing about this story; the Aussies weren't involved. ☺



The Combat Jump ~ Junction City

February 22, 1967



Recon combat jumpers
Mike Hargadon (L) &
Jerry Hassler

The sequence of the jump was personnel, followed by equipment and then resupply bundles. During resupply, VC and/or NVA started firing at the C-130s with a heavy machinegun just off the east end of the DZ. The resupply was halted and the AF bombed the area.

These pictures were taken by Capt. Claud Matchette, Asst. Brigade S-2, from a low flying Helicopter. He retired a LTC.

Jerry Hassler
S-2/Recon RTO
2/503d, '66/'67

Photo of the DZ looking north-northeast. Note the parachutes starting at the road and running northeast.

Over the years I have run into attempts to disparage the combat jumps made by the 2/503, particularly the Vietnam and Iraq jumps. Although the Iraq jump was made into a relatively secure DZ, it was made in enemy occupied territory and the DZ was so big it could not be secured completely.

After our jump in Nam, it was stated SF and Irregular Defense Forces (IDF) secured the DZ, which was completely false and evidenced by the study done by the military of all three jumps by the 2/503rd as found in: *"Operation Employment of the Airborne Brigade Combat Team: The 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment as a Case Study - A Monograph by Maj. Matthew J. Konz, U.S. Army for the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas."*

The location of the DZ was so secreted, not even AF Blue Berets were given the location and the Air Force coordinator, LTC Burrows, jumped in at the same time as the rest of us. The AF presence was to coordinate the equipment and resupply drops. Some rumors dealt with how hot the DZ was and whether or not sniper fire or enemy activity was encountered. The paratrooper that landed in the tree and was stuck up there for several hours allegedly took periodic sniper fire.



Jumpers, with the paratrooper caught in the treetop on the left of the photo.



Smoke from a bomb dropped by a fighter jet.



National Archives

Military Awards and Decorations

How Do I Request Military Awards and Decorations?

Important information for Next-of-Kin Cold War Recognition Certificate.

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) does not issue service medals; that is a function of each military service department. Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served. However, for cases involving Air Force and Army personnel, the NPRC will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request along with the records verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medals. Use the addresses listed below, and mail your request accordingly.

How Do I Request Military Awards and Decorations?

For the Veteran: in general, the military services will work replacement medal requests for the veteran at no cost. This includes family members with the signed authorization of the veteran.

For the Next-of-Kin: the process (and cost) for replacement medals requests differs among the service branches and is dependent upon who is requesting the medal, particularly if the request involves an archival record.

For the General Public: if the service member separated from military service **before 1951**, the public may purchase a copy of the veteran's Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) to determine the awards due and obtain the medals from a commercial source. If the service member separated **after 1950**, the public may request such information from the OMPF via the Freedom of Information Act (see Access to OMPFs by the General Public).

ARMY	
Where to write for medals	National Personnel Records Center 1 Archives Drive St. Louis, MO 63138 or
Where medals are mailed from	U.S. Army TACOM Clothing and Heraldry (PSID) P.O. Box 57997 Philadelphia, PA 19111-7997
Where to write in case	U.S. Army Human Resources Command

ARMY

of a problem
or an appeal
Soldier Program and Services
Division - Awards and Decorations
Branch
ATTN: AHRC-PDP-A
1600 Spearhead Division Avenue,
Dept 480
Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408

[Thanks to Craig Ford, C/1/503d]

~ Correction ~

Great newsletter, really enjoyed looking at it. It will take a little time to go through it slowly. Would like to make a donation to *Operation Corregidor II*, need address. Also, the one photo of spraying Agent Orange; I was the one who took the picture, the man laying down working on the hose was from Supply. Thanks,

John Cavinee
Cowboys

The photo and caption which appeared in last month's newsletter, with corrected credit. Ed



"This photo shows me in our chopper spraying Agent Orange. Hated to do this job, we had to fly slow for some reason. The pipe was right under my ass." Supply Trooper
(Photo taken by John Cavinee, Cowboys)

The reluctant
paratrooper



A 173d, 2/503d Legacy Continues

"Legacy - Something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past."

By: Leta M. Carruth

Honorary Member of 2/503d Infantry Regiment

A few months ago I was visiting Fort Benning, GA as a guest at the home of SFC Kevin Rice (Battle Company ROCK Paratrooper from OEF VIII) and his family. Kevin told me that he had something he wanted to give to me. Unfortunately, both of us forgot about it and I left Fort Benning without it.

Three weeks ago I saw SFC Rice again. This time he had the item with him and gave it to me. Yeah, I got all emotional. I don't think I'd be human if I didn't.

He gave me this:

Now some of you may be thinking, "hmmm, so he gave you a 173d flag." And you would be right, of course.

BUT, when he gave me the flag he told me its story.



I'm not sure if the photo is of good enough quality for you to see the dirt and dust stains on it but they are there. This flag was physically with one of the 2/503d Soldiers on the jump into Iraq in OIF 1, and has been taken on every deployment to Afghanistan by a ROCK Paratrooper as well. Those dirt stains are a testament to the fact that this flag has been in Iraq and in more than one place in Afghanistan.

SFC Rice is one of a fairly small group of Paratroopers who know that, in 2011, I was made an *Honorary Member of the Regiment*. He told me that he wanted me to have the flag because he knew that I would ensure it continues to go on any deployment with the ROCK in the future.

I wish there were words more powerful than 'humbled, honored and privileged' because none of those even come close to how I feel that SFC Rice and the ROCK Paratroopers have entrusted me with this flag and its continued legacy. I cannot even begin to image all of the memories this flag holds for them.

The 2/503d (and the entire 173d Brigade) are about to deploy to Afghanistan again. This will be the unit's fourth deployment to Afghanistan. Knowing that this flag **MUST** go on that deployment, I set about to make that happen.

I'm a member of several Facebook pages related to the 173d and the 2/503d. I remembered reading that Dawn Paola-Galante was planning a trip to Italy to visit her son, PFC Matthew Galante, in the near future. So I

reached out to Dawn and her husband Bryan (former Paratrooper with the 82nd) to ask if Dawn would mind hand-carrying the flag to Italy with her. I didn't want to run the risk of mailing the flag to Italy.

Dawn graciously (and I might add, excitedly) agreed that she would absolutely hand-carry the flag with her and deliver it personally to SFC Bobby King who will take the flag with him when he deploys to Afghanistan later this year. She and her husband repeatedly told me it is an honor to be a part of continuing this legacy.

I am grateful to SFC Rice for entrusting me with this incredible part of the history and legacy of the ROCK. I am also grateful to Dawn for assisting in getting the flag to Italy. I am so thankful to SFC King for agreeing to be the keeper of the flag on the upcoming deployment. Such teamwork.

I am currently working on writing the history of the flag so that one day, God willing, when there are no more wars, it can be displayed in an appropriate place and manner.

Such a legacy. Such an honor.

AIRBORNE!!! The ROCK!!!

UPDATE: Rockbridge County grad, former football star killed by IED in Afghanistan

Chase Prasnicki played football at Army after starring at Rockbridge County High School.



Chase

WDBJ7.com

1:46 p.m. EDT, June 28, 2012

LEXINGTON, VA: WDBJ7 is learning more about former Rockbridge County football star Chase Prasnicki, who was killed Wednesday night in Afghanistan. Prasnicki, 24, had been based in Germany before being deployed to Afghanistan on Sunday (with the 173d ABCT). According to his former coach at Rockbridge County, Jason White, Prasnicki died as a result of injuries from an improvised explosive device, or IED. White said Prasnicki was killed Wednesday night. He was a first lieutenant in the Army. Prasnicki graduated from Rockbridge County in 2006. He went on to play football for Army, and graduated from West Point in 2010. Prasnicki leaves behind a wife, Emily. The couple was married last fall. (**Note:** It's reported Chase was the great grand-nephew of Maj. Gus Vendetti, A/2/503, VN).



Ceremony of the Empty Boots Memorial Day Remembrances

By Steve Welsh

C/2/503d

Survivor of Hill 875, Dak To

New jungle boots all lined up in a row
Signifying the young soldiers who wouldn't grow old
It was our custom after a battle to show this respect
As we stood there at attention with time to reflect

The names of the dead were read off
And Life Magazine pictures were taken
Honoring these men so they wouldn't be forsaken

We all stood there in the sweat of the hot day
Feeling their loss in our own special way

All those boots and not one being filled
Showed just how many of us had been killed
Our 2nd battalion of 330 men
Had been reduced to only a few
As fifty plus were able to walk off that Hill in their own
boots

The colors of our flag shown bright in the slight breeze
And none of us wanted to leave

The ceremony was done, but we stayed in a group
As the sound echoed in our ears of the 21 gun salute

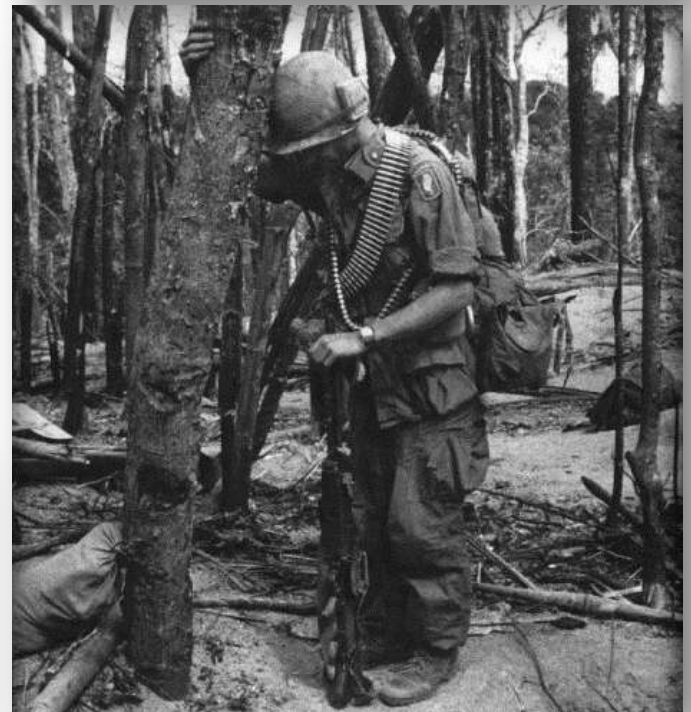
These were our friends, the brave men of the 173d

Our fallen brothers like many in Wars before them are
the hero's respected and honored
On this very special day called Memorial Day

**Central Highlands, Dak To, Vietnam,
November 1967, Battle for Hill 875**



There were not enough boots.



*Do you want to know about war neighbor? We
could tell you about war. But we won't. It would
make you tremble.*



ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

By Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D.
LTC USA (Ret)
82nd Abn Div

Army leaders and some psychiatrists are marshaling on the City of Brotherly Love this week in an attempt to convince the American Psychiatric Association to change the diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to Posttraumatic Injury. Military officers led by General Peter Chiarelli (Ret) insist that effecting this change will reduce the stigma that keeps troops from seeking treatment. Retired General Chiarelli was the first to drop the word “disorder,” referring to the condition as PTS. The new name was adopted by officials at the highest levels of the Pentagon, including Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta. But PTS never caught on with the medical community because of concerns that insurers and government bureaucrats would not be willing to pay for a condition that wasn’t explicitly labeled a disease, disorder or injury. Plagued by increasing suicide rates the Department of Defense spent millions of dollars studying suicides and largely came to conclusions which blamed the victim.

In 2009, Colonel Elspeth Ritchie, Army psychiatrist now retired, said problems within family or marital relationships back at home were the significant factors leading to suicides, revitalizing the antiquated adage that if the military wanted to have a wife and a family, they would have issued you one. Are they genuinely so naïve as to attribute 300,000 cases of PTSD to having problems with a wife and family?

Currently it is reported that more than 60 percent of troops who believe they have post-traumatic stress disorder are not seeking treatment through the military. The nonprofit *Blue Star Families* found that only 35 percent of service members displaying symptoms of PTSD sought military medical treatment. Others sought civilian treatment or ignored their symptoms.



In the report, service members stated, “*Command didn’t think he needed it and didn’t make time available for help.*” Another reported, “*My husband did not want to be ‘excused’ from the military after 16 years of service with no retirement and without a medical board.*”

The military is in the business of war fighting. The Army’s Medical Department motto is, “*Conserve the Fighting Strength*”. It is no wonder that the stigma against seeking mental health support will never be eradicated. The Army Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, under the direction of Army Urologist BG Cornum, and in conjunction with *Don’t Worry Be Happy* psychologist



Dr. Martin Seligman launched a multi-million dollar Resiliency Training Program (formerly called *BattleMind Training*) based on a small pilot program conducted at the University of Pennsylvania with non-military participants. The program returned military mental health to the dark ages and Resiliency became the 21st Century version of the archaic *Suck it Up and Drive On!*

The Army’s emotional resiliency program diverted huge amounts of money and attention away from what was really needed; an end to multiple forced redeployments to combat zones, and an overhaul of the military’s mental health screening and treatment protocols to reduce red tape and stigma.

My own research, plus a slew of investigative reports of others, documents the military’s history of keeping warm bodies on the battlefield and away from pricey health care — even if that means drugging unhappy troops to keep them in combat, ignoring signs of distress, or placing institutional obstacles in the way of distressed soldiers seeking care. The program has grossly failed to reduce the skyrocketing suicide rates and increasing cases of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

And now, having wasted valuable tax dollars and failed, these same leaders want to direct how PTSD is diagnosed. If we can’t solve the problem, let’s just eradicate the problem by calling it something else. Let’s examine the faulty logic for relabeling Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as an injury.

(continued....)



1) Military leaders are *not* clinicians and have NO place in determining or even suggesting what are appropriate criteria and labels for mental health diagnoses. As I once told an Army Chaplain who wanted to administer psychological tests, *"I don't administer communion in my office, and if you want to administer psychological tests, go to school and get the appropriate credentials."*

2) Repetitive exposure to psychological trauma produces permanent changes in the brain. We are all products of our experience. Servicemembers having been exposed to trauma evidence increased activity in the basal ganglia, the thalamic nuclei, and the anterior cingulate gyrus, all visible through SPECT imaging of the brain. Quantitative EEGs reveal that individuals diagnosed with PTSD have extremely elevated beta, the brain waves responsible for our learning. Individuals exposed to trauma forever have the survival instinct etched in their brain, even when they return to a safe environment. Does calling it something else make it go away? I think not.

3) Downgrading the name of a mental health disorder does NOT in any way modify the intense suffering and symptoms experienced for those impacted by trauma. Will our rape victim dramatically feel better and will it reduce the stigma if we just refer to her rape as an Adverse Sexual Encounter? I think not. The 1978 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (DSM II) deleted the PTSD/Trauma category completely. Did that mean that those who had experienced trauma were suddenly healed? I also think not.

4) Servicemembers suffering from PTSD and its torturous symptoms struggle daily to cope with their conditions. Having their condition downgraded to an injury becomes a secondary wound, similar to our Vietnam veterans who experienced the second wound of not being welcomed home. Researcher Ed Tick author of *Soldiers Heart: Supporting or Returning Veterans*, clearly elucidates the importance of welcoming home and embracing our warriors. For most of the veterans I assist with Veterans Disability Claims, it is NOT at all about the money, but actually about validation and recognition of their sacrifice. Do we really want to diminish the sacrifice of our young warriors by downgrading the impact of their trauma? I think not.

5) A shift to "injury" could make it harder for service members to collect permanent-disability payments for their condition from the government, some experts warn. *"When you have an injury, you follow a treatment regimen and expect to get better, this change is about medicine, but it is also about compensation. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars."* The VA already makes it extremely difficult for veterans to file claims and there are currently over 1,000,000,000 claims

in arrears with an over three-and-a-half year wait on appeals. Do we want to add to that burden for our returning warriors? I think not.

6) After Vietnam, our motto became, *"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."* Can we really consider diminishing the valiant sacrifices of a new generation of warriors by denying their condition or robbing them of the benefits they deserve to collect? **If a nation does not have the resources to take care of the warriors who sacrifice so much, then the nation and its leaders should NOT wage the war.**

7) *"The whole history of psychiatry is to change the names of conditions. If the problem doesn't go away, we change the name,"* said Bessel van der Kolk, a professor of psychiatry at Boston University. *"It makes us feel momentarily better. But it doesn't change anything."*

8) The current diagnostic manual already has a category for the Posttraumatic Stress Injury. It is called *Acute Stress Reaction*. If the symptoms persist for more than four weeks, the condition becomes Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

9) If the Army really wants to protect soldiers, it will limit the number of tours that troops are permitted to do in Afghanistan/Combat environments. Medical studies have suggested that a soldier's resilience is depleted with each battlefield tour. Research with QEEG can predict suicidality in service members. As long as we wage wars there will be devastating human consequences.



Let us not abandon those who answered the call, who sacrificed that we might be free, who suffered the invisible wounds. Our warriors deserve a better welcome home than adding insult to their injuries.

Scott Fairchild, Psy.D. (LTC, USA Ret)

**Doctor of Psychology
Co-Founder, Welcome Home Vets
Founder, Stress, Trauma and
Response Team, Kennedy Space
Center, NASA
1370 Bedford Drive
Melbourne, Florida 32940
321.253.8887 phn
321.253.8878 fax**



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



Sun City "All Airborne" Fiesta VI, July 4-8, El Paso, TX.

Contact:

Phn: 915-562-9969

Eml: bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org



70th Birthday of the 506th Infantry Regiment (Currahee) July 20, 2012 - Fort Campbell, KY.

Contact:

Web: 506infantry.org



"Parachutes Over Pittsburgh", 2012 Convention, August 8-11, 2012, Monroeville/Pittsburgh, PA.

Contact:

Tommy Thompson, 724-206-0290

Eml: 82paratrooper@comcast.net



101st Airborne Division Association 67th Annual Reunion, August 14-17, 2012. Marriott Nashville Airport, Nashville, TN.

Contact:

Phn: 931-431-0199



2nd International Paratrooper Reunion, August 17-19, 2012, The Interessengemeinschaft Fallschirmjäger n.e. V, Leipziger Chaussee 111, Am Flugplatz, 39120 Magdeburg

Contact:

Eml: http://www.paratroops-reunion.de/html/home_.html



56th Annual Reunion of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, September 23 – 26, 2012. Holiday Inn, Richmond Intl. Airport, Sandston, VA.

Contact:

Nancy Young, Secretary

Eml: youngncy@comcast.net



2012 FSB Ripcord Association Reunion, October 3-6, 2012, Indianapolis Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN.

Contact:

Web: www.ripcordassociation.com

~ Other Reunions ~



29th Annual Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Reunion, July 30 - August 5, 2012. Hilton Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Phn: 800-505-8472

Battle of the Bulge Veterans, September 26-30, 2012. New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Doris Davis

Phn: 650-654-0101

Eml: doris@battleofthebulge.org

Web: <http://www.battleofthebulge.org/>



2012 Combat Infantryman's Reunion, October 18-21, 2012. Nashville, TN.

Contact:

Web: <http://cibassoc.com>

Note: If you're aware of any upcoming Airborne reunions please send details to: rto173d@cfl.rr.com



Political Stuff

We shy away from making political statements in your newsletter, yet regularly report on matters involving the Commander-In-Chief and legislation impacting vets. Given the political climate in our country I have longed believed what is needed to pull us back together as a people is **A PARATROOPER IN THE WHITE HOUSE!** Finally, one brave soul is standing in the door.

VOTE THOMAS FOR PRESIDENT!

Like many voters I was giving a great deal of thought to trivial issues such as our economy and high unemployment. I am so grateful that we peons have been enlightened as to the real issues by the political pundits.

The left makes a compelling case. How can one support a candidate who accepts the endorsement from a guy who was sleeping at a Springsteen Concert? That, coupled with where the Romney dog rode on a trip, obviously makes Romney unacceptable.



All The Way with Thomas!
(Pushups may be involved)

The right also makes a good case. I was shocked to find grown men employed by the government drank and employed prostitutes. Obviously, their Commander in Chief is inept. I'm certainly glad none of *my* paratroopers drank or hired hookers while *I* was in command.

I'm running as a write-in candidate for President. I don't hire prostitutes for three reasons; I don't have the money, my wife wouldn't allow it, and at my age I don't remember what I'm supposed to do with one anyway. Our puppy doesn't travel. I have never fallen asleep at a concert. By current political spin standards, I'm the only qualified man for the job running. Vote Thomas!

William Thomas
LTC U.S. Army (Ret), C/2/503d

Hmmm. The Colonel does make a strong case. Should we vote for him and he wins, my only fear for us is, pushups might be involved! And there's that drinking part. Then again, those 173d visits to the White House for Saturday BBQs and PLF practice and volley ball on the White House lawn might be fun! No hookers tho, damn. Ed

No Doo Dads in *This* Newsletter! *well, sort of*

After 43 issues we believe we've done a reasonably good job adhering to our self-imposed policy of not including advertisements for 'stuff' in your newsletter – this newsletter is about *you*, not doo dads. The exception to this has always been running free reviews and info about books written by Sky Soldiers & 503rd Troopers and, of course, notices of reunions and 173d related fund raisers, such as Ken Smith's *Spartan Club* which raises funds for the maintenance of our 173d Memorial at Benning (see following page).

But, we've decided to bend the rules this one time -- because we can. Even here it involves support of the 173d Memorial maintenance program mentioned.

After seeing the neat 173d/503rd jackets presented to the WWII 503rd Troopers who attended the reunion in Lexington last month, a number of our guys have expressed interest in obtaining a copy of the jacket for themselves.



Only 12 of the jackets were produced for the reunion.

Our good buddy, Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d, personally created the design of the jacket, including stitching the 503 patch on the back which required 113,000+ stitches. (Hopefully, a machine did the counting).

Anyone interested in ordering a jacket from Wayne can contact him at bowway@aol.com for details and pricing. Wayne has offered to donate 10% of proceeds to the *173d Memorial Maintenance Fund*. We here at your newsletter have no interest in this endeavor, financial or otherwise.

Wayne mentioned because each jacket is essentially 'hand-made', it will take a little time to complete each request.

We now return to our 'no advertising doo dads' policy.



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

In 480 BC, three hundred Spartans stood in a rocky mountain pass at Thermopylae and for seven days held off the mighty Persian army, allowing Greek forces to muster and eventually defeat the invaders. Three hundred warriors preserved the cradle of civilization. Three hundred Spartan Warriors made a difference.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation needs the support of 300 warriors to preserve and maintain our Memorial that was dedicated in June 2010 at the National Infantry Museum campus near Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Memorial Foundation requires a minimum of \$5,000.00 annually for basic maintenance costs (electricity, landscaping and irrigation). In addition to periodic costs of adding new information to the Memorial, funds will be required for maintenance, minor repairs, insurance and the Foundation's administrative costs. To ensure perpetual care for the Memorial, the Foundation has established an endowment fund goal of \$300,000., raised over ten years, in addition to annual donations received from other sources.

The Foundation is seeking 300 warriors willing to help preserve our legacy and maintain our memorial. This letter constitutes your invitation to become a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation's *Spartan's Club*.

We ask each Spartan Club Commander to pledge between \$200.00 and \$1,000.00 for each of the next ten years. We ask each Spartan Club Centurion to Pledge between \$173.00 and \$199.00 for the same period and each Spartan Club Lancer to pledge between \$25.00 and \$172.00 for a similar period. If the Spartans contribute an average of \$100.00 each for the next ten years, the Foundation Endowment Fund will achieve its objective. Each Spartan Club member will receive periodic communications regarding events held at the Memorial, as well as receiving recognition in our annual programs and reports.

As with the Spartans at Thermopylae, the burden of preserving our memorial and heritage is shared equally regardless of position, title and rank. Membership in the Club is open to all Sky Soldiers, their families, and military and patriotic organizations and friends of the 173d. As in the past, we hope that you will accept this challenge and support your memorial.

**Ken Smith, Chairman
173d Memorial Foundation**

The 173d Spartan Club

I/We wish to share the honor of preserving our memorial and heritage as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation *Spartan Club*.



Beginning in 2011, and for nine succeeding years thereafter, I pledge to donate the following amount each year to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation:

As a **Spartan Club Commander** (\$200.00 or more)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Centurion** (173.00 to \$199.00)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Lancer** (\$25.00 to \$172.00)
\$ _____

(Please print)

Full Name: _____

Primary Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail your signed pledge form and your check (payable to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation) to:

**173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation
1160 Lake Royale
Louisburg, NC 27549**

Pledges may be paid electronically by going to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org and clicking on the tab, "Memorial Donations."

To assist you in remembering the timing of your annual pledge donation, the Foundation will send you electronically or by mail a brief reminder.

Note: The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Fund has been granted 501(c)3 status by the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions may be deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.



1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975

~ This Month in History ~

"They were the best of times; they were the worst of times."

July 1965

The Wrong Strategy?

"The shift from a strategy of defending enclaves to one of 'search and destroy' wedded the American forces to a conventionally fought war in Vietnam. General William Westmoreland wished to use the American forces, with their weight of firepower, to take on large communist concentrations, while the ARVN contained the guerrillas. Many members of the US defense establishment had different ideas.



July 1965

They believed in the concept of Counter Insurgency (COIN), as an answer to guerrilla warfare. COIN involved a close co-ordination of political, military and social policies, in order to isolate the guerrilla from the general population. When the allegiance of the population was won, then the guerrillas could be defeated. The US Marines, moreover, had their own theory, known as the Combined Action Program (CAP). It involved, for example, a specifically trained Marine squad protecting a village, while civic and medical aid was provided. Westmoreland rejected this type of strategy partly because one such policy – the 'Strategic Hamlet' programme – was proving unworkable in Vietnam, and also because he believed that his combat troops were needed to meet an immediate threat of large concentrations of the enemy breaking through. Influential voices opposed Westmoreland, but he got his way, and Starlite was the result. Whether it was the right result is another question entirely." (Nam, by Tim Page & John Pimlott)

1st: Viet Cong stage a mortar attack against Da Nang air base and destroy three aircraft.

3rd: Trigger, Roy Rogers' horse, dies at 25.



"Trigger. The smartest horse in the movies."

6th: Rock group "Jefferson Airplane" forms.

8th: Henry Cabot Lodge is reappointed as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

14th: Adlai Stevenson, US Ambassador to UN/ Presidential candidate, dies.

21st-28th: President Johnson meets with top aides to decide the future course of action in Vietnam.

23rd: Following several months of USAF operations against North Vietnamese targets, the first F-4C was downed by an SA-2 missile.

24th: Four F-4C Phantoms escorting a bombing raid at Kang Chi are the targets of antiaircraft missiles in the first such attack against American planes in the Vietnam War. One is shot down and the other three sustain damage.



This F-4 Phantom II served with the USAF in the Vietnam War. It shot down a North Vietnamese MiG 17.

27th: President Johnson signs a bill requiring cigarette makers to print health warnings on all cigarette packages about the effects of smoking.

Smoking impede a erecao? Now that can't be good.



"..and put on your socks!"

(continued....)



28th: During a noontime press conference, President Johnson announces he will send 44 combat battalions to Vietnam increasing the U.S. military presence to 125,000 men. Monthly draft calls are doubled to 35,000. *"I have asked the commanding general, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression. He has told me. And we will meet his needs. We cannot be defeated by force of arms. We will stand in Vietnam."*

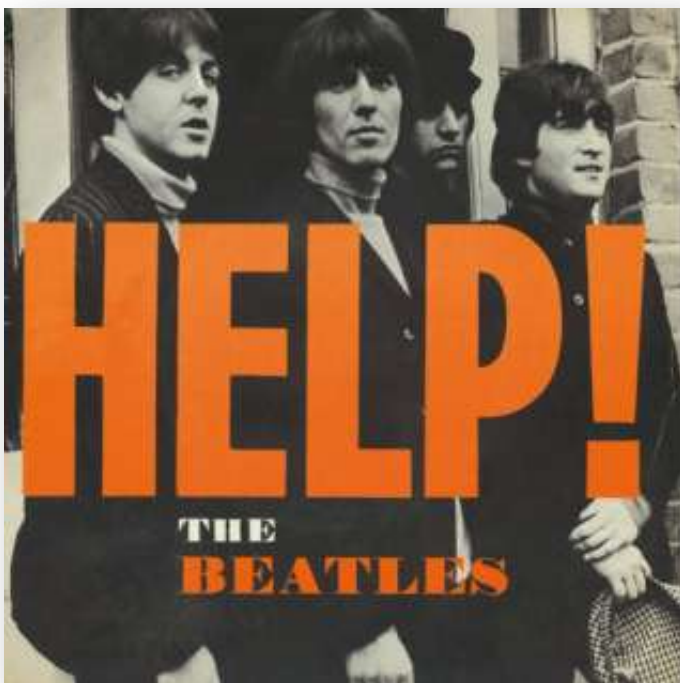


Napalm bombs explode on Viet Cong structures south of Saigon in the Republic of Vietnam, 1965.

(National Archives)

"...I do not find it easy to send the flower of our youth, our finest young men, into battle. I have spoken to you today of the divisions and the forces and the battalions and the units, but I know them all, every one. I have seen them in a thousand streets, of a hundred towns, in every state in this union working and laughing and building, and filled with hope and life. I think I know, too, how their mothers weep and how their families sorrow."

29th: Beatles movie "Help" premieres, Queen Elizabeth attends.



30th: LBJ signs Medicare bill, which goes into effect in 1966.

July 1966

VC Tactics in Action:

The Viet Cong were no weekend soldiers as the Americans found to their cost. Here suddenly they are caught up in stage three of the VC's 'one slow, four quick' strategy. The US Special Forces camped at A Shau was set in the middle of VC territory, near Laos. Nevertheless, the opposing forces had adopted an uneasy policy of live and



July 1966

let live. This changed abruptly in 1966, when the Green Berets heard digging outside the wire. Then a white phosphorus shell signaled that co-existence was at an end. All night the VC poured shells, mortar rounds and machine gun fire onto the camp. Morning brought the possibility of an allied air strike, but the VC's meticulous planning scored again and low clouds reduced the effect of the Phantom's attack. Nightfall brought another heavy barrage. Creeping out from their carefully prepared trenches, the VC used Bangalore torpedoes to blast their way into the camp. Machine gun fire and Claymore mines cut down the first wave of VC, but sheer weight of numbers pushed the Americans into the northern corner. Once again, daylight brought with it mist and low clouds. The Air Force mounted a rescue bid, even though it meant emerging low through the clouds into a hail of VC fire, losing six aircraft. The Special Forces had fought courageously but had been defeated by careful preparation and weight of numbers in a classic Viet Cong assault.

(Nam)

1st: Medicare goes into effect.

3rd: Race riots in Omaha Nebraska.

4th: LBJ signs Freedom of Information Act.

6th: Hanoi Radio reports that captured American pilots have been paraded through the streets of Hanoi through jeering crowds.

9th -17th: 173d Abn conducts *AURORA I* conducting search and destroy operations in northern Long Khanh Province and eliminating VC tax collecting in the province.



(continued....)



10th: US launches Orbiter 1 to the Moon.

11th: The U.S. intensifies bombing raids against portions of the Ho Chi Minh trail winding through Laos.

12th: Race riot in Chicago.

15th: Operation Hastings is launched by U.S. Marines and South Vietnamese troops against 10,000 NVA in Quang Tri Province. This is the largest combined military operation to date in the war.

17th: Jim Ryun sets mile record (3m51s3).

19th: 50 year old Frank Sinatra marries 21 year old Mia Farrow in Las Vegas. (He did it his way).

21st- Aug. 3rd: During *AURORA II* the 173d Abn Brigade deployed 80 kilometers northeast of Bien Hoa into the Long Khanh, Binh Tuy Lam Duong Province. 25 Sampans were sighted and subsequently destroyed by gunship, tactical air and artillery fire.



23rd: Montgomery Clift, movie actor (*From Here to Eternity*), dies.



Montgomery Clift in *From Here To Eternity*, 1953.

25th: At 70, Mao Tse Tung swims Yangtse River, 15 km in 65 minutes. (On this same day pigs were seen flying over the Great Wall).

30th: For the first time, the U.S. bombs NVA troops in the Demilitarized Zone, the buffer area separating North and South Vietnam.

July 1967

Despite their resilience, the North Vietnamese were not immune to pain and fear. The U.S. air offensive probably killed a

hundred thousand civilians and, at an early stage, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong (N. VN) told a British journalist in an unusual outburst of emotion that *"I'm not acting when I say that I am obliged to cry – literally cry – at the suffering and the losses."* The region just to the north of the seventeenth parallel, where North Vietnamese units



July 1967

assembled to move south, was a special target of American aircraft. Years after the war, an inhabitant of the area, Ho Thanh Dam, recollected the day in July 1967 when they struck Vinh Quan, his village: *"The bombing started at about eight o'clock in the morning and lasted for hours. At the first sound of explosions, we rushed into the tunnels, but not everyone made it. During a pause in the attack, some of us climbed out to see what we could do, and the scene was terrifying. Bodies had been torn to pieces – limbs hanging from trees or scattered around the ground. Then the bombing began again, this time with napalm, and the village went up in flames. The napalm hit me, and I must have gone crazy. I felt as if I were burning all over, like charcoal, and I lost consciousness. Comrades took me to the hospital, and my wounds didn't begin to heal until six months later. More than two hundred people died in the raid, including my mother, my sister-in-law, and three nephews. They were buried alive when their tunnel collapsed."* (Vietnam, by Stanley Karnow)

July: General Westmoreland requests an additional 200,000 reinforcements on top of the 475,000 soldiers already scheduled to be sent to Vietnam, which would bring the U.S. total in Vietnam to 675,000. President Johnson agrees only to an extra 45,000.



Westmoreland in '67

(continued....)



7th: Beatles' "All You Need is Love" is released.

7th: North Vietnam's Politburo makes the decision to launch a widespread offensive against South Vietnam. Conceived in three phases, the first phase involves attacks against remote border areas in an effort to lure American troops away from South Vietnam's cities. The second phase (Tet Offensive) will be an attack against the cities themselves by Viet Cong forces aided by NVA troops, in the hope of igniting a "general uprising" to overthrow the government of South Vietnam. The third phase involves the actual invasion of South Vietnam by NVA troops coming from North Vietnam.

7th: Vivian Leigh, actress (Scarlet-Gone with the Wind), dies at 53.



*"Fiddle-dee-dee. War, war, war. This war talk is spoiling all the fun at every party this spring."....
"Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn."*

10th: Operation GREELEY continues from 18 June – 14 October 1967 in Dak To / Kontum area. The 4/503rd was rapidly deployed to the Central Highlands after the Battle of the Slopes. On 10 July, moving up Hill 830, A Company came under intense fire from the NVA. On 12 July, after taking the hill, D Company discovered a single network consisting of 60 bunkers with supporting foxholes. In short order, two more bunker complexes were discovered.



12th: 23 die in Newark race riot.



16th: Will Ferrell, American comedian, born.

17th: Race riots in Cairo, Illinois.

19th: Race riots in Durham, NC.

20th: Race riots in Memphis, Tennessee.

20th: Rolling Thunder targets were revised again offering 16 additional targets and 23 road, rail and waterway segments inside Hanoi-Haiphong. Bridges bypasses, rail yards and military storage areas were bombed to slow or halt traffic between Haiphong and Hanoi.

21st: Basil Rathbone, actor (Sherlock Holmes), dies of heart attack at 75.

22nd: Carl Sandburg, poet (Abraham Lincoln: Prairie Years), dies at 89.

23rd-27th: 43 die in race riot in Detroit (2,000 injured, 442 fires).

24th: Race riots in Cambridge, Maryland.

24th: Race riots in Detroit force postponement of Tigers-Orioles game.

27th: LBJ sets up commission to study cause of urban violence.

29th: A fire resulting from a punctured fuel tank kills 134 U.S. crewmen aboard the USS Forestal in the Gulf of Tonkin, in the worst naval accident since WWII.



30th: Race riot in Milwaukee (4 killed).

(continued....)

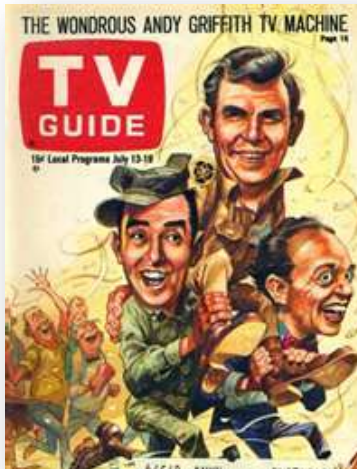


July 1968

A New Team – A New Ball Game?

When it became clear that Richard Nixon would be the next president to walk into the Oval Office, political analysis predicted a change in strategy. *“I shall not seek, and will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president,”*

Johnson’s war would soon be over. In July 1968, three months after LBJ dropped his bombshell, General



July 1968

Westmoreland was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army. There was now a new man at the helm of MACV, General Creighton Abrams. Up until early 1968 the role of US main-force units had seemed fairly straightforward – to ‘hold the ring’ around South Vietnam. But now, in the light of the Tet Offensive, it was clear that an urgent reassessment of US strategy was required. Johnson had refused to run for the presidency on the ground that he wanted to ‘rise above partisan divisions’ and devote himself to the pursuit of an honourable peace. During the last weeks of 1968 the successful candidate, Richard Milhous Nixon, waited in the wings. Recognizing that Vietnam could not be won by force of arms alone, and believing that the Soviet Union and China were disposed toward the North Vietnamese entering constructive peace negotiations, Nixon had decided on a more flexible policy to the war. Inaugurated on 20 January 1969, he set about organizing a team of advisers to implement this strategy—a marrying together of American troop withdrawals and diplomacy into a package that was intended to gain peace with honour. In came Henry Kissinger as National Security Adviser, a master of diplomatic intrigue. The new Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, was given the task of working with Abrams to implement the programme of troop withdrawals and combining this with the gradual handing over of the prosecution of the war to the ARVN – a policy known as ‘Vietnamization’. Where Johnson and Westmoreland had been portrayed as floundering in their attempts to find a solution to the war, Nixon and his team seemed set to bring the conflict into a new phase. As the first units withdrew from Vietnam in July 1969, the nature of the war did indeed begin to change. (Nam)

July: Congress passes a ten percent income tax surcharge to defray the ballooning cost of the war.

1st: General Westmoreland is replaced as U.S. commander in Vietnam by General Creighton W. Abrams.

Creighton Williams Abrams, Jr.

(Sep. 15, 1914 – Sep. 4, 1974) was a general in the United States Army who commanded military operations in the Vietnam War from 1968–72 which saw U.S. troop strength in Vietnam fall from a peak of 543,000 to 49,000. He served as Chief of Staff of the United States Army from 1972 until shortly before his death in 1974. In honor of Abrams, the U.S. Army named the XM1 main battle tank the M1 Abrams. The IG Farben building was also named after him from 1975 to 1995.



1st: The Phoenix program is established to crush the secret Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) in South Vietnam. The VCI, estimated at up to 70,000 Communist guerrillas, has been responsible for a long-standing campaign of terror against Americans, South Vietnamese government officials, village leaders and innocent civilians. However, the Phoenix program, which is controlled through CORDS under the direction of Robert Komer, generates huge controversy in America concerning numerous alleged assassinations of suspected Viet Cong operatives by South Vietnamese trained by the U.S. The controversy, generated in part through North Vietnamese propaganda, eventually results in Congressional hearings. Testifying in 1971 before Congress, Komer's successor William E. Colby states, "The Phoenix program was not a program of assassination. The Phoenix program was a part of the overall pacification program." Colby admits that 20,587 Viet Cong had been killed "mostly in combat situations.. by regular or paramilitary forces."

“Under the Phoenix Program, assassination and torture were regularly used against Viet Cong fighters and their civilian supporters, in order to gather intelligence and to strategically weaken the VC insurgency. Pictured here is a squad of U.S. soldiers posing with beheaded Viet Cong operatives, circa 1968.”



(Wikipedia)

(continued....)



19th: President Johnson and South Vietnam's President Thieu meet in Hawaii.



26th: South Vietnamese opposition leader Truong Dinh Dzu is sentenced to five years hard labor for advocating the formation of a coalition government as a way to move toward an end to the war.

26th: The first attack on a U.S. Air Force Base in Thailand took place Friday evening, July 26, 1968 at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base. Security was routine except for precautionary support of a C-141 medical transport standing by for possible evacuation of three prisoners of war who had been released by Hanoi. Security for the aircraft included placing a sentry team close-in and a quick reaction team nearby. At 10:25 pm, approximately 25 attackers from four locations opened fire with automatic weapons against the northwest corner of the base.

July 1969

Communist intractability and Nixon's growing inflexibility meanwhile nourished each other. In his 1969 Foreign Affairs article, Kissinger had described the Johnson administration's vain attempts to negotiate as having been "marked by the classic Vietnamese syndrome: optimism alternating with bewilderment; euphoria giving way to frustration."

Now, in 1969, he and Nixon were on the threshold of the same experience, which was to go on for the next three years.

(Vietnam, by Stanley Karnow)



July 1969

"What interests me is what you can do with power."

~ Henry Kissinger

July: President Nixon, through a French emissary, sends a secret letter to Ho Chi Minh urging him to settle the war, while at the same time threatening to resume bombing if peace talks remain stalled as of November 1. In August, Hanoi responds by repeating earlier demands for Viet Cong participation in a coalition government in South Vietnam.

8th: The very first U.S. troop withdrawal occurs as 800 men from the 9th Infantry Division are sent home. The phased troop withdrawal will occur in 14 stages from July 1969 through November 1972.

17th: Secretary of State William Rogers accuses Hanoi of "lacking humanity" in the treatment of American POWs.

20th: Project Apollo: Apollo 11 lands on the Moon and Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin become the first humans to walk on its surface.



25th: The "Nixon Doctrine" is made public. It advocates U.S. military and economic assistance to nations around the world struggling against Communism, but no more Vietnam-style ground wars involving American troops. The emphasis is thus placed on local military self-sufficiency, backed by U.S. air power and technical assistance to assure security.

30th: President Nixon visits U.S. troops and President Thieu in Vietnam. This is Nixon's only trip to Vietnam during his presidency.



Tricky Dick in the War Zone

(continued....)



July 1970

By 1970, most of South Vietnam was firmly under the control of the South Vietnamese Government, and Communist forces avoided contact with allied forces. Only in northernmost I Corps were the Communists willing to engage in combat: in II, III and IV Corps, they had been largely driven back to the Cambodian border area. The American effort to 'Vietnamize' the war was well under way, and troop units amounting to over 100,000 US soldiers had returned to the United States. Over 47,000 Communist troops had 'rallied' to the South Vietnamese side during 1969, and the South Vietnamese forces structure had swelled to more than 950,000 soldiers. Clearly, the Communists were losing the war.

(Battles and Campaigns in Vietnam, by Tom Carhart)

July: Air America was equipped with 24 twin-engine transports, 24 short take-off and landing aircraft (STOL), and 30 helicopters. During 1970 A/AM air-dropped or landed 46 million pounds of food in Laos and flight time reached more than 4,000 hours a month. A/AM also transported thousands of troops and refugees, flew emergency medivac, rescued downed airmen, inserted and extracted road-watch teams, monitored sensors along infiltration routes, conducted reconnaissance and engaged in numerous clandestine missions.

4th: 100 injured in race rioting in Asbury Park, NJ.

12th: Blues-Rock singer Janis Joplin debuts in Kentucky.

14th: Preston S. Foster, actor (*Waterfront*, *Gunslinger*), dies at 69.

18th: Willie Mays becomes 10th baseball player to get 3,000 hits.

29th: 6 days of race rioting in Hartford, CT.

31st: Chet Huntley retires from NBC, ends "Huntley-Brinkley Report".



July 1970



*Good night, David.
Good night, Chet.*

July 1971

In 1971, the war was in its seventh year, and there was no end in sight. U.S. troop levels were down from a peak of 540,000 to 270,000. Dr. Henry Kissinger offered to negotiate a deadline for withdrawal of U.S. forces in exchange for a cease-fire and the release of American POWs. This triggered an exchange of comprehensive proposals that would ultimately lead to an agreement. Throughout 1971, however, Le Duc Tho (lead negotiator for the North Vietnamese Gov't) held firm to his insistence that President Thieu (President of South Vietnam) be removed and no breakthrough occurred.

1st: State of Washington becomes 1st state to ban sex discrimination.

1st: Maj. Gen. DeWitt R. Searles replaces Maj. Gen. Andrew J. Evans, Jr. as commander of the 7/13AF at Udorn.

1st: 6100 American soldiers depart Vietnam, a daily record.



Going back to the World

1st - Wanda Gonzalez, Miss Connecticut USA (1996), born.

3rd: Singer Jim Morrison of The Doors is found dead of a heart attack in his bathtub.

(continued....)



4th: Koko, sign-language gorilla, born.

5th: 26th amendment certified (reduces voting age to 18).

6th: Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, jazz musician (Hello Dolly), dies at 71.



13th: All Star MVP: Frank Robinson (Baltimore Orioles).

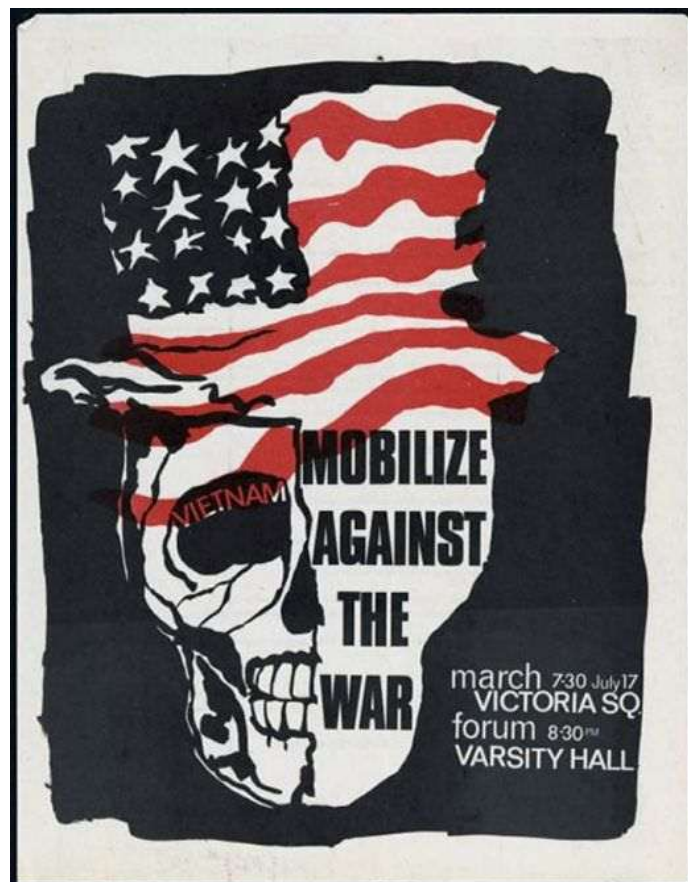
15th: President Nixon announces he will visit Communist China in 1972, a major diplomatic breakthrough.

17th: The 'Plumbers' unit is established in the White House by Nixon aides John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson to investigate Daniel Ellsberg and to 'plug' various news leaks. Colson also compiles an 'enemies list' featuring the names of 200 prominent Americans considered to be anti-Nixon.

26th: Apollo 15 launched (Scott & Irwin) to 4th manned landing on Moon.

30th: Japanese Boeing 727 collides with an F-86 fighter killing 162.

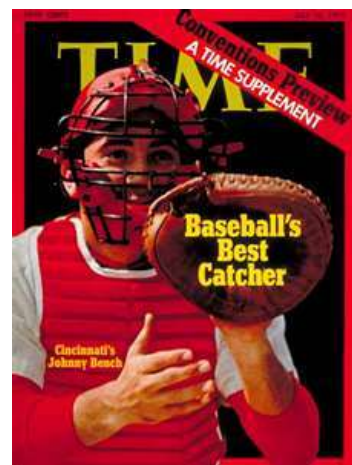
30th: US Apollo 15 (Scott & Irwin) lands on Mare Imbrium on the Moon.



National mobilisation poster against the war in Vietnam, 17 July 1971. (National Library of New Zealand)

July 1972

1972 in the Vietnam War saw foreign involvement in South Vietnam slowly declining. Two allies of America, New Zealand and Thailand, which had contributed a small but effective military contingent left South Vietnam this year. America still fought tenaciously while negotiators in Paris tried to hammer out a withdrawal strategy for the United States. One American Operation that was later declassified years after the war was Operation Thunderhead which was a highly classified mission that attempted to rescue escaped POWs.



July 1972

(continued....)



~ Operation Thunderhead Overview ~

In 1972, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized U.S. Pacific Command to execute Operation Thunderhead in which a small group of hand-picked SEALs were employed to assist in the rescue of Prisoners of War being held in North Vietnam. A number of POWs were planning to escape, steal a boat, and flee via the Red River to the Gulf of Tonkin. Although mission training, planning, and rehearsal was conducted, many the POWs were moved prior to their escape without the SEALs knowledge, and no POWs were rescued. The operation was the first combat-use of a mini wet-submersible SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV).

The operation would be conducted in two parts: surveillance to detect the escapees, and the rescue. Lt. Melvin S. Dry commanded Alfa Platoon, SEAL Team ONE. His forces would depart a submerged submarine, the USS Grayback (SS 574) off the coast of North Vietnam in the Red River delta area and position themselves to make an early sighting of the escapees. Lt. Philip L. "Moki" Martin, then a Chief Warrant Officer, was a member of Dry's platoon and a critical asset to the team.

On June 3, 1972, Lt. Dry and His men were forced to abandon a swimmer delivery vehicle when its batteries were exhausted by heavy currents during a night reconnaissance mission. Dry rallied the four-man team in enemy waters for eight hours. Dry made the decision to tow to sea and scuttle the inoperable SDV, preventing detection by the enemy and preserving operational security. Upon their rescue, while aboard the USS Long Beach (CGN 9), Lt. Dry made the decision to return to the Grayback to continue to lead future SEAL insertions.

On June 5, 1972, while returning to Grayback by helicopter to continue the mission, when signaled to exit, the team unhesitatingly jumped. In harsh conditions, Lt. Dry was killed instantly and two others were injured. Nearly losing consciousness, Martin located the survivors and kept them alive through another eight-hour night.

The details of the once secret operation and the accounting of the SEALs' actions were reported in a magazine article in October of 2005. When retired Capt. John D. Chamberlain, the then commander of USS Grayback, the submarine the SEALs launched from during the operation, read the article and realized that neither Dry nor Martin were ever recognized, he collected naval messages, official documents, and personal statements from witnesses and submitted awards for the two SEALs in November 2005. The Navy authorized the medals on Oct. 26, 2007.

2nd: Joseph F. Smith, Jr., leader US Mormon Church, dies at 95.



Smitty and his gals, 1901.

"Take care of your polygamous wives; we don't care for Uncle Sam now."

- Prophet Joseph F. Smith, 1896 dedication speech for the Payson, Utah meeting house, quoted in William Edward Biederwolf, *Mormonism Under the Searchlight*, 1915.

Note: Tried to convince the wife we should join the Mormon Church and take-up this polygamy thing. That was just before the head injury which sent me to the hospital. I'm doing fine now, really. D. Lewis Smith, Jr. (Ed)

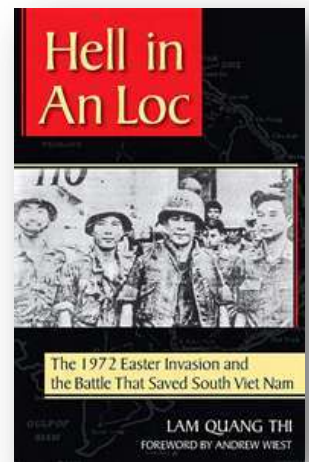
7th: Dutch Minister decides to ignore soft drug usage.

8th: Cpt Richard S. Ritchie and Cpt Charles B. DeBellevue of 555 TFS, 432 TRW shoot down two MiG 21 aircraft.

11th: A North Vietnamese Army attack on An Loc was defeated by South Vietnamese troops, with the assistance of American B-52 air strikes. Eight days later, South Vietnamese troops started a major counter-offensive campaign against the North Vietnamese Army in Binh Dinh Province.

12th: Democrats nominated George McGovern for president in Miami, FL.

13th: The Paris Peace Talks resume. The following day, the Democratic Party chose Senator George McGovern, an outspoken critic of the war, as their candidate for president in the upcoming election. McGovern advocated 'immediate and complete withdrawal' from Vietnam.



(continued....)



14th: Deborah Mailman, Australian actress, born.

16th: Smokey Robinson & Miracles final live performance.

18th: During a visit to Hanoi, actress Jane Fonda broadcasts anti-war messages via Hanoi Radio.

19th: With U.S. air support, the South Vietnamese Army begins a drive to recapture Binh Dinh province and its cities. The battles last until September 15, by which time Quang Tri has been reduced to rubble. Nevertheless, the NVA retains control of the northern part of the province.

21st: Bloody Friday: 22 IRA-bombs explode in Belfast.

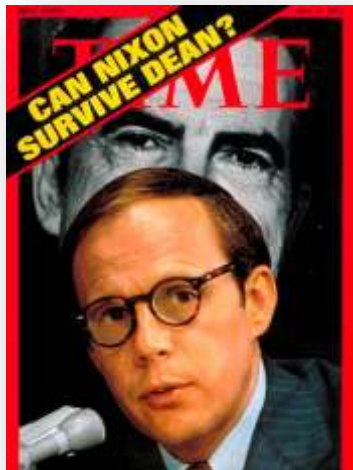
21st: Dodgers release and end career of pitcher Hoyt Wilhelm.

Hoyt Wilhelm served in the U.S. Army during World War II, seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant, thereby, acquiring his nickname, "Ol' Sarge".



July 1973

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War began as a small commitment of 30 men in 1962, and increased over the following decade to a peak of 7,672 Australians deployed in South Vietnam or in support of Australian forces there. The Vietnam War was the longest and most controversial war Australia has ever fought. Although initially enjoying broad support due to concerns about the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia, as Australia's military involvement increased a vocal anti-war movement developed. To a large extent this focused upon conscription, which had been an issue in Australia dating back to the First World War, however, considerable portions of society were opposed to the war on political and moral grounds. The withdrawal of Australia's forces from South Vietnam began in November 1970 when 8 RAR completed its tour of duty and was not replaced. A phased withdrawal followed, and by 11 January 1973 Australian involvement in hostilities in Vietnam had ceased. Nevertheless, Australian troops from the



July 1973

Australian Embassy Platoon remained deployed in the country until 1 July 1973, and Australian forces were deployed briefly in April 1975, during the Fall of Saigon, to evacuate personnel from the Australian embassy. Approximately 60,000 Australians served in the war; 521 were killed and more than 3,000 were wounded.

July: The U.S. Navy removes mines from ports in North Vietnam which had been installed during Operation Linebacker.

1st: 1st US-China basketball game, US collegiates beats Shanghai 96-61.

2nd: James R. Schlesinger is sworn in as the 12th United States Secretary of Defense.

5th: "Live & Let Die," James Bond film premieres

6th: Joe E Brown, comedian, dies after long illness at 80.

10th: Bahamas declares Independence from UK & adopts constitution.



It's better in the Bahamas!



11th - Robert Ryan, US actor (The Dirty Dozen, Longest Day), dies at 63.



12th: Lon Chaney Jr, actor (Wolfman), dies after long illness at 66.



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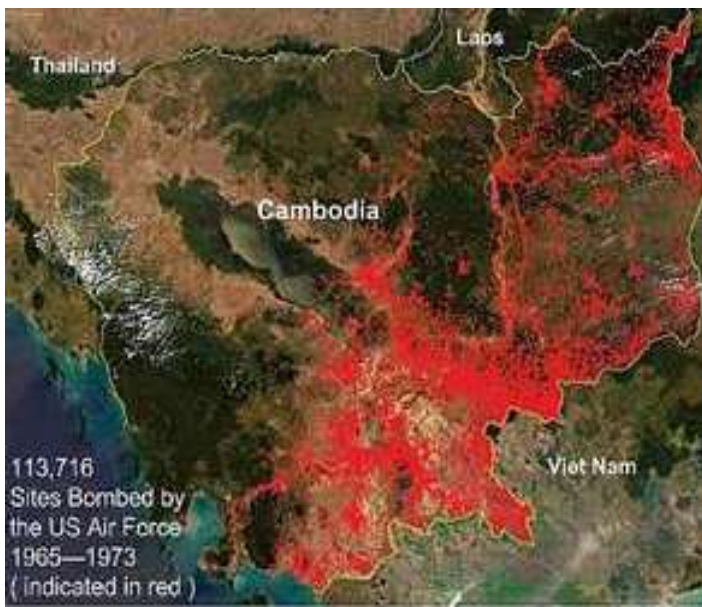


16th: The U.S. Senate Armed Forces Committee begins hearings into the secret bombing of Cambodia during 1969-70.

16th: During Watergate hearings, Butterfield reveals existence of tapes.

17th: Military coup in Afghanistan; King Mohammad Zahir Shah flees.

17th: Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger testifies before the Armed Forces Committee that 3500 bombing raids were launched into Cambodia to protect American troops by targeting NVA positions. The extent of Nixon's secret bombing campaign angers many in Congress and results in the first call for Nixon's impeachment.



20th: The US Senate passes the War Powers Act.

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 (50 U.S.C. 1541-1548) is a federal law intended to check the President's power to commit the United States to an armed conflict without the consent of Congress. The resolution was adopted in the form of a United States Congress joint resolution; this provides that the President can send U.S. armed forces into action abroad only by authorization of Congress or in case of 'a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.'

The War Powers Resolution requires the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of committing armed forces to military action and forbids armed forces from remaining for more than 60 days, with a further 30 day withdrawal period, without an authorization of the use of military force or a declaration of war. The resolution was passed by two-thirds of Congress, overriding a presidential veto.

The War Powers Resolution was disregarded by President Reagan in 1981 by sending military to El Salvador, by President Clinton in 1999, during the bombing campaign in Kosovo, and by President Obama in 2011, when he did not seek congressional approval for the attack on Libyan forces, arguing that the Resolution did not apply to that action, and again when troops entered Pakistan to kill Osama Bin Laden. All incidents have had congressional disapproval, but none have had any successful legal actions taken against the president for violations. All presidents since 1973 have declared their belief that the act is unconstitutional.

23rd: Eddie Rickenbacker, WWI fighter pilot, dies at 82.

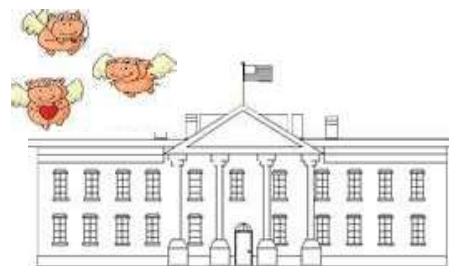


Edward Vernon Rickenbacker (October 8, 1890 – July 27, 1973) was an American fighter ace in World War I and Medal of Honor recipient. He was also a race car driver and automotive designer, a government consultant in military matters and a pioneer in air transportation, particularly as the longtime head of Eastern Air Lines.

23rd: President Nixon refuses to release Watergate tapes of conversations in the White House relevant to the Watergate investigation. (Bill Clinton visits White House and Nixon gives him a souvenir cigar...just kidding).

23rd: Monica Lewinsky, San Francisco, California, American White House intern noted for improper relationship with President Bill Clinton. (She was known to like cigars...not kidding).

"Now, I have to go back to work on my State of the Union speech. And I worked on it until pretty late last night. But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time; never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people. Thank you."



(continued....)



July 1974

On July 18 the Communist artillery, rocket, and mortar units pounded ARVN bunkers and fire-bases in the area out of existence. The NVA corps then occupied the hills surrounding the valley and fired more rounds into the Da Nang airfield and a base at Duc Duc. On July 29, the 29th NVA Regiment attacked Thuong Duc, a district capital and the westernmost ARVN post in Quan Nam. The 79th ARVN Ranger Battalion held on to the town in the face of fierce infantry and artillery assaults, but had to evacuate the area when the rangers ran out of ammunition.



July 1974



"ON THE ROAD AGAIN -- A Vietnamese youngster flees renewed fighting on the two wooden legs he has used since he lost his limbs in a mine explosion some years ago. The boy and thousands of civilians were fleeing fighting between government forces and North Vietnamese troops recently in the Du Duc district, south of Danang, South Vietnam." (AP Wirephoto via Cable from Tokyo)

6th: Garrison Keillor made his 1st live broadcast of "A Prairie Home Companion" from MacAlester College in St. Paul, Minn. In 2003 the show drew some 3.9 million listeners weekly. The show ended in 1987 and resumed in New York in 1989. It returned to Minnesota in 1993.

11th: House Judiciary Committee releases evidence on Watergate inquiry.

14th: Carl Spaatz, American World War II general and 1st Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, dies at 83.

17th: John Lennon is ordered to leave US in 60 days.

17th: Jay Hanna "Dizzy" Dean, pitcher (St Louis Cards), dies at 63.

19th: Joe Flynn, actor (McHale's Navy), dies at 59.

21st: House Judiciary approves 2 Articles of Impeachment against President Nixon.

23rd: All Star MVP: Steve Garvey (LA Dodgers).

25th: Walter Brennan, actor (Real McCoys), dies at 79.

27th: House Judiciary Committee votes 27-11 recommends Nixon impeachment.

29th: Cass Elliot, singer (Mamas & Papas) dies from heart attack in London at 32.

30th: House Judiciary Committee votes on 3rd & last charge of "high crimes & misdemeanors" to impeach President Nixon in the Watergate cover-up.



July 11, 1995

Full diplomatic relations were established between the United States and Vietnam.

"President Bill Clinton announced the formal normalization of diplomatic relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on July 11, 1995. Subsequent to President Clinton's normalization announcement, in August 1995, both nations upgraded their Liaison Offices opened in January 1995 to embassy status. As diplomatic ties between the nations grew, the United States opened a consulate general in Ho Chi Minh City, and Vietnam opened a consulate general in San Francisco. In 2009, Vietnam opened a consulate in Houston; the United States received permission to open a consulate in Da Nang."

(continued....)



July 1975

“The war divided a nation and cost it a generation of their children. Father and son fought one another, citizens fought their government and hundreds of thousands of young men went to war. Protesting against war was not new. Every war America has ever fought had its dissenters. It is not only the right of a citizen in a free society to disagree with their government's actions, it is a duty of all free men and women to stand up for what they believe. What seems odd today is that what most soldiers thought they were fighting for was the right of their fellow citizens to live in a free country and to be able to speak out against the policies of their government. The argument was not against America or its fine young men who fought in the war. The fight was against the policy that sent them there. The Americans who fought in Vietnam were citizen soldiers who went thousands of miles away to fight for the freedom of other men. There can be no more noble behavior then that. May God hold in high regard all that fought for what they believed in regardless of the side they were on. We were then, as we are now, all Americans....The Vietnam War was the longest and most unpopular war in which Americans ever fought. And there is no reckoning the cost. The toll in suffering, sorrow, in rancorous national turmoil can never be tabulated. No one wants ever to see America so divided again. And for many of the more than two million American veterans of the war, the wounds of Vietnam will never heal.”

http://history-world.org/vietnam_war.htm

8th: President Ford announced he'll seek Republican nomination for president.

11th: Chinese archeologists discover a 3-acre burial site with 6,000 clay statues of warriors dating as early as 221 BC.

14th: EPCOT Center (Florida) plans announced.

22nd: House of Representatives votes to restore citizenship to Confederate General Robert E. Lee.



July 1975

29th: Ford became 1st US president to visit Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz.



Entrance to Auschwitz concentration camp.
“Work Makes You Free”

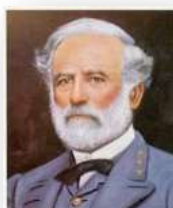
AUSCHWITZ WAS THE LARGEST NAZI GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP AND DEATH CAMP. IN THE YEARS 1940-1945, THE NAZIS DEPORTED AT LEAST 1,300,000 PEOPLE TO AUSCHWITZ:

- 1,100,000 JEWS,
- 140,000 - 150,000 POLES,
- 23,000 ROMA (GYPSIES),
- 15,000 SOVIET PRISONERS OF WAR,
- 25,000 PRISONERS FROM OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS.

1,100,000 OF THESE PEOPLE DIED IN AUSCHWITZ. APPROXIMATELY 90% OF THE VICTIMS WERE JEWS. THE SS MURDERED THE MAJORITY OF THEM IN THE GAS CHAMBERS.

“Some years ago my wife and I visited the WWII concentration camp at Dachau near Munich, Germany. It was a cold winter morning. The prisoner barracks had decades ago been demolished yet certain buildings remain standing to this day, including the “showers” and the building housing the ovens, and one where horrifying medical experiments were performed on the innocent, and the wall where those same innocent were executed by firing squads during that war. It was abundantly clear to us we were walking in the midst of a killing field. We toured the area mostly in silence, stepping on those grounds now covered by gravel. Approaching our time to leave and nearing the “Arbeit Macht Frei” front gates, I leaned down and picked-up a single, small stone, a ‘souvenir’ of our time there. Reaching the front gate I stopped, looked at the stone in my hand, then dropped it to the ground. That stone belonged there; I had no right to take it. Except for the Chinese medicine vial I sent Doc Beaton, the rusted lug nut now in a glass jar in Texas mingling with Cowboy Geishauser’s dirt from two wars, and the spent cartridge I gave Jim Healy, I remain in possession of these three, small, rusted pieces of metal from 16 March 1966. I wish I would have left them there, at Zulu-Zulu, where they belong.”

From *The Battle at Bau San*
D. Lewis Smith, Jr.



~ Memorial Day ~

Remembrance of a Time

By Mark Carter
173d LRRP, 17th Cav

Here in Oregon, our little town sticks flags in the ground and has a modest parade on Memorial Day. Many pause to remember the cause, but most people just spread a blanket and eat chicken while their kids run yelling around the park.

Many local folks have relatives in the Guard or are in the Guard themselves, so it's not really a hollow day for them. I differ from them in that my sentiments in this direction come to rise on Veterans' Day. I live within earshot of the Veterans Cemetery, and I can hear them playing taps every time another old fart bites the dust.



For me Memorial Day is remembrance of a time when I was in my early teens. I lived with my mother in those days. At times when I was a bit of a handful, she shipped me over to Jim's house for tweaking. To me, this was a second family. They had a son my age, another son a little younger, and two sisters: one my age and another just a bit younger. Mr. Cruz taught me civility by example, and Mrs. Cruz taught me civility and situational awareness by broom handle.

On Memorial Day, the custom was to pile us kids into the back of their station wagon for a drive to the nearby mountains. Only a few years before,

Mr. Cruz had worked at a lumber outfit call Pine Logging, which provided a small, self-contained village for its milling crew at the



Pine Logging sawmill site, circa 1955

5000-foot level, at the edge of what is now the John Muir Wilderness. For the family it was a sort of idyllic life, even counting the company-store set up. Anyhow, Pine Logging got folded into another consortium, and the family moved to Fresno.

The Memorial Day trip for Mr. & Mrs. Cruz was about good times as a younger couple. Nowadays, for me, it's

about a carload of kids in the back of a station wagon, winding our way up Tollhouse road: 30 miles of switchbacks, two lanes, a steep ascent from the valley floor into the forest, and views across the San Joaquin Valley, all the way to the coastal mountains. Jim and I usually scrunched in the back deck of the car, so we could watch the cars behind us. Kids wave a lot. We put the window down so we could hang our feet out, and spit sunflower seeds between our feet. Up front, Mr. & Mrs. Cruz liked to listen to the radio. For some reason I always conflate midget car races with this trip, mostly because the Vokuviches, father and son, were hot in those days, at the top of the racing heap, and they both were from the Fresno area. The son, Billy, died in a ball of fire one May, so I particularly remember that trip.

At the top of the road, we stop at Cressman's, a country store plus single-pump gas station.



Louie waves at us from his chair in the sun, smiling from ear to ear, dripping sincere goodwill. Louie waves at everybody. That's his job. His mind went south years before, but his folks took care of him. He doesn't talk a lot, but he nods and smiles at anything you say to him. His parents own the store, and Louie works there as a smiling greeter.

Everyone who travels up the mountain knows Louie, and waves to him even if they don't stop at the store. We use the restroom, get fresh sodas and pile back into the car.

Our first destination is the old lumber camp. All the buildings, including the large wooden water tower, are still intact, because they are regularly tended by the Forest Service for use as a base camp for fire crews. We spend only a little time inspecting the place. We kids wander about the edges of the clearing while Mr. & Mrs. Cruz visit the cabin where they'd lived, and the larger building that served as a dining hall.

After a short stroll down memory lane, we piled back into the car and drove to one of several favorite meadows on the plateau.

(continued)



Those of you not familiar with this section of the Sierras may need to know that it's an area dominated by granite.



Some of the rocks are the size of smallish cities, while others are merely townish in their mass. Trees grow out of the living rock here. Meadows are filled with spring runnels, and in those days you could drink the water without filtering it. Snows are all melted, except perhaps small clumps in certain secluded shadows. The



ground is still spring-damp. Vole tunnels are strung about in mounded brown lines, trails of their winter forages under a snow ceiling. All earth surfaces are covered in shades of green and

spotted with early-blooming flowers.

We set up a picnic area and, right away, start on the food. Usually chicken and some sort of home-made chili (salsa for you guys) was the entrée, and a bag of apples and oranges was carry-out for us kids, for when we wandered away after lunch. I can barely begin to describe the afternoons in the forest. Some of them involve moving from place to place while staying only on rock surfaces—touch ground and die. Anything to run and jump, or hide. Later, to sit on a boulder of living rock so large that it was the mountain itself. Warm sun, wind in whispers from any direction, click and ticks from the forest, and the blood rushing in our ears while we absorb the effect of the altitude on our young bodies. We owned this place, and made it home while we were there. The only rule was to stay together, and in earshot of the car horn.

At dusk we piled back into the station wagon, and slept pretty much all the way down the mountain.



Mr. & Mrs. Cruz have both passed away from this version of existence, but they still live for me, especially on Memorial Day.

I Know You

You may not know me, but I saw you.
Your arms reached out.
Your mouth gasping for one last breath.
You carried wounds not seen with scars.
You carried memories that burn deep,
and burn like fire.

The blood dripping from
your hands does not wash off
and the screams within never leave.
You choke up when a flag passes by.

You fall to your knees not from faith, but from
weakness when you hear "TAPS".
The faded army clothes, worn badges,
but proud medals that you wear say so much.

You may not know me, but I know you.
You are a veteran from a war no one liked.
You gave when no one wanted.
You suffered when no one cared.
You saluted a flag that you felt turned its back on you.

You are Vietnam Veteran.
I breathe Freedom, because you cared.
My children know Freedom,
because you fought for it.
You may not know me,
but I know you and I just want to say,
"THANK YOU..".

[Sent in by MG Jack Leide (Ret), CO C/2/503d]





Office of the Honorary Colonel
503d Infantry Regiment
29 June 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Distinguished and Honorary Members,
503d Infantry Regiment

SUBJECT: Update

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Memorial Day is fast approaching, a bitter-sweet day for all of us. We mourn the loss of our fallen warriors but with the passage of time become reconciled to our loss and appreciate even more the privilege we had of walking with them. We remain grateful that our nation is blessed with individuals willing to risk all to protect and preserve our beloved country.



COL Smith

Once again our Regimental battalions will deploy this summer as part of the Sky Soldier Brigade to Afghanistan. As a result of changes in Army deployment policies, this rotation will last nine months. Under the command of Colonel Andy Rohling, the 173d Airborne Brigade deployed to Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany during October 2011. This training included the first Brigade size Airborne Operation since the Brigade's 2003 assault into Iraq. Brigade elements conducted extensive predeployment training during January – March in Hohenfels, Germany including a Full Spectrum Training Rotation at the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center.

Warriors serving in our Regimental battalions have achieved multiple military qualifications and won awards too numerous to mention here. Based on reports from their leadership, they are fully prepared for their upcoming deployment. They do continue to need our prayers for their success and safe return.

I am pleased to announce that Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2/503 and its subordinate elements to include its attached companies, and Company F of the 173d Support Battalion, were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism during the period 5 June 2007 to 10 November 2007 during service in Kunar and Southern Nuristan Provinces, Afghanistan. For those interested in reading the award, please refer to Permanent order 299-18 dated 26 October 2011. This Presidential Unit Citation is in addition to the previously announced Valorous Unit Award for the same tour (25 January – 30 July 2008).

Earlier this year, Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major Loren Storjohann requested to be relieved of his

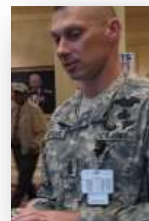
duties. He has held this position since 2006. With great appreciation for his many years of service to our Regiment and for his friendship and sage advice, I have granted this request. I have forwarded to the Office of the Secretary of the Army a recommendation that CSM (R) Richard A. Weik be appointed as Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major. CSM Weik served as 1/503d CSM in Afghanistan and prior to his recent retirement had been CSM of the 198th Infantry Brigade, Ft. Benning, GA.

I have also forwarded to the Office of the Secretary of the Army the names of the following to be designated as Distinguished Members of the Regiment:

Colonel Andrew Rohling, currently assigned as Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy. Col. Rohling has previously served with distinction in 2/503. Between assignments with the Herd, he has displayed extraordinary support of the Regiment, its heritage and traditions.



COL Rohling



CSM Hartless **CSM Jeffrey S. Hartless**, currently assigned as Rear Detachment CSM for the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vincenza, Italy. CSM Hartless has previously served with distinction in 2/503. While residing at Walter Reed Army Hospital as a patient and subsequently serving there, CSM Hartless was extremely active in supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of our wounded warriors, consistent with the highest traditions of the Regiment.

LTC (R) Harold Nobles. LTC Nobles served with distinction in the 3/503d Infantry, 1968-1969, Republic of Vietnam, and has continued to support Regimental activities as a member of the South Carolina Chapter of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.



LTC Nobles

(continued....)



The Regimental leadership made changes to the Regimental DMOR/HMOR criteria this year..... When we started looking to whom the distinctions were accorded, we became aware that we were more prone to select individuals by virtue of the position they had held rather than initial and sustained support of the Regimental Battalions/173d Airborne Brigade beyond their duty positions. We made that initial and sustained involvement part of the criteria. The decision to expand the criteria was a tough call and resulted from extensive debate and a lot of soul searching. However, our conclusion was that the toughened criteria will strengthen the Regimental structure.

Two notes about our DMOR's:



COL Matt McFarlane is completing his academic assignment at the National War College and after a two month assignment in Afghanistan will assume command of the 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division in Fairbanks, AK.

COL McFarlane

COL Bill Ostlund is completing an academic year at Tufts University and is scheduled to take command of the 3-1 IBCT at Fort Knox.



The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation last year launched an initiative to provide a \$300,000.00 endowment **COL Ostlund** Fund for the Memorial. Called the *Spartan Club*, the program is predicated on limited donations by 300 or more "Spartan Warriors" over ten years. For more information on the Memorial Foundation's Spartan Club and how you can participate, please visit the Memorial Foundation Website at www.173dairbornememorial.org. (See Page 21)

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation announced a 50th Anniversary Celebration of the activation of the 173d Airborne Brigade to be held at the Brigade Memorial at the National Infantry Museum 21-24 March **2013**. The celebration will involve a "Reading of the Names" of all our fallen, as well as a commemoration of the Brigade's Airborne assault into Iraq. Opportunities are available for those wishing to participate in the "Reading of the Names." Please visit the Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org for more information.

Warm regards to all!

Kenneth V. Smith, COL, USA (Ret)
Honorary Colonel, 503d Infantry Regiment
kvsmith173@gmail.com / 252-478-9359

Team Sky Soldiers Win the Trophy for VFW Post 10148

They entered the golf tournament in Florida with high hopes for victory until they saw two or three other teams fielding 6' 5" each bangers all less than half their age. Jim Stephens, 3/319th, was heard to say to Smitty, 2/503d, "Now what the hell did you get us into?!"

The Men's Auxiliary of the Cocoa Beach, FL *Gunnery Sergeant Elia P. Fontecchio* (Iraq) VFW Memorial Post 10148 sponsored this motley crew in the competition to support the "Sanctuary Island 1st Annual Golf Outing to Support Wounded Soldiers". No one really expected them to actually win the thing!



Team Sky Soldiers, L-R: Smitty, Mike Britt (Leg), Tom Sebastian (a bigger Leg), and Jim Stephens.

But, when the totals were tallied, Team Sky Soldiers took First Place! Good thing those Legs had those two paratroopers on the team to tee-up the balls for them.

Our shirts were made by that famous shirt-maker grunt Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d, of Myrtle Beach, SC.

Another first for the 173d Airborne!



Post 10148, Dennis Fontecchio, USMC Vietnam, Commanding



~ COVER PHOTO OF THE YEAR 2011, CONTEST ~

Here are the cover photos of our newsletter from last year. Please select your top three (3) cover photos, ranking them 1 thru 3 (your favorite #1) listing them by month name, 1) Aug; 2) May; 3) Jan, for example, and send in your choices to rto173d@cfl.rr.com by July 15th. We'll report in the August issue the top cover photo of 2011 the

majority chose. Hell, it's something for old paratroopers to do -- I mean, you can only wash the dishes and take out the trash for so long; *"Honey! Can't you see I'm busy here?!!"* Everyone who participates wins ONE FREE PLF for your personal use in your back yard (must be jump qualified), but *not* off the roof. Tried it once..*bad idea.* Ed

January 2011



February 2011



March 2011



April 2011



May 2011



June 2011



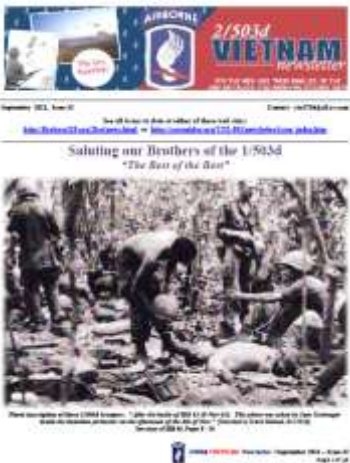
July 2011



August 2011



September 2011



October 2011



November 2011



December 2011



Long Beach Poly High School graduate and Military Hero to be honored with a Memorial

Former Long Beach Poly High School graduate, US Army Sergeant Israel Garcia who was killed in action on 13 July 2008, in Afghanistan while serving with the "Chosen" Company of the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, was honored on Friday, May 25, 2012, when the "*SGT Israel Garcia Memorial Bench*" was dedicated at Long Beach Poly High School, 1600 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA.



Mr. Steven Kerns, who served in the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan and who is a local resident and local college student, had a dream of honoring SGT Israel Garcia at the former high school where Garcia had played Soccer. Steven Kerns started asking, seeking and knocking for donations that would be used to build a Memorial Bench for SGT Israel Garcia at Long Beach Poly High.

During the ceremony, the Long Beach Poly ROTC conducted the presentation of the flag, the US National Anthem was sung, and Mr. Steven Kerns who had created this project spoke, and then Mrs. Lesly Garcia, the widow of SGT Israel Garcia spoke just before the presentation of the Memorial Bench.

The "mission" is complete, and former friends, team members of Israel Garcia, and former "Sky Soldiers" of the 173d Airborne Brigade and members of other military Veterans service organizations attended the Memorial Bench dedication.

SGT Garcia's heroic actions resulted in the posthumous award of the Silver Star which is the 3rd highest award for Valor, and is in addition to his Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal (3), Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Non-commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon (2), NATO Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Parachutist Badge.

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) Combat Operations in Vietnam

1. Opord 7 May - 9 Jul 65
2. Frag Order 7 Jun 65 - 2 Aug 65
3. Pleiku 10 Aug 65 - 5 Sept 65
4. Big Red 7 Sep 65 - 8 Oct 65
5. Iron Triangle 8-14 Oct 65
6. New hope 21-27 Oct 65
7. Hump 5-9 Nov 65
8. New Life 21 Nov - 17 Dec 65
9. Smash 17-23 Dec 65
10. Marauder 1-8 Jan 66
11. Crimp 8-14 Jan 66
12. On Guard 17-21 Jan 66
13. Phoenix 26 Feb - 22 Mar 66
14. Silver City 9-22 Mar 66
15. Denver 10-25 Apr 66
16. Dexter 4-6 May 66
17. Hardiwood 16 May - 8 Jun 66
18. Hollandia 9-17 Jun 66
19. Yorktown 23 Jun - 8 Jul 66
20. Aurora I 9-17 Jul 66
21. Aurora II 17 Jul - 3 Aug 66
22. Toledo 10 Aug - 7 Sep 66
23. Atlantic City 13-22 Sep 66
24. Sioux City 26 Sept - 9 Oct 66
25. Robin 10-17 Oct 66
26. Attleboro 7-20 Nov. 66
27. Waco 25 Nov - 2 Dec. 66
28. Winchester 8 Oct - 4 Dec 66
29. Canary/Duck 7 Dec 66 - 5 Jan 67
30. Niagara/Cedar Falls 5-25 Jan 67
31. Big Springs 30 Jan - 16 Feb 67
32. Junction City 22 Feb - Mar 67
33. Junction City II 20 Mar - Apr 67
34. Newark 18-30 Apr 67
35. Fort Wayne 1-4 May 67
36. Dayton 5-17 May 67
37. Cincinnati 17-23 May 67
38. Winchester 28-31 May 67
39. Francis Marion 1-18 Jun 67
40. Stilwell 22 Jun 67
41. Greeley 18 Jun - 14 Oct 67
42. Bolling 19 Sep 67 - 31 Jan 68
43. MacArthur 1 Nov - 14 Dec 67
44. Walker 16 Jan 68 - 31 Jan 69
45. Cochise 30 Mar 68 - 31 Jan 69
46. Darby Crest 1 Feb - 15 Apr 69
47. Darby Trail 1 - 16 Feb 69
48. Darby March 1 Feb - 6 Mar 69
49. Sting Ray 6 - 10 Mar 69
50. Darby Punch II 10 Mar - 24 May 69
51. Washington Green 15 Apr 69 - 1 Jan 71
52. Greene Lightning 1 Jan 71 - 15 Mar 71
53. Green Storm 5 Feb 71 - 15 Mar 71
54. Green Sure 17 Mar - 21 Apr 71

Source: 173d.com



(The Early Days, by BG Ellis Williamson – Declassified, Photos Added)

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO U.S. FORCES 96250**

RIABN

7 July 1965

DUTY IN VIETNAM

Last week the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) participated in the largest troop lift operation conducted in the Republic of South Vietnam. Over 144 Army aircraft which included 77 troop carriers using 10 sorties each lifted two battalions of the Vietnamese 2d Airborne Brigade and the 1st and 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry deep into War Zone "D". This was the first time friendly troops had been that deep into War Zone "D" in many months. The 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery, protected by Troop E, 17th Cavalry, Company D, 16th Armor, and later the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, provided fire support for the infantry units.



"30 Jun 1965, Bien Hoa, South Vietnam --- Troops of the US 173rd Airborne Division leap from a hovering helicopter."

Despite a three hour weather delay, elements of the 2d Battalion (Airborne) 503d Infantry began landing on LZ North at 1400 hours on 28 June. Prior to this landing the 3rd and 8th Vietnamese Airborne Battalions landed on LZ South and began their drive northwards. Only small arms fire and scattered mortar rounds were encountered on the LZ which was quickly secured by the 2d Battalion.

Following the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry came the troopers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry who rapidly began their operations to the east and south of the LZ.

The 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery's Task Force had moved into position Bravo at 0800 hours, 28

June following a stop-over in Tan Uyan for the night of 27-28 June. Their supporting fires rapidly began their operations to the east and south of the LZ.



"173rd Airborne soldier on patrol, 1965"

Captain Moore's Cavalry Troop, while screening to the north of position Bravo, made one of the most significant finds of the operation. The normally swift moving Cavalry Troop made a thorough search of the area and discovered four cache points which contained an estimated 200 tons of rice, and quantities of cigarettes, tea, milk, corn, barley, and tobacco. After our troops had suffered five casualties due to booby traps in the area, the Engineers under Lieutenant Grubbs, thoroughly cleared the cache areas of booby traps. Several members of the Cavalry Troop distinguished themselves during the search operation. Lieutenant Karr and Lieutenant Hanson, who was wounded at the initial cache, did a fine job. In addition Staff Sergeant David Yellow Robe, Sergeant Daniel and Sergeant Parsons, were instrumental in discovering and disarming the booby traps. Specialist Fourth Class Rember of the 173d Engineer Company and Private First Class Chiaffino, the mine detector operator, were notable for their professional jobs. On 28 June more than 30 tons of rice were sent back to friendly hands with ARVN trucks, the remainder had to be destroyed in place.

(continued....)



The majority of the activity on the night of 28-29 June centered around Position B where the Artillery Task Force received mortar fire and several probing attacks.



“Ellis C. Williamson (L), Commander of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade”

Lieutenant Hill, of the Royal Australian Armor Corps attached to Company D, 16th Armor, received a small arms wound in the side when the VC apparently attempted to capture him, but after treatment returned to lead his men throughout the conduct of the operation. Quick reaction by all forces answered these attacks with small arms, mortar, artillery and 90mm fires and the Viet Cong was forced to withdraw. The tail fins of the incoming mortars identified the round as 81mm U.S. Mortars made in 1955. The shell craters were closely examined, three of them indicated that the rounds were coming from 725 to 730 mils. Artillery and mortar fires were delivered along this line up to the maximum range of the 81mm mortar. The enemy firing stopped.



Sky Soldier & Diggers coming to the aid of an Aussie brother, June 1965.

The Infantry Battalions continued their operation on D+1 and several more caches were discovered.

At 1200 hours on D+1 the decision was made to commit the 1/RAR in the Position Bravo area to help thoroughly search the area and to assist with the security. The quick reacting Australians were brought in on the helicopters which extracted the Vietnamese Airborne, and were on the ground by 1630 hours, rapidly took up defensive positions and began patrolling.

The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry swung south after securing its northern objectives and carefully reexamined the ARVN areas of responsibility.

Again the night of 29-30 June found most of the action in Position Bravo. 20 mortar rounds were reported but once again the quick reaction of our forces halted what would have been a serious problem. On both nights in Position Bravo the medics of the 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery did an outstanding job of treating the wounded under fire and assisting in the evacuation of troopers when appropriate.

On D+2, the last day of the operation, solid contacts were again encountered. The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry killed two Viet Cong, wounded one, and captured two weapons in a clash around 1200 hours. In addition the 1st Battalion discovered more cache points while the Bravo Bulls of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry discovered and destroyed two trucks in their area. They were in addition to a truck they destroyed on D-Day. Company D, 16th Armor shot a Viet Cong out of a tree with .50 caliber fire and blasted five fleeing VC with 90mm SPAT fire.

At 1415 hours on D+2 the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry began extraction from LZ South under the protection of the 2d Battalion which had secured the LZ. The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry followed the 1st Battalion under the protective fires of the 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery. The 3d Battalion closed trails after firing their last volley at 1700 hours and began the long 50 kilometer overland movement back to Bien Hoa. The 1st Royal Australian Regiment cleared the most dangerous portion of the route. After the Artillery moved through, the 1/RAR mounted tracks provided by Lieutenant Colonel Staiger's Support Battalion and rolled into Bien Hoa closing at 2040 hours.

Several troopers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry distinguished themselves by their outstanding performance during the four day operation.

(continued....)



The 1st Platoon of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry under Platoon Sergeant Adam A. Bernosky kept alive the most impressive record in the Brigade – a VC kill on every operation in which they have participated. They got their man on the last day of the operation as they were fired upon by four Viet Cong near a trail. The point man, Private First Class Robert Pedrotti, was struck in the helmet by an enemy round and knocked to the ground. Although stunned, PFC Pedrotti immediately jumped to his feet and vigorously joined his platoon in the assault on the enemy position. One Viet Cong body and a weapon and documents were recovered and blood trails on the ground indicated that at least two more were dead or wounded.

Sergeant Hector Henbrano of Company B, 1st Battalion reacted quickly when his squad was engaged by an enemy land mine and small arms fire. Although wounded and somewhat dazed by the mine explosion, Sergeant Henbrano led his squad forward and by aggressive fire and maneuver forced the Viet Cong to flee.

Staff Sergeant Sundborg and Sergeant Wooten, the operations NCO and Communications NCO of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, on their own initiative constantly scouted the flanks during the company movement. On one such excursion they discovered an enemy position and the resulting action produced one Viet Cong kill plus a weapon and documents.



It was our job, and it was their job.

Acting as point squad for the 3d Platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, Staff Sergeant J.B. Strange's squad came under enemy fire from dug in positions. The lead men quickly returned fire and gained fire superiority. Staff Sergeant Strange maneuvered the remaining men of his squad against the VC emplacements employing hand grenades and AR fire. This violent action routed the VC from their position. During the actions Staff Sergeant Strange was wounded in the stomach.

Sergeant First Class James Akuna's, the Platoon Sergeant of 3d Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, keen observation detected a VC hamlet. SFC Akuna's attention to detail caused him to take a recon patrol outside of the Battalion perimeter to investigate animal sounds that he had detected at dawn and in doing so he discovered a VC hamlet that contained food and medical supplies.

While Company A, 1st Battalion was destroying a cache Staff Sergeant Vicars of the 2d Platoon, upon his own initiative, took a patrol out on recon and found an extremely well camouflaged cache of rice. Staff Sergeant Vicar's investigation resulted in the destruction of this cache as it was off the intended company route.

This operation was unique for us in several ways:

1. It was the largest force we have committed in combat here in Vietnam. In all, nine battalions were involved: Five infantry, one artillery, one support and a composite battalion of cavalry, armor and engineers.
2. The Australians took their place with us as a part of our combat formation.
3. For the first time we worked with the very find troops of the Vietnamese Airborne Brigade and the ARVN 48th Regiment.
4. Besides being our first large scale probe into War Zone "D", this operation represented the first time any large size friendly troops have operated in this area for over a year.
5. The cache points we destroyed or recovered represent a serious logistical setback to the VC.



ARVN Soldiers

(continued....)



Our total result were of course quite satisfying. By conservative estimate we:

1. We killed over 25 Viet Cong.
2. Wounded 50 or more Viet Cong.
3. Destroyed over 200 tons of rice plus medical supplies, corn, barley, quantities of cigarettes, milk, tea, raw tobacco.
4. Recovered over fifty tons of rice that can be used to feed friends.
5. Destroyed three trucks and eight bicycles.
6. Destroyed many Viet Cong villages, defensive positions, and livestock.

Lessons learned:

1. We have been operating daily for the past two months with some of the most lethal weapons known to the soldier. Familiarity must not breed contempt. Be careful with these weapons!
2. In order to effectively place counter battery fire on incoming mortars we must know the direction these mortars are coming from. This information or Shell Rep as it is called must come in promptly and accurately. As a minimum we need to know where the shells landed, type of weapon (60mm or 81mm Mortar) and general direction the rounds came from.
3. Squad leaders and fire team leaders must keep track of the individual men in their units. Valuable time has been wasted in recent operations because of "lost" individuals.
4. Artillery is a valuable weapon in jungle warfare. Use it to secure flanks, rear, and the front when moving. It is also quite effective as a close-in defensive wall when stopping for the night.
5. Once again the need for flexibility has been emphatically pointed out. Remember plans are guidelines for operations and we must always be ready to adapt to any change that our enemy, terrain, or mission may present.
6. Checking the direction of stream flow in conjunction with your map will give you another means of sure navigation in the jungle.
7. We must concentrate on keeping fire low when engaging the enemy. Our encounters thus far have been brief and fleeting – We must get first round hits.
8. Safety in helicopters cannot be overstressed. On the extraction one trooper from the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry with his feet dangling outside the helicopter was wounded in the foot by a bamboo sliver when the ship made a low take-off over a thicket. Keep your feet inside the helicopters. In addition do not depart the helicopter until it has firmly touched down. The rapid shift of weight of departing troopers before

touch down makes the helicopter very difficult to control and has caused the ships to crash.

9. The medical evacuation ships (Dustoff) cannot take improvised stretchers if they are too long. Be prepared to shift wounded personnel to stretchers that are on the evacuation helicopters.

Once again I can only reiterate my words of praise for your outstanding performance. By your actions in this operation you have provided conclusively that you are fast becoming real professionals in this deadly business. Our superiority over the Viet Cong is quite evident for all to see. Well done.

AIRBORNE, "ALL-THE-WAY"

ELLIS W. WILLIAMSON
Brig Gen, U.S. Army
Commanding



The General

General Williamson participated in the D-Day landings in Normandy in World War II and the Inchon landings in the Korean War. He held high-level posts supervising troop training and, from 1971 to 1973, was chief of the United States military mission to Iran.

In 1963, General Williamson reactivated the 173d Airborne Brigade, which had begun as an infantry brigade in World War I and was absorbed into other units in World War II. For two years, his 3,500 troops trained intensively in Okinawa.

They began arriving in Vietnam on May 5, 1965. Their first mission was to secure, patrol and neutralize any threat to Bien Hoa Air Base. That day, General Williamson said in an interview with the New York Times, ***"I am sure my men will want, as I do, to get out for action."***

Then 47, General Williamson developed tactics for a war with no defined front. Fighting with South Vietnamese troops, he had his men penetrate the countryside surrounding the base and then worked methodically to expand the perimeter with day and night patrols. The members of the 173d were among the first soldiers to use M-16s, the lightweight rifle that became the standard for American forces.

Born in Raeford, North Carolina, died on 28 Jan 2007, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.





INCOMING!



About the June '67 Chronology

(See Issue 41, Page 14)

I was in training at Fort Devens Mass, for the MOS 98J when the Liberty was attacked. The Liberty was an ELINT ship, a radar-telemetry intercept vehicle, covering the MOS in which I was training at the time. The attack was not a mistake. The Israelis had warned the US to power down the ship's intercept equipment and move it elsewhere, but of course we did not. We were interested in various fire-control radars, both on the ground and in aircraft, plus voice intercept stuff (radio intercepts was out of my field, so I don't know what they did in that area). The ground radars for the Arab factions were Fan Songs, similar to the SAM missile radars we were dealing with in SEA, and we especially wanted to intercept the command string emissions for our Countermeasures officers aboard Phantoms and B-52's. The EW officers used the command strings to spoof commands from the ground stations, and could get the SAMs to follow their beams back to the ground emitters, rather than lock on to a heat signature. Anyhow, the Israelis wanted us blind during the attacks for their own security purposes, so they attacked the Liberty. At Devens we were outraged that our state department let it slide. You aren't supposed to kill Americans with impunity. Only a year later, while I was in Japan, North Korea captured the USS Pueblo, another ELINT ship, and then they shot down a super-constellation which was an ELINT aircraft (not on the same day of course). Typically, signal intercept vessels would be positioned so that they could intercept North Korean fire control radars. Our F-4 Phantoms would fly into the reaction bubble of the radars, and when they came up, the ELINT vessels sitting on that azimuth about 50 to 100 miles away would intercept the emissions. I was on an ELINT site in Japan when this happened. As with the USS Liberty, we were pretty much outraged that we let the Koreans take the vessel in tow—we easily could have sunk everything NK put in the water around the ship. Couldn't do anything about the super-connie, though. NK couldn't take out the F-4s, on account of how our pilots kick ass and take names, but they sure could take down an unarmed, propeller driven airliner. I suppose none of this is any longer classified. Back in 1967, it was all TS Crypto. Finally, thanks for the article by Tom Tiede. I often read his stuff in the *Stars and Stripes*. He was one of the good reporters.

Mark Carter
173d LRRP, 17th Cav



[Sent in by Jim Gettel, A/2/503d]

Looking for Info About His Dad

My name is David Wilde and my father, **John Wilde** served the 173d and dropped into Operation Silver City on March 16, 1966. He survived the combats of Vietnam only to succumb to cancer from Agent Orange on April 2nd, 2009. I am seeking any information, and especially any photos that are out there of my father. I noted some names who might have heard of him since he was also a radio operator and tunnel rat. One name was Tom Goodwin who has supplied you with photos and wrote that he was in communications in the field (same as my father). I have sent a request for his records but I know they won't have any of this information. Could you direct me to anyone who can be of assistance or ask your contacts? I would appreciate it greatly. My father's unit received the Presidential Unit Citation during their tour. It was said he also served as a drill instructor? I can't verify that though. His best friend was **David Epstein** who served with him, but most of his library of information was lost in a recent house fire. Epstein is my Godfather, but contact with him is sporadic. Thank you for your time and any assistance you can lend.

David J. Wilde
thewildeman2@yahoo.com



~ Paul F. Murphy ~ A 503rd Trooper, WWII (1920-2012)

Paul was born on August 18, 1920 and passed away on Thursday, May 24, 2012. Paul was a resident of Manchester, New Hampshire at the time of his passing.

He graduated from Saint Joseph High School for Boys, Class of 1938.

During World War II, he served with the United States Army, 3rd Battalion 503rd Airborne Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR). His tour of duty included the Pacific Theater.

He was preceded in death by his wife Margaret.

The funeral was conducted with a mass of Christian burial and celebrated in Saint Pius X Church, Candia Road, Manchester, NH. Burial with military honors followed in Pine Grove Cemetery, Manchester, NH.



Thank you, Paul. Your legacy lives on,

All The Way!

Note: You may leave a memory of Paul or condolences to his family at this web site:

<http://nh.tributes.com/show/93858206#condolences>



BLESS 'EM ALL



"A veteran kisses the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, etched with the names of more than 58,000 U.S. servicemen and women who died in the war, on Memorial Day in Washington, May 28, 2012." REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

Local Vietnam veterans reticent about reception

By Doug Harlow, Staff Writer, *Morning Sentinel*

SKOWHEGAN -- A Memorial Day gathering Monday at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., marked the beginning of a national commemoration of the anniversary of the Vietnam War.

"This month, we'll begin to mark the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, a time when, to our shame, our veterans did not always receive the respect and the thanks they deserved -- a mistake that must never be repeated," President Obama said this month.

In a proclamation released Monday, the president said: *"As a grateful nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots -- their names etched in black granite -- who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know."* Locally, some Vietnam veterans assembled for Memorial Day ceremonies in Skowhegan were reluctant to share their experiences returning home from the jungles of Southeast Asia.

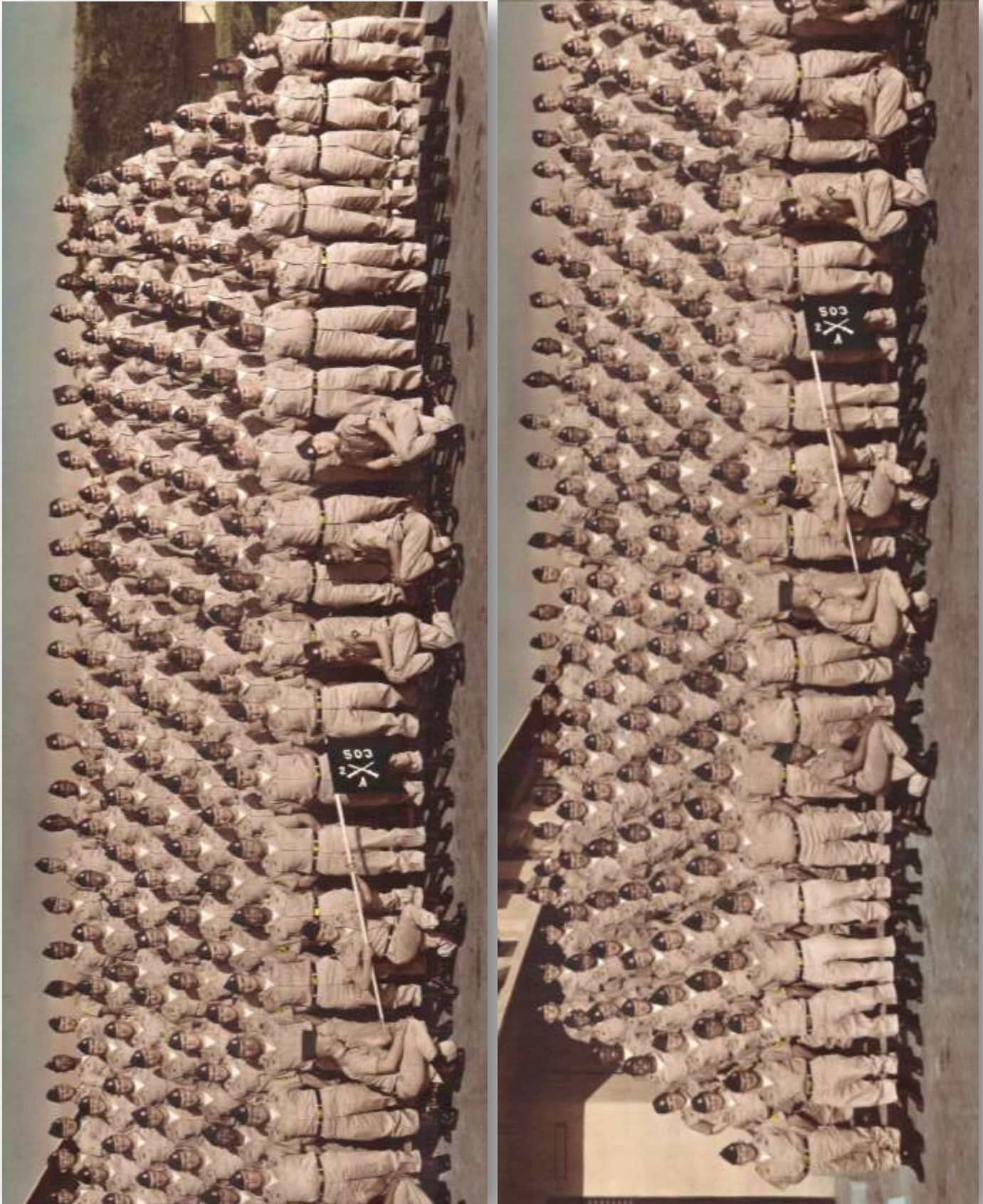
But Gerald Boulette, 67, of Skowhegan, said Monday the treatment returning Vietnam veterans received was nothing short of a national disgrace.

"I was in Vietnam from December of '66 until December '67 -- I was all over South Vietnam," he said at Veterans Memorial Park. *"We were treated like mud when we got back; we were treated like nothing because everyone was against the war."*

Veterans are treated differently now, he said. *"It's a lot different now,"* Boulette said. *"We've got a lot more respect from a lot of people and we really appreciate it."*



~ Alpha Company, 2d Bn, 503rd Inf, 173d Airborne Brigade, on Okinawa ~



Courtesy of Will Rivera, A/2/503d. Thanks to Will, we can email a larger version of these photos to troopers who appear in them. Contact us at rto173d@cfl.rr.com



Michael D. Taylor...

"Ranger Mike"

Michael D. Taylor (Ranger Mike), 63, of Titusville, FL, passed away on June 5, 2012. Mike was born June 9, 1948 in Glasgow, KY and moved to Florida in 1958.

Mike was an Army Airborne Ranger of the 173d Airborne Brigade and served bravely in Vietnam in 1969-1970. He worked with the military Stand Down helping homeless vets and traveled to Washington, DC for Honor Flight as an escort for a WWII veteran. Mike was a life member of the VFW and American Legion, and loved his country and his flag.

Ranger Mike was retired from his job at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station where he was a crane operator.

He was a loving husband and friend who possessed a wonderful sense of humor, was compassionate, honest and exhibited unmatched integrity by all those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Mike is survived by his loving wife, Diane Rowe Taylor. He is also survived by his daughter Michele Wilkins; son, Jason Taylor; mother, Wanda Taylor; and four brothers and sisters.

A Celebration of Life will be held on July 21, 2012, at 3:00 p.m., at the VFW Post 4228, 4411 Capron, Titusville, FL 32780.



Ranger Mike



~ Rest Easy Ranger. You're Leading The Way ~

More than a Ranger...

Mike was more than a Ranger, although he might have argued that point with you. He loved the Rangers, and the Airborne, and the 173d, and his wife and family. Mike loved life and he lived it every day to its fullest, although life didn't always treat him well. Mike was a brother and a friend.

Those of us who knew Ranger Mike as a friend, have stories about him -- he left us all with so many stories. Stories of the serious kind, and others full of fun and mischief. I'll share just one of those stories with you here, a story which speaks to the character of this man, this trooper, my friend and friend of many, and husband to one.

This Ranger Mike story begins a few years ago in the hospitality suite at our reunion at Ft. Bragg. While sitting at a table near the bar, a loud crash occurred immediately to my rear. It seems one big dude, must have been about 300 pounds, and wearing a Ranger shirt, got cold-cocked by a young waiter. He must have gotten into the waiter's face, but the waiter apparently had never heard of Rangers, and treated our hero to a nice right cross which left him sprawled on his back on the floor. Instantly, out of nowhere it seemed, Ranger Mike was on the scene. He had witnessed what happened, and knew the waiter wasn't at fault -- good thing for the waiter.

Coming to, our tipsy guy struggled to get up, cursing and trying to fight anyone near him. Mike held this mammoth trooper down, yelling in his face, "You're a Ranger goddamit! Now stop it!!" But, he wouldn't stop it, he wanted to fight.

Mike helped the man to his feet and was struggling with him to keep him from harming anyone within arm's reach or hurting himself. Another trooper and I jumped into the fray, helping Mike half carry the guy out of the room, all the while the big trooper trying to hit anyone nearby, including us.

The three of us finally got the fellow out the back door of the hotel, Mike admonishing him the entire way, and onto the loading dock in the rear, where Mike continued to scold him, and control him, and keep him out of jail. Eventually, the big fellow fell asleep there on the dock, while the three of us waited a couple hours for him to sleep it off.

Eventually, Mike retrieved his truck and drove the four of us to the man's hotel, where we dropped him on his bed. The other helpful trooper and I waited outside as Mike made sure his fellow Ranger was trucked in for the night, and safe.

It was later reported the marauding Ranger had experienced a bad reaction to a mixture of medication and alcohol, and apologized to everyone within earshot the following day, and I assume, the waiter as well. Another good Ranger.

Ranger Mike put himself in harm's way (again) that night to keep people from getting hurt, and to keep a buddy from going to jail. That was typical of him, but, that's just one Ranger Mike story; there are many. I miss my friend. Damn you, Mike, you left us too soon bro.

A friend of Ranger Mike's.

RLTW



"RECOLLECTIONS ON CORREGIDOR"

By: Howard Lout

"A" Co., 503d PRCT



I am putting down the circumstances that took me to where I was when the Japanese blew up the large cave at Monkey Point on February 26, 1945. I've used parts of several books to verify the starting date. After that, events are as I remember them. They will not always jibe with the books.

The morning of February 24, the first Battalion of the 503d moved over and around Malinta Hill toward the eastern end of Corregidor. While that hill had been held by a battalion of the 24th Infantry Division, the island had been cut into two halves. "A" Company proceeded along the southern shore. I was acting squad leader of the third squad, third platoon of that Company.

We went slowly, sometimes wary of anti-vehicle mines in the road (after we saw the first one we walked to the side of the road). Occasionally we would wait, then follow a mortar barrage. At one point the company held up briefly while our squad checked out an area off the right flank.

In the late afternoon we swung left and third squad, third platoon, became the battalion's extreme right flank as we prepared to assault a hill we called "Water Tank Hill."

We stayed put while artillery, and probably the 81mm mortars, worked over the hill. Then we fixed bayonets and went up, at the same time keeping an eye to the right. Nothing threatened there and we encountered only one enemy soldier at our end of the line. He waited until we were right upon him, then jumped from a hole and ran. Many of us fired simultaneously, and he was shot a lot of times.



It was getting dark when we reached the top and there took up a defensive position. With one or two inches of soil over solid rock there was no digging in.

This time our squad was on Company "A's" extreme left. To our left, Company "B" I believe it was, started its defensive line. Between us was a machine gun and crew from Battalion Headquarters Company. Even a somewhat depleted parachute infantry battalion was crowded together on that small hill – and not dug in. The platoon CP guys were only about 4 yards behind us. We would all sleep with our helmets on.

After settling the business of how we would take turns staying awake, no doubt also done in every other squad, I fell asleep. Sometime later the sound of explosions woke me. They were about like hand grenade explosions, and the flashes were just short of the hill's crest – short of us. My first, bleary thought was that the Japanese were advancing up the hill, throwing grenades ahead. The machine gunner just to our left must have also thought that, for he opened up at those flashes.

More awake, now. I realised it was not enemy advancing, but probably one with a knee mortar – and his rounds were not reaching us. The flames from that machine gun, though, must have been over two feet long. In my most authoritative voice I ordered the machine gunner to cease firing. He did, but the damage was done. About 30 seconds later, there was a clank right among us and I guess we all realized that, although it was a dud, the little mortar now had the range.

Another 30 seconds and the next one came in. It was not a dud. I felt pain in the back of my neck, just below my helmet, and knew I'd been hit. Ears ringing, I rolled over and started crawling toward the platoon CP to see the medic. The ringing stopped and I heard Lt. William Sullens, Platoon Sgt. Harvey Hicks and Pvt. Harry Hamilton all say they'd been hit, and all had much more serious wounds than I did.

Harvey Hicks told us his leg was "blown clean off." I didn't complete my crawl. Compared to them I was fine.

No more rounds fell that I heard. The navy had been contacted and fired star shells over us, illuminating the area. I was later told that, in the bright light, someone had spotted and shot the guy with the knee mortar.

By daylight Sullens, Hicks and Hamilton had died. I reported the third platoon situation to the company commander and caught a ride to the regimental aid station. My bleeding had stopped, but I wondered if a fragment of something was still in the neck.

(continued....)



At the aid station I was given a shot of Novocain by the regimental dentist who *"don't like to fool with a neck"* and turned over to a doctor who probed. Nothing in there. Later I was assigned a cot, and I spent the night of the 25th in it.

Next morning, when I told the doctor I'd like to go back to the company, he said I didn't have to go and that he admired my spirit. Since then I've wondered why on earth I did go back when I didn't have to. But I was rested and clean. My wound, though a close call, had turned out to be no more than a nick. Just about every person I'd met in the past 3 years was up there. I guess I figured I should be too.

I was issued clean fatigues and a rifle covered with Cosmoline. I cleaned the rifle and started back. The trip was no more than a mile, and I caught a ride for most of it in a service company jeep driven by Charles Woodlee who at one time had been in "A" Company. Walking, I found the company and reported to the first sergeant in the words of General MacArthur, *"I have returned."* He was not a bit amused and sourly told me, *"We've put those left into two platoons. You are now in the second platoon."* I was told by the second platoon sergeant, *"You were a squad leader. We don't need any more squad leaders so you're a rifleman again and you're in the second squad. That's them just going out on patrol."*

I caught up with the patrol and fell in, as I recall, between Robert Atz and Paul Saul. I never learned the purpose of the patrol or where we were going – or who the patrol leader was.

Almost immediately we were strung out over the entrance to a large cave with a metal door. A tank sat broadside about 30 yards from the door. Other patrol members stretched ahead, then down so that the patrol's first scout, Ted ("Pat") White, was at the entrance level and a little to one side. I was not quite to a point directly over the door and, looking down to the right, could see Pat, the door and the tank.

Pat called up to us, *"There are two dead Yanks down here."* That's all I can remember, so it is probably when the explosion occurred.



I have been told that the whole of its force could not escape out the entrance (but what did tipped the tank,) so the earth over the cave, to my left, opened up. Likely the concussion from that broke my left eardrum and killed my left eye's optic nerve. The broken bones were probably due to falling rocks. I received casts on both legs, and other care, at our aid station, though I cannot remember it and was sent to a hospital at Subic Bay where I "came to."



Pat White was not killed by the explosion; Bob Atz and Paul Saul were.

I began the journey towards home. Thirteen months later, after a couple of operations and the broken bones had healed, I was discharged from the Army. It had taken me about as long to remove the cosmoline from that rifle as it did to find my company, start out on patrol and get blown up.

Story and photos provided courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site.



Airmobile Operations

An excerpt from *Illustrated History of the Vietnam War, Sky Soldiers*, by F. Clifton Berry, Jr., 1987. (photos added)



173d on the move. (Photo by John Cavinee, Cowboys)

FROM THE time it had arrived in Vietnam the 173d specialized in difficult quick reaction missions. For these the Sky Troopers had settled into an efficient combat routine. On notice of an airmobile operation, the squads and platoons formed into five or six-man groups, the right size load for a Huey. Leaders checked weapons, ammunition, and water. As much of the plan as was known was briefed to the men before liftoff.

Often little detail was known. For instance, if the operation was a quick-reaction mission such as an 'Eagle Flight' to reinforce a unit in contact with the enemy or to exploit a sighting, the men would know only that the helicopters would go into the LZ on a certain compass heading. On landing, they were to move out in a certain direction, reassemble, and follow orders.

However, deliberate operations planned from the base would start with an intelligence analysis developing a picture of enemy activity and confirming the location of a VC or NVA unit. An operation plan is then made at higher headquarters. The 173d's role is fitted into this overall plan.

The 173d commanders make their own plans to conform to the larger picture. Its battalions and other units do the same. Maps are issued, along with transparent acetate overlays marked with the maneuver and fire support plans.

The plan is outlined to all involved. They prepare their combat loads, draw ammunition, and check their equipment. Troopers going out for the first time wonder how they will behave under fire. Veterans wonder if they'll get hit this time, or if they'll make it through one more combat assault uninjured. The 'short-timers,' men whose rotation date is near, think about getting through the operation and back to the States.

At the appointed time, the units break up into their helicopter loads. The approaching helicopters are heard before they are seen. The wop-wop-wop of their rotors beating the air rises in frequency as they draw near. In a column they look like a swarm of disciplined dragonflies as they approach. The troopers are on their feet. Leaders hold their maps tight to keep them from blowing away in the rotor downwash. Weapons' safety catches are on so some idiot doesn't put a round through an engine.

The troopers climb aboard, settling on the diamond-patterned aluminum floor. There are no seats. Door gunners pat their M-60 machine guns reassuringly.

The commander of the helicopter radios an order. The helicopter pilots bring up engine power. On command, they lift their birds to a low hover, about three feet off the ground. The leader radios the order to go. The pilots lower the helicopter noses and gain airspeed. They climb to cruise altitude, about 1,200 feet.



2/503d on another mission.
(Photo by Pat Bowe, HHC/Recon)

(continued....)



The helicopter doors are off. The wind whips through the troop compartment. The scenery below might be rice land, with the turtleback pattern of dikes. Or it could be primary jungle, with the canopy tops reaching 200 feet into the air. Or it might be the coastal plain or Delta, with streams sluggishly flowing in a pattern like the veins on the back of your hand. Old B-52 bomb craters often have water in their bottoms. They look like suburban swimming pools in South Florida or California, without the houses.

Nearing the landing zone the pilots might pass back a comment to the door gunners about the smoke from artillery and air strikes hitting around the LZ. The door gunners relay information to the troops. But the troops can hear better than the crew, because they have no headsets or earphones. They listen for the crump of bombs bursting in the soil, the whoosh of gunship rockets, and for the staccato stuttering of machine guns on fighters and gunships both. They watch for the F-100 and F-4 fighters, as they roll off the target and climb to position for another pass. Now and then a fighter flies the wrong way. He sails through the helicopter formation, leaving momentary terror in his wake.

Some LZs can take a dozen or more Hueys, the bulk of a rifle company. Others may be smaller. Allowing clearance between blades and fuselages, and distance for a steep approach and climb, a two-ship LZ needs a space about 30 by 30 meters.

The smaller the LZ, the longer the helicopters are exposed to enemy fire.

The landing zone might be 'cold', with no enemy fire. Or the enemy might resist the landing. Then the LZ is 'hot'. A hot LZ can turn into an awful mess in a hurry if helicopters are hit and downed. Then everyone must keep his head to make the operation work. Gunships pour fire around the edges of the hot LZ. The helicopter door gunners fire both to left and right, pouring 7.62mm machine gun rounds into the trees to keep the enemy's heads down. Commanders and observers search for the flash of enemy weapons, then direct fire on them.

Like all commanders of the 173d, General Smith was always present in his command chopper in the air over an assault landing. With him were an operations officer, an artillery representative, and a member of the brigade's air section. Each had his own radio to deal with his portion of the action. The airborne commander had the flexibility of the helicopter and reach of communications "to get things back on track in a hurry," General Smith recalls.

"When the command chopper began running low on fuel it was replaced by another. The brigade's deputy commander and a similar coordinating team were aboard to take charge. These two groups rotated as necessary so that the capability of spotting glitches and overcoming them was immediate." The same procedure was used for extracting units by helicopter, which General Smith describes as "infinitely more hairy than insertions."



2/503d Air Assault into the rice paddies of Vietnam.

(Photo by Fitz-Enz)

A cold LZ is a pleasure to watch. For a few moments it is transformed from a quiet clearing in the jungle into a disciplined and busy air terminal. Colored smoke marks the spot for the lead helicopter, and the formation homes on it. The formation descends. The helicopters touch down in column (or vee or line abreast, as required), settling on the skids again. The pilots keep power up and ready to lift. The troops pile off the helicopters, hitching up their rucksacks and equipment. They dash away in the direction briefed. If that is to the right, the men pouring out of the left sides of the helicopters run around the noses of their birds. No one passes a helicopter by its tail. The tail rotor can decapitate you in a split second.

(continued....)



If the ground is soft, it sucks against the men's jungle boots, slowing them down. If they have landed in elephant grass, it saws across their faces and arms; if we rice fields, they face the choice of running along the dikes where the going is easy, or through the fields where the mud and water slow them down. On the dikes, in a tight column, they are easy targets for enemy fire. So they slog. That never changes. The squad leaders count their men, place them into the movement formation, and report them ready to the platoon leaders.

The platoon leaders radio their readiness to the company commander. He spreads out his command group. The forward observers, forward air controllers, and the company's own radio-telephone operators spread out. The company commander gives the word to move out.

The point men in each squad watch, smell, and listen for the enemy. Everyone listens for the swiiissssh of incoming mortar rounds, or the cracksnap of enemy rifle fire. Their stomachs tighten up in anticipation and the sweat rolls down their faces and necks in the close humid heat. An olive drab towel around their necks absorbed the sweat.

When the company arrives at the designated spot, it may be time to eat. Security outposts are placed 50 – 75 meters in all directions. When word comes down to move again, the outposts are pulled in, the squads form in the movement formation, and the process is repeated.



C/2/503d troopers humping the bush.

(Photo by Jack Leide, C/2/503d)

This may go on for days with no enemy contact. The leaders and men must guard against becoming complacent, especially at night. The entrenching tool, a portable folding shovel carried by every man, is vital then. Swinging their trenching tools, the troops dig into the protection of the ground for the night. Night security is posted. Half the men sleep, wrapped up in ponchos. The other half remain on alert, waiting out the night.



A/2/503d trooper 'taking 5'.

(Photo by Les Fuller, A/2/503d)



Chopper Dude...*Finally* Airborne!



Col. Don Bliss, Caspers, on his 80th birthday, wondering what the hell he's doing up there! *"Is everybody happy?" cried the Sergeant looking up.*

Since I had a super tour with the 173d as a "LEG", I just had to show you that I can do something stupid in my old age. Therefore, on my 80th birthday, May 12, 2012, I did my first stint at sky diving.

This was the only time I ever jumped out of a good airplane (except a couple helicopters that the VC had done considerable damage to during my two tours in Nam). Here are a couple pictures to prove it was me that pulled this stunt.



We jumped at 13,500, floated to about 5,500 and pulled the ripcord. Floated back down to the earth with a reasonably smooth landing and then pulled the 173d Airborne Brigade flag out of my shirt, and there it is.

"The days he lived and loved and laughed kept running through his mind."



I had to carry that flag with me on the jump and the instructor was excited about it also. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience even though I wondered what I was doing up there when I looked out of that airplane.

Don Bliss, COL (Ret)
173d Brigade Staff Aviation Officer &
Aviation Platoon Commander
Caspers

~ AIRBORNE ~

The word does not say much to some, but it speaks volumes to others – to those who knew what we were then, and still are. They say we were a crazy bunch. And maybe we were, but we got the job done. Just how crazy we were is open to debate.



To ALL OUR PARATROOPER BROTHERS, on the question of who is the toughest fighting man in the world, I say this: when we load that plane and step out that door, we are all the same. Once we were all great. We were a special breed. We are getting a little older now, and We can't do some of the things We used to do, but, We still think the same, and We will be Airborne until We die.

For those of you who are still in, give it all you have; you will not regret it.



Airborne all the way, do or die; or as the Greeks would say, come home with your Shield, or ON IT.

The above was paraphrased from a guestbook entry by Richard C. Cover, Jr., 11th Abn Div 1954 to 1957.

*The first week of jump school,
they separate the men from the boys;*

*The second week of jump school,
They separate the men
from the fools;*



*The third week of jump school,
the fools jump!*

ATFW!



Who Dats?

Six brothers, one wife, and a horse named Sugar.



This is a tough one. In this 1957 photo three of the brothers included one *All American* of the 82nd Abn, one *Sky Soldier* of the 173d Abn, and one *Green Beret* of the Special Forces; two of the brothers served in Vietnam. Shirts must have been at a premium in those days. Any idea who they are?

Buddies Hook-Up in Vegas

We had a mini 173d reunion here in Vegas, and I was surprised to see 1LT Bill Olds, B/2/503d. He asked about Dan Buttolph, CO HHC/2/503d so I told him where he was and gave him Dan's email address. I remember putting him and others on a medevac chopper, so you can see my surprise after 47 years.



L-R: Bill and Top Searcy

**John "Top" Searcy
HHC/2/503**



Sky Soldiers in Vegas



~ A Note of Thanks ~

Many thanks to all of you who sent me greetings on my 88th birthday. There is no greater gift you could send to this old soldier than word from those who served in the 2d Battalion 503d Airborne Infantry, particularly those who served with such skill and courage when I had the honor of commanding the battalion but also those who served in Vietnam after my time and those who serve with the battalion today in a different war against a competent, dedicated and deadly enemy. You made my day!

Airborne All the Way!

George E. Dexter
Colonel, USA, Retired
Commander 2/503 Abn Inf
Aug '64 - Feb '66



The "Old Man" ready to blast on Okinawa.

~ Jimmy Bruce Furlow ~ Sky Soldier & Teacher

Jimmy, age 63 of Fountain Hills, AZ, formerly of Nashville, TN, passed away on June 12, 2012. Jimmy served during the Vietnam War with the 173d Airborne Brigade. During the Fall of 1969, he was wounded in combat, which resulted in the loss of both legs. He was honorably discharged in September of 1970. In 1993 Jimmy realized his goal of becoming a teacher. Although a double amputee, he always had a desire to teach. He was a valuable staff member at Hendrix Jr. High School. His challenges have been an educational experience for all students at the school. Students saw in Jimmy an energetic, educated individual. They learned he never used his disability as an excuse. He expected as much of himself as he did of his colleagues and students. He was a good teacher, a confidant, and an advisor. He presented interesting, fast-paced lessons. He incorporated new techniques to help students improve their study skills. He varied his lessons, stressed the multiple intelligences of learning, and took a personal interest in each student. In 1998, Jimmy was awarded the *USA Today All Star Teacher* award. He retired from teaching in 2010, and will be remembered fondly by his students and colleagues. Jimmy is survived by his wife, Ruth Furlow; two sons, Jeremy and Joshua Furlow; sisters, Joan Pendergrast, Joyce England and Wanda Elliott; and brothers, David Furlow and Everett Butler. Funeral services were conducted on June 19, 2012 at Woodbine Funeral Home Hickory Chapel, by Rev. Joe Gray. Jimmy was laid to rest at Middle Tennessee Veterans Cemetery with full Military Honors.



Take a moment to view this video. Jimmy's kids clearly loved him as a teacher:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4cij5D3z6E>

All the Way, Mr. Furlow!



Chapel at Middle Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery



STARS AND STRIPES®

Ex-CO Gets Reprimand, \$300K Fine

Jun 15, 2012

by Nancy Montgomery



KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany -- Col. James Johnson, convicted of fraud, bigamy, and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, was sentenced Thursday to a reprimand and a \$300,000 fine.

The court-martial panel also imposed a sentence of five years' confinement if Johnson, the former commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, fails to pay the fine. He was not dismissed from the service and was not sentenced to forfeit his pay and allowances. His convictions all had to do with an affair he had with an Iraqi woman he met while deployed and his efforts to help her family.

Thursday's hearing began when Johnson addressed the panel for the first time in the proceedings.

He implored the five colonels deciding his fate to let him leave the courtroom a free man so that he could protect the woman, Haveen Al-Atar, from the damage inflicted by the pair's illicit love affair. *"She has nowhere to go,"* Johnson said. *"She's hiding in an*

unnamed hotel, waiting to see if anybody will show back up to care for her," Johnson told the court. *"I passionately ask that you consider that."*

Haveen Al-Atar's father, who has disowned her, has threatened to send her back to Iraq, Johnson said, where she'd either live a destitute life on the street or even be murdered in an honor killing. Her ex-husband, whom she was forced to marry, then forced to divorce when her relationship with Johnson came to light and dishonored the family, he said, has threatened to take away her beloved 4-year-old daughter. *"Haveen and her daughter are at the center of my life,"* Johnson said.

Johnson's convictions included failure to obey orders and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. He pleaded guilty to 15 counts, two of which were later dismissed. He contested two counts of conduct unbecoming, but was convicted at trial.

The charges were all connected to his relationship with the Al-Atar family, whom he'd met on an Iraq deployment in 2005. The family fled to the Netherlands as refugees in 2007. Johnson filed false travel vouchers when he visited the family, beginning in 2008, and improperly used government vehicles.

When he deployed to Afghanistan in 2009, he gave the family a government cellphone that racked up \$80,000 in charges. He also steered money to Haveen's father, Alladin Al-Atar, by hiring the former math teacher who had fought against Saddam Hussein and worked with the Americans, as his cultural adviser for Afghanistan. In addition, he attempted to get a contract to bring water-producing windmills made by a Dutch company to Afghanistan which, if approved, would have netted Al-Atar, who worked for the company, more than \$500,000, prosecutors said.

(continued....)



Prosecutors told the jury that Johnson had abused his command to aid Al-Atar and find favor with his daughter, with whom he committed adultery, then wrongful cohabitation, then bigamy.

But Johnson told the panel on Thursday that for the contracts with Al-Atar, his motives were pure; he wasn't merely funneling money to Al-Atar. Although the two conferred by telephone and Al-Atar spoke none of the languages of Afghanistan and had never been there, *"I honestly believed the advice provided by Mr. Al-Atar were part of our success in Afghanistan,"* Johnson said. *"What I know in my heart is Mr. Al-Atar was contributing more than other advisers."*

The water-producing windmills, Johnson said, had they worked, would have saved resources and lives by reducing water deliveries to combat outposts. *"It was a good idea,"* Johnson said, and others agreed until they learned it wouldn't work.

Johnson began his statement, which was not under oath, by taking full responsibility. *"I deeply regret having disgraced my family, disgraced my unit, disgraced my profession and disgraced my friends,"* he said. *"I failed the soldiers I commanded and the officers I served with for 26 years. I've lost my son and daughter."*

Lt. Col. Charles Kuhfahl, Johnson's defense lawyer, asked how the colonel, an honor graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, who was always rated best and brightest among his peers and who shone in four combat deployments, could explain all that had happened.

"I failed in two large areas. I should have ended my marriage many years ago," Johnson said. *"I should not have kept the Al-Atars in my professional life. I allowed the lines of my professional life to cross into my personal life. Those lines became more blurred, and my decisions became more questionable."*

He said his relationship with the Al-Atar family had been above-board at first, but his feelings deepened as time passed. *"I found somebody that was a companion, a friend; we respected each other,"* he said of Haveen Al-Atar. *"I started rationalizing decisions I was making that pertained to (her father)."*

Later, after he was fired, sent to a basement office at U.S. Army Europe headquarters in Heidelberg, told not to speak to colleagues and had earned the enmity of his children, he said, *"I found I had nothing more than Haveen and her daughter to rely upon."*

Johnson said the woman and her daughter had moved into his base quarters because they'd had nowhere else to go, and that officials had then taken away the base

access card he'd gotten for her and banned her from all USAREUR bases. *"They've tried to strip her away from me,"* he said.

He married her, although he was not yet divorced, he said, because she was in a perilous immigration status. Kris Johnson, whose divorce from the colonel is not yet final, and who turned him in in an email to investigators last year, sat in the courtroom with the couple's two teen-age children. *"You're a pathetic human being,"* she told him during a break.

After the sentence was announced, Kris Johnson said it was insufficient and that she had wanted her estranged husband in jail. She was relieved, she said, that he was not sentenced to forfeiture and she would get to keep half of his retirement benefits, when their legal and financial affairs are settled. *"If he ever signs my divorce agreement,"* she said. *"He could drag the divorce out for another five years and live in a bigamous marriage."*

The colonel said he'd been trying to repay the money he'd illegally spent and would pay double back if that would allow him to *"stop hurting my son and daughter"* and *"stop hurting Haveen Al-Atar and her daughter."*

He'd tried to pay back the money and tried three times to resign in lieu of court-martial, he said.

The panel seemed persuaded by his statement and the closing arguments of his lawyer.

Prosecutor Lt. Col. Will Helixon in his closing argument had asked the panel to sentence Johnson to dismissal and confinement for a period of *"years, not months."*

He said Johnson still was minimizing what he'd done, characterizing his actions as cutting corners, errors in judgment, blurring the lines.

"No," Helixon said. *"He engaged in criminal conduct. He said, 'Screw it. I'm going to make this contract happen.'"*

Kuhfahl said the appropriate sentence would be a fine, paying back the money misappropriated, or doubling it. Although in murders or arsons, for instance, there's no undoing the damage, he said, *"in this case, you can unring the bell."*

Kuhfahl pleaded with the panel not to impose confinement. *"Don't destroy his life,"* Kuhfahl said. *"Give him the opportunity to pick up the shattered pieces of his life and try to move on."*

[Sent in by a Sky Soldier]



JUMPIN' JIM GAVIN

This year, Mount Carmel, PA (the town Annette is from, about 8 miles from Shamokin) celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

Mount Carmel was the boyhood hometown of James M. Gavin, the World War II Commander of the 505th PIR and then the 82nd Airborne Division. LTG Gavin (Ret) visited his hometown on many occasions and maintained friendships with many of the townspeople. During the occupation of Germany, Gavin returned to the US to promote a war bond campaign, see his family and visit his hometown. The town held a huge welcome parade for her most famous son 67 years ago today.

Our local newspaper printed photos from the event and I thought you might like to see one. ATW!

Bob Sandri

Proud father of Matt Sandri, 82nd Abn, KIA 3/20/04



The "unidentified" Captain in the photo seated next to Gavin is COL (Ret) Michael Pivarnick.



Jumpin' Jim Gavin, *All American*

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



I have completed another book. This one comes in at a forest-munching, paper-mill profiting extravaganza of 340 pages. There's a 49 page preview button available on the 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter hosting page at http://corregidor.org/VN2503/newsletter/issue_index.htm and at the 503d PRCT Heritage Bn Publications page at <http://corregidor.org/publications.htm>

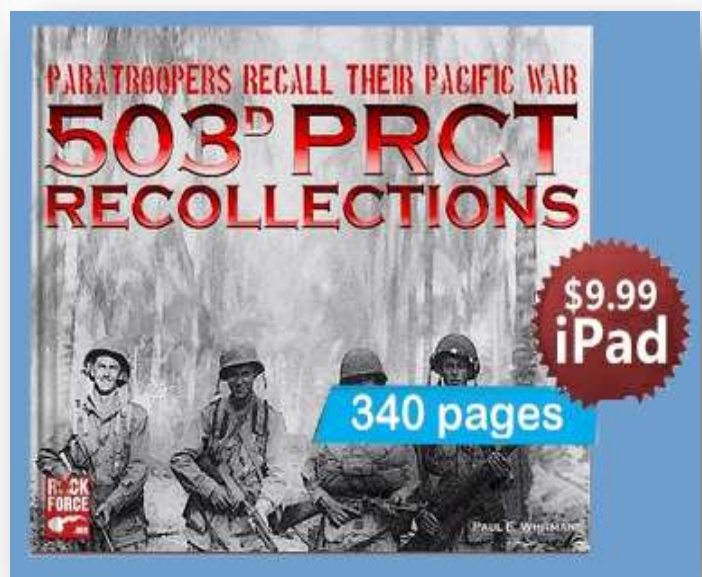
The book is split into sections about each of the campaigns – Training, Australia, New Guinea, Noemfoor, Mindoro, Corregidor and Negros. Essentially it is a pictorial collection, and I have tried to include the best, most informative and most human images from all the collections I have been given access and from the earlier books. I have featured a series of short campaign histories and retrospective vignettes by the WWII men themselves. The basic edition (the softcover) is being sold at printer's selling price.

Personally, I hate iPads, but they get the benefit that there's a ten buck e-book version available. The hardcover image wrap is the Cadillac of the versions, it doesn't need to be plugged in.

Paul Whitman

Webmaster

503rd Heritage Battalion Website





New Mental Health Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System Opens

June 25, 2012

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Robert Petzel joined Veterans, staff and congressional representatives on June 22 to open a state-of-the-art, 80-bed acute mental health center at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

“This new facility will ensure that California’s Veterans continue to have access to high-quality mental health care that they earned through their service to our Nation,” said Petzel. *“This is a priority for the American people. It’s a priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs. And there is nothing more important to me than making sure America’s Veterans receive the health care and services they need and deserve.”*

The new center, on the Palo Alto campus, will provide a continuum of mental health services, from inpatient to outpatient, with an additional research component. The 90,000 square-foot facility will house four units, each with 20 inpatient acute psychiatric beds. The project also includes outdoor enclosed gardens for the patients, a separate mental health research and office pavilion and a utility building to service the complex. Most rooms are private, with some semi-private, and all have private bathrooms.

“This new facility is like day and night to the current one,” said Christopher Hurt, 25, an Iraq War combat Veteran and patient. *“I’ve heard other people say they’ve never seen a facility this nice. It’s bright, airy and just makes the healing process so much nicer. It even has a work-out room and basketball court. I love it.”*

The building's therapeutic design and healing environments were the result of collaboration with clinicians and considering the perspective of the Veterans who will receive care in the facility. Features to enhance the treatment of Veterans can be found throughout the project, including patient access to landscaped gardens, ample use of natural light in all internal patient and staff areas, views to landscaped areas from all patient bedrooms, color, texture and material palettes selected to aid in the healing process. To view the VA Palo Alto Mental Health Center visit http://www.paloalto.va.gov/construction_mhc.asp.

Last year, VA provided quality, specialty mental health services to 1.3 million Veterans. Since 2009, VA has

increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of Veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

In April, as part of an ongoing review of mental health operations, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced VA would add approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce of 20,590 to help meet the increased demand for mental health services. The additional staff would include nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers.

More from the VA....

VA Continues PTSD Outreach with AboutFace Campaign

June 20, 2012

Veterans Provide Video Testimonials on Experiences with PTSD

WASHINGTON – In observance of June as PTSD Awareness Month, the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has begun a new online initiative, *AboutFace*, focused on helping Veterans recognize PTSD symptoms and motivating them to seek treatment.

“We must do all we can to help Veterans identify possible indicators that they may be suffering from PTSD,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *“It requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to be effective. We hope that this initiative, while just one aspect of our program, will play an important role in that effort.”*

The *AboutFace* campaign introduces viewers to Veterans from all eras who have experienced PTSD and turned their lives around with treatment. Through personal videos, viewers will meet Veterans and hear how PTSD has affected them and their loved ones. Visitors will also learn the steps to take to gain control of their lives.

AboutFace, which is PTSD specific, was designed as a complementary campaign to VA’s current *Make the Connection* (www.MakeTheConnection.net) campaign. *Make the Connection* uses personal testimonials to illustrate true stories of Veterans who faced life threatening events, experiences, physical ailments, or psychological symptoms; reached out for support; and found ways to overcome their challenges.

(continued....)



“VA is committed to ensuring the men and women who bravely served our Nation can access the resources and services tailored for them that can lead to a more fulfilling life,” said Dr. Robert Petzel, VA’s under secretary for health. *“We want Veterans to recognize themselves in these stories and to feel optimistic that they can overcome their challenges with proper treatment. We set aside this month of June to urge everyone to increase awareness of PTSD so those in need can get effective treatment that will enable them to lead productive, fulfilling and enjoyable lives.”*

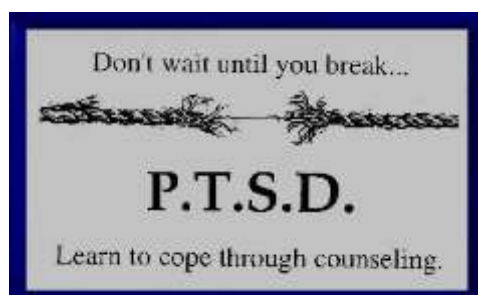
AboutFace launched in June in time to help bring attention to PTSD Awareness Month. It is located on the National Center for PTSD website, www.ptsd.va.gov. There viewers will watch as Veterans candidly describe how they knew they had PTSD; how PTSD affected the people they love; why they didn’t get help right away; what finally caused them to seek treatment; what treatment is like and how treatment helps.

VA provides effective PTSD treatment and conducts extensive research on PTSD, including prevention. Those interested in further information can go to www.ptsd.va.gov to find educational materials including courses for providers on the best practices in PTSD treatment and the award-winning VA/DoD PTSD Coach Mobile App for electronic devices, which provides symptom management strategies.

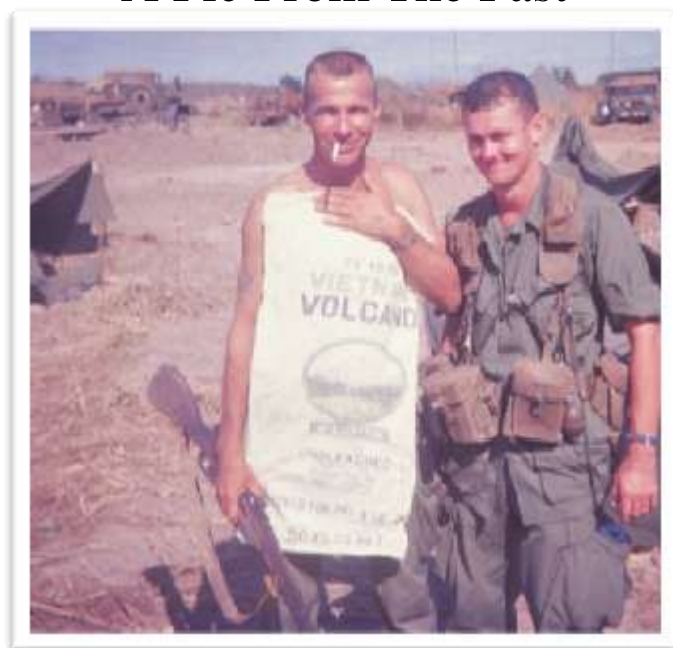
These campaigns are part of VA’s overall mental health program. Last year, VA provided quality, specialty mental health services to 1.3 million Veterans. Since 2009, VA has increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of Veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

In April, as part of an ongoing review of mental health operations, Secretary Shinseki announced VA would add approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce of 20,590 to help meet the increased demand for mental health services. The additional staff would include nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers.

For more information on AboutFace, visit www.ptsd.va.gov/aboutface/ or contact the National Center for PTSD at (802) 296-5132.



~ A Pic From The Past ~

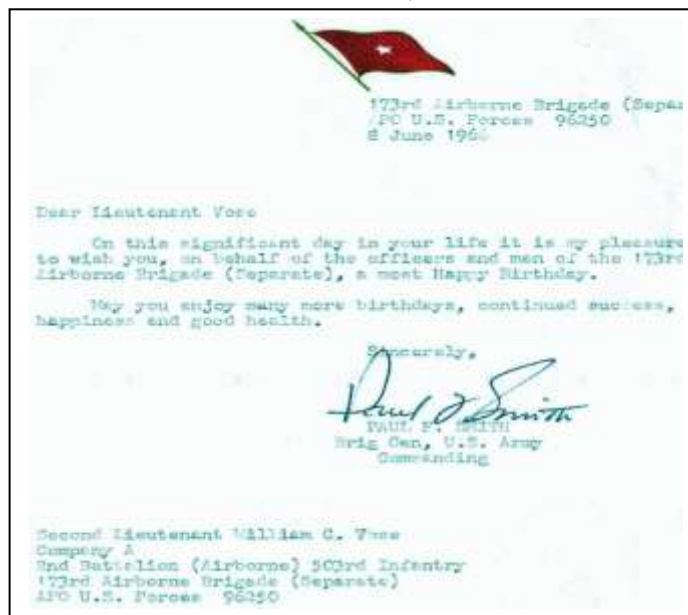


James “Jack” Voyles & Rex Stickler, Recon

I was recently converting some slides that I took in Vietnam and came across this one from Jan '67. We were on Operation Cedar Falls if I recall correctly. Last month you mentioned that Rex Stickler had passed (Issue 39, Page 17) -- the pic is of Rex and his platoon sergeant, SSG Voyles. Rex had the Recon Platoon at the time this photo was taken in late January 1967. I took the picture at the 2nd Battalion TOC after they returned from a mission. Wish I had found it earlier so I could have sent it to him before his death. Best wishes,

Bob Guy, Col. (Ret)

A/HHC/2/503d, '66-'67



Belated birthday wishes to Mr. Vose.



Families & Friends Looking For Buddies

You have graciously helped me in my efforts to locate men that served with **Rusty Engle**, A/2/503/173d in 1967. In the process of trying to get leads on whom he might have served with, I looked through old copies of *Sky Soldier* viewable on line. I copied several notices of men or women searching for information about men who served with the 173d in 1967. I had forgotten to get this list to Wambi Cook A/2/503d) before he went to Lexington.

If there are any at the reunion who would want to get in touch with the families of men they served with, could you pass on this list of names for them to look at? [Below are the original postings from *Sky Soldier* magazine]:

Robert P. Degen, KIA November 20, 1967. Information about him sought by a friend, Ed Malloy, in a message posted in *Sky Soldier* in 1995. His posting gave his address in Vancouver, WA. He now lives at 739 Cordova Circle, The Villages, Florida, and has a current phone listing as: (352) 633-0530.

William Shaffer, with the 173d from 5/66 to 5/67. A medic, he requested information about any of the 15 other medics that went to jump school with him in 1966. Shaffer still lives in Arkansas.

David R. Reynolds, B/4/503, KIA November 21, 1967. Sought by a high school friend, Mark Lavetti, in a message posted in *Sky Soldier* in 1997. Mark currently lives at 13005 Bryantown Court, Bryantown, MD. His current phone is listed as: (301) 932-8066.

Carl Robbins, with the 173d from May 2 to Nov. 23, 1967 [WIA], was seeking information about two men who were with him on Hill 875: Dewayne Lombardo, and Dennis Cooney. His wife is Deborah K. Robbins, The phone number is (765) 987-7093. I don't know if Carl is still alive or not.

Sa Won Chang, 3rd platoon/A/1/503 from May, 1967 to March, 1968, posted in *Sky Soldier* in 1996 that he was seeking to locate men he served with: Platoon Sgt. Hernandez, 1st Sgt. Duckett, Platoon Leaders Quinn and Doan; his squad members were: Fred Knight, Kinner, Jones, Herbert, Holland, Sutalo, Sgt. Porter. Chang has a Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/people/Sa-Won-Chang/100000777879635>. I think this is the correct Sa Won Chang. He was career army. There are pictures of him during the 80's on his webpage: <http://www.sfaxiii.org/Sa%20Won%20Chang.htm>.

Finally, in a message posted in 1993, the director of In Touch, that seeks to put families of KIA in touch with the men their loved ones had served with, posted a notice indicating they were seeking information concerning about a dozen men whose families wanted further information about them. In Touch people later started the Virtual Wall. You can get contact information from the webpage:

<http://www.virtualwall.org/contactus.htm> or by writing to webmaster@VirtualWall.org

You don't need to deal with any of this if you don't have time or don't want to be bothered. This is your reunion, and it's for you to enjoy seeing your friends, not to facilitate my agenda.

Most of the postings in *Sky Soldier* are ten years old or older, so these individuals may no longer even care to locate the men in their original messages, or may have died since the posting. It's simply that if men at the reunion happen to remember one of these names, it might be a relatively easy way to put them in touch with those wanting to locate old friends. I have tried to get current telephone numbers or contact numbers for all of the individuals except for Army medic William Shaffer. Thank you.

Keith Hale
Friend of Rusty Engle

Note: Keith's message was not viewed until after the reunion in Lexington. Thanks Keith. Ed

Note:

In the cover note which accompanied the *Special Reunion Edition* of our newsletter (June Issue 42), I mentioned I saw a brief newsrelease in the *Miami Herald* about the 173d reunion in DC held in the 80s. Here's a tid bit about that reunion. Ed

The DC Reunion

At the time of the DC Reunion, membership in the Society was pretty small so it was a word of mouth thing. Much of the membership was recruited at that reunion and at the *NYC Welcome Home Parade* which was in the days immediately following the reunion. The only reason I know that was because I was a charter member of Chap II in NYC and the group of us that attended the DC reunion had to rush home Sunday night and open the hospitality suite at the hotel in NYC on Monday through the end of the week.

Jim Chieco
E/2/503d



Classic Photo of a Sky Soldier



This photograph is of Pfc. John R. White, taken by SSG. A. W. Fischer, Brigade PIO 1969. Sergeant Fischer gave me the original photograph. Say hello from me to them. Also to Phillip Brown. The last I heard from Phillip was in 1993 in an e-mail to me at JPL. He was living in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Mike de Gyurky
B/HHC/2/503d

MEMORIAL UNVEILING CERMONY

We hope you will share this truly amazing honor with the Fritsche family on **July 28, 2012 at 11am**. The beautiful marble stone which welcomed soldiers to OP (Out Post) Fritsche in the mountains of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border will find a permanent resting place in the Morgan County War Memorial Park at the corner of Jefferson and Washington streets in Martinsville, IN on that morning. Come see the unveiling of the memorial and hear the amazing story behind its creation and journey to its new home.

1SGT Jonathan Hill who was the commander at OP Fritsche when it was brutally attacked will be a guest speaker, as well as Robert Meacham who served with

Ryan in the Old Guard, and Eric Bowlen who was Ryan's coach and mentor during his days as a Martinsville Artesian.

It will be a beautiful and touching event and one we would like to share with you.

[Sent in by Eric Hitchcock, HHC/2/503]

Results of 'The Great Hat Contest'

Thanks again to LTC Bob & Exie Carmichael for the military hats and patches they gave us to give-away to troopers. Results are in, and these are the lucky guys who won:

Bill Berry, 173d Engineers
Johnny Jones, C/2/503
Fabe Sesma, 173d Abn
Bob Sweeney, C/HHC/2/503
Bill Wilkinson, C/2/503
Gordon Nielson, 1RAR
Jimmy Stanford, B/2/503
Andy Russell, A/2/503
Dick Prosser, B/2/503
Dan Fritzman, A/2/503
Mike Switzer, C/3/503
Bill Harlan, C/2/503



As noted by this photo the hats and patches are on display in this man cave in Florida waiting for one lazyass RTO to mail them. Hurry up and wait boys! They're coming soon. No Vose, you didn't win anything so please stop calling.



Mark Twain's Fourth of July Speech in Keokuk, Iowa July 3, 1886

*'Better this decade than the 900 years of
Methuselah.'*

There is more done in one year now than Methuselah ever saw in all his life. He was probably asleep all those 900 years. When I was here thirty years ago there were 3,000 people here and they drank 3,000 barrels of whisky a day, and they drank it in public then.

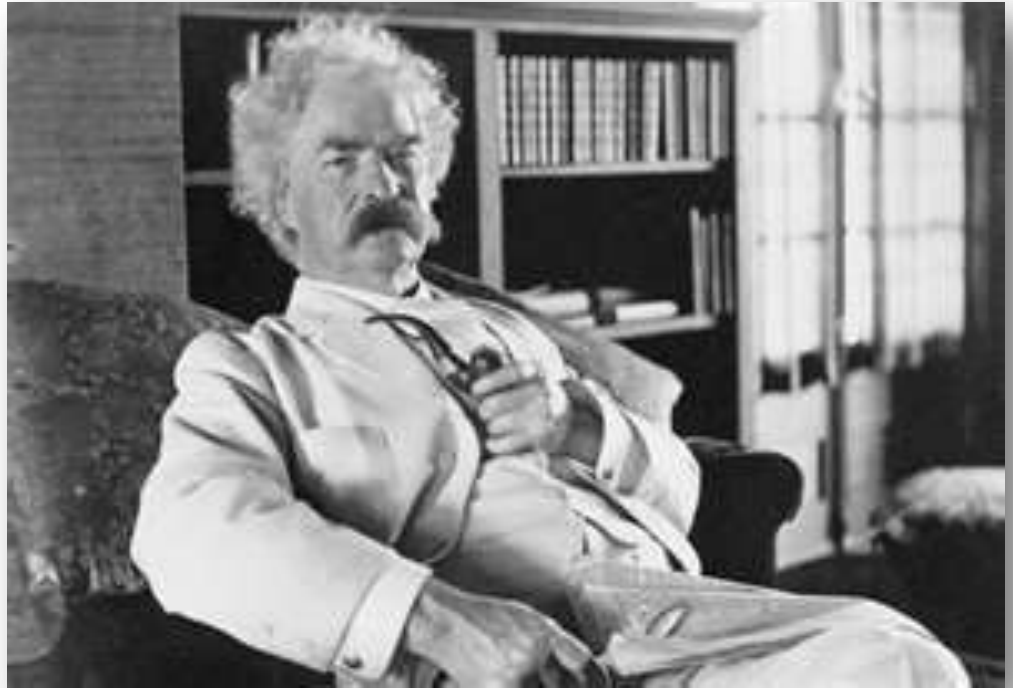
"Ladies and gentlemen: I little thought that when the boys woke me with their noise this morning that I should be called upon to add to their noise. But I promise not to keep you long.

You have heard all there is to hear on the subject, the evidence is all in and all I have to do is to sum up the evidence and deliver the verdict. You have heard the Declaration of Independence with its majestic ending, which is worthy to live forever, which has been hurled at the bones of a fossilized monarch, old King George the III, who has been dead these many years, and which will continue to be hurled at him annually as long as this republic lives.

You have heard the history of the nation from the first to the last--from the beginning of the revolutionary war, past the days of its great general, Grant, told in eloquent language by the orator of the day. All I have to do is to add the verdict, which is all that can be added, and that is, 'It is a successful day.'

I thank the officers of the day that I am enabled to once more stand face to face with the citizens that I met thirty years ago, when I was a citizen of Iowa, and also those of a later generation.

In the address today, I have not heard much mention made of the progress of these last few years--of the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, and other great inventions. A poet has said, *'Better fifty years of England than all the cycles of Cathay,'* but I say



I know that the man who makes the last speech on an occasion like this has the best of the other speakers, as he has the last word to say, which falls like a balm on the audience--though this audience has not been bored today--and though I can't say that last word, I will do the next best thing I can, and that is to sit down."

Happy 4th of July

