

2/503d

FOR THE MEN, AND THEIR
FAMILIES, OF THE 2ND BATTALION,
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)



We try
harder.

VIETNAM

newsletter

January 2012, Issue 36

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See all issues to date at these web sites:

<http://firebase319.org/2bat/news.html> or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



Forty-six years ago 2/503 troopers prepare wounded for Dust Off at LZ Wine in the Mekong Delta on 2 January 66 during Operation Marauder. See story on Pages 41-49.



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Chaplain's Corner



The Leapin' Deacon

Psalm 23:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

2012 Greetings and Blessings to all Sky Soldiers, Families and Friends!

This magnificent, comforting and powerful Psalm is a wondrous blessing to all our people! Psalm 23, "*The Shepherds Psalm*," was a favorite for two of our historic mothers, George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's. These two mothers had this most meaningful and comforting Psalm written on the "table of their hearts" – yes, they memorized it, sang it, prayed it, and jubilantly shared it with their sons.

This blessed Psalm deeply assisted our early Presidents in their demanding and dangerous times of crises and leadership during wartime – the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. This precious Psalm helped encourage and carry them through the dark and supremely demanding wartime presidencies.

A gifted Pastor, Charles L. Allen, wrote a dynamic and most helpful book entitled, "*God's Psychiatry*". Pastor Allen, using the 23rd Psalm as his centerpiece for help and healing and wise discipline, prescribed the Twenty Third Psalm to be read five (5) times each day for seven (7) days – yes, healing medicine for the entire person, mind, body, heart and soul.

READ IT: First thing upon waking in the morning.
Read it carefully and prayerfully...

Again immediately after Breakfast

Again immediately after Lunch

Again immediately after Dinner

Finally, the last thing before going to bed...

not quick or hurried, to carefully think on each phrase and verse – indeed, endeavor to write it on the table of one's heart. Truly, at the end of the week things will be different, newness and fresh beginnings will be a gift to you. The good Pastor Allen is assured of its marvelous, fruitful and healing results for all the faithful.

Ralph Waldo Emerson declared...

"A person is what he or she thinks about all day long."

Holy Scripture further teaches in Proverbs 23:7...

"For as a person thinks in his heart, so he is."

In summary, the 23rd Psalm is a pattern of thinking and being, and when a mind becomes saturated with it, a new way of thinking and a new life are the result.

Tremendous!

This New Year 2012 is a grand opportunity and a challenge to write these 118 words on the table of your heart. Bless all of you in so doing as you grow in Grace, Holiness and Wisdom!

In the Name of our kind Heavenly Father, our Lord Jesus, and the winsome Holy Spirit.

Chaplain Conrad Walker, COL, Ret.
"The Leapin' Deacon"
National Chaplain Emeritus
173d Airborne Association and
Military Order of the Purple Heart



Our Deacon, doing the Leapin', with able assistance with his holy boot (just in case) by Chaplain (Dr.) Robert Crick, Connie's successor with the 2/503d.





~ 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2011 ~



Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., LTC (Ret)

We have the distinct honor of announcing Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., LTC (Ret), and former company commander of B/2/503d, has been unanimously selected by officers and men of our battalion representing all companies, as *2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2011*. Congratulations Ranger Roy!



BDQ Roy

In addition to Roy, there were many equally deserving men nominated for this special recognition this year. The 2/503d officers and men appointed to represent our battalion with their selection are to be commended for this most difficult task.

Rather than attempt to describe here the many merits and attributes of Roy Lombardo, here is what some of his Bravo Bulls had to say about their former commander:

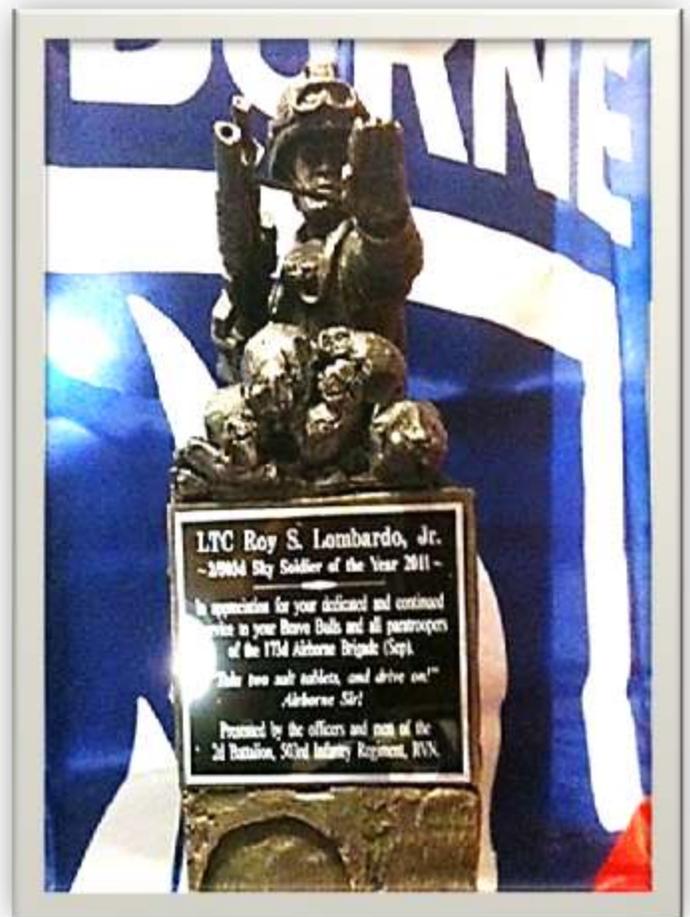
I would like to add my name to the list of those nominating LTC (Ret) Roy S. Lombardo, Jr. for "2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2011". I cannot imagine anyone more deserving than my "old" commander, "Ranger Roy". He has been, and still is the glue that holds us all together. And, I don't know how he does all he does.... still a great leader! Of course, we can't forget his lovely wife Carol (the glue that holds Roy together). With Much Respect and Admiration,
~ A Bravo Bull ~

I nominate Lt Col (Ret) Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., to be selected as the 2nd Bn 503rd Sky Soldier of the Year for 2011. Then, Captain Lombardo, was my company commander in Vietnam. Captain Lombardo was the first of six CO's during my 12 month tour of duty. Since I was an eighteen year old Private, I did not have much exposure to him. I remember being led to the company CP in a very wet rubber tree plantation by my Platoon Sergeant to meet my CO. He and First Sergeant McDonald were talking when I arrived. I remember him looking me in the eye when I was introduced to him. I could tell he was professional and meant business. That set the tone for the next twelve months.

Many years later I have become reacquainted with now LTC (retired) Roy Lombardo, Jr. It has been under much more pleasant circumstances. I have found BDQ Roy to be a very caring and considerate man. He shows a very sharp level of interest in all of the Bravo Bull veterans.

Largely because of his dedication and efforts we have one of the few if only company size annual reunions among the many veteran reunions. He is always ready to listen and hear what you have to say. When we get together he wants to know how well my family is. When less fortunate members are in need he is willing to make it possible for them to enjoy the reunions with the rest of us. If it wasn't for BDQ Roy I don't think my level of enthusiasm for our reunions would be the same. I always look forward to seeing him.

~ A Bravo Bull ~



This small token of appreciation was personally presented to LTC Roy Lombardo by men of the Bravo Bulls on behalf of the officers and men of our battalion. *RLTW*

(continued...)



LTC Lombardo was my very first thought and if there is a vote to be made between our Colonel and any other man, I would have to vote for our LTC Lombardo. My personal nomination was for the wives, children, parents and siblings that held in there with us through thick and thin, although I knew in my head the nomination would just get tabled. The Colonel is top-notch to me and with all he does for all of us – there should be no question. I will not apologize for the nomination! We all know man for man our Colonel Lombardo was cut from a very special piece of military cloth, and that if he was cut he would bleed O/D green. I do not know of a finer commander or a more dedicated man to his family, to his duties, to his men and to the United States of America than LTC (Ret) Roy Lombardo, Jr. LTC Lombardo represents the 173d in a way that no other man ever could.

~ A Bravo Bull ~



Roy, leading Punch Bowl Ceremony, assisted by Roger Flowers, in memory of their fallen Bulls.

I recommend LTC (Ret) Roy S. Lombardo Jr., to be the 2nd Bn 503d Sky Soldier of the Year. I joined Bravo Company in August 1965 when then Captain Lombardo was clearing to head back to Fort Benning. I first met Roy in person at the 1985 reunion in Washington DC. From then on I have watched as LTC Lombardo reassembled the company to include anyone who served in B/2/503d, thru reunions, letters, e-mails and sadly, funerals. As a leader then and now he reaches out to his soldiers, NCO's and officers. We now have a Punch Bowl ceremony that takes place whenever the Bulls assemble, Roy is the one who brought this tradition from the days of the "Old Army" into the present which included the veterans and the active members of B Company. Last November LTC Lombardo hosted an informal reception for Medal of Honor awardee SSG Giunta that grew from a small planned event into the

largest event that week. He did it all with no cost to any of the active duty soldiers or Gold Star families. It was one to the highlights of my life and I personally thank LTC Lombardo for including me and the 173d personnel that were in attendance.

Also, something that may not be known outside of the Bravo Bulls is how LTC Lombardo still looks after his troops. He visits those who are sick and keeps in contact with the guys who can't attend any of the reunions for one reason or another. After my wife passed away I received calls from Roy just checking to see how I was doing. It's those little things that make LTC Roy Lombardo the Soldier of the Year for 2011 and to me, every year.

~ A Bravo Bull ~

Just to put in my two cents worth, Roy Lombardo is a perfect choice for the battalion trooper of the year. He does so much organizing and has helped keep B/2/503d guys as a cohesive group all these years. In fact, I just got a Bravo Bulls' shirt in the mail for their Las Vegas reunion in November, even though I'm not going and didn't pay for it. He said it was on him. And, last year through his urging I got a big framed award for supporting the Bulls in Afghanistan, just 'cuz I went to a funeral in Michigan for a combat fatality. I don't think Roy is in real good health, but he still travels all over the place doing stuff. Can't say enough about the guy.

~ A Bravo Bull ~

I'm in favor of the nomination of LTC (Ret) Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., for the 2nd Bn 503rd Sky Soldier of the Year for 2011. I have known LTC Lombardo since 1963 when the Bravo Bulls were stationed on Okinawa. LTC Lombardo is a seasoned combat veteran and I would serve under his command then and now without hesitation. He cared deeply for his men then and still does today.

I have gone with him in the present time to hospitals to visit wounded combat soldiers from the Iraq war. I have traveled with him to send off veteran soldiers to their final resting place and I have traveled with him to Vicenza, Italy to participate in, now Battle Company, and the 173d Brigade functions in 2006. He has made several trips there and will be going again in December, 2011 to participate with the 173d Airborne Brigade.

LTC Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., cared deeply for the men he commanded on Okinawa and the men he commanded in the Viet Nam War. He still cares today and is always giving back to the men in so many ways. Since we re-connected in 2003, I have attended several Bravo Bulls reunions throughout the country with him.

(continued....)



The one thing I believe he truly loves doing is the Punch Bowl Ceremony and I have photographed him on numerous occasions. I have observed his dedication and sincerity and it is clear that he is deeply moved when he speaks of our KIAs and those that are deceased from natural causes. I was also with him when he gave a very poignant eulogy for Major General (Ret) Ellis W. Williamson in 2007 at Arlington National Cemetery. He also performs a ceremony every year the day before Veteran's Day at Arlington where the 173d Airborne Marker is located. Many Sky Soldiers throughout the country attend this event yearly.

LTC Lombardo, I believe, is primarily responsible for holding the Bravo bulls together today. It's just not the same when he is absent from a function that the Bulls may have. I've also heard some of the other men say the same thing about him. His compassion and concern are intact for the men he commanded yesteryears and the camaraderie he has today for the men he served with years ago is unwavering. He gave much then and is still giving today. He has given more than he could ever receive as he is a very giving man when it comes to the U.S. Army and the men he served with.

His nomination for the award is highly recommended and is certainly befitting for a soldier who has so much compassion for our military men and women. LTC Lombardo had some encouraging words for me personally back in 1964 and it still rings clear to me today. I must say it helped shape my time spent in the U.S. Army as a soldier as well as helped shape my civilian career which impacted me in a positive way and helped me to be the man I am today. I am grateful for that and I do believe many other such men he commanded would share this same sentiment for LTC (RET) Roy S. Lombardo, Jr. I am proud to salute him!
A Bravo Bull



Roy and Carol Lombardo, 2011

This is to nominate Lt Col (Ret) Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., for 2/503rd Sky Soldier of the Year 2011 (Viet Nam Era).

Lt Col Lombardo was Commander of B Co 2nd Bn 503rd Airborne Infantry (BRAVO BULLS) on Okinawa and led the company into Viet Nam upon deployment on 5 May 1965. During his tenure as Company Commander on Okinawa, then Captain Lombardo, prepared his troops for combat with some of the most rigorous jungle training he could devise. Their performance in combat is testament to that training.

At the Brigade reunion in 1985, Roy initiated, and ever since, has maintained a roster of former Bravo Bulls. To date, there are approximately eighty (80) former Bulls, or next of kin survivors, on that roster. Roy has regular contact with all of them. In order to accommodate those Bulls that are unable to travel, he began annual Bull reunions throughout the U.S.

The Brigade Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery has been the site of a memorial service conducted by Roy and the Bravo Bulls every year since the dedication of the Memorial. Roy has also visited many graves of deceased Bulls throughout the U.S.

Troop morale and welfare were always, and continue to be high priorities for Roy. Some of his continuing efforts include:

** Nomination of deserving veterans for selection as Distinguished Members of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment

** Attended reactivation of the 2nd Bn 503rd in Italy with other Bulls in 2002

** Visits the current BATTLE company in Vicenza on a regular basis and presents awards to them as follows: Leather-Man tools to Soldiers of the Month, combat knives to Soldier and NCO of the Year

** Upon his visits to the troops in Vicenza, he also conducts a Punch Bowl Ceremony to honor fallen/deceased members of B-2/503

** Roy also organized a reception for Medal of Honor recipient SSG Sal Giunta after the presentation at the White House

Among Roy's proudest accomplishments are his selection as the first veteran of 2/503 to the Ranger Hall of Fame in 1996, and his selection as a Distinguished Member of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

(continued...)



Roy is a regular contributor to the *2/503rd Newsletter*, *Static Line*, and *Infantry Magazine*.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration.

~ A Bravo Bull ~

My recollection of Roy goes back to August, 1964. Several of us, Larry Paladino, Bryan Bowley, Carleton Love, Stephen Scarpulla (Charlie Company), and myself, to name just a few, had just graduated from the same jump class, and when we landed on Okinawa were assigned to the Bravo Bulls B/2/503d. While the specifics of my first direct contact with Roy remain sketchy, I do recall that our training never stopped, just as if Lombardo knew in August 1964 that 9 months later we would land in South Vietnam for a 90 day TDY assignment that would last seven years.

Our training, unbeknownst to many of us, was geared to prepare us to be the finest jungle fighters in the best brigade in the United States Army. Roy was hard on us, fair, but hard. The training was designed to teach us the many nuances of jungle warfare, taking care of our weapons, our bodies and our buddies, and developing an irrevocable bond among the members of our company. That bond remained twenty years later in Washington DC, in 1985, when many Bravo Bulls gathered for the first time since we departed individually from Bien Hoa airbase.

I did not meet again with my fellow Bravo Bulls until 2000 when more than a dozen original Bulls and wives gathered in Palm Springs, CA. That was the first time several of us met as a unit since March 1966, when our rotation home began. Since then, and under Roy's guidance, the Bravo Bulls have met yearly across the United States to renew the bond that Roy instilled in us over 47 years ago. Besides our yearly get-togethers, several of the local area Bravo Bulls meet each 10th of November at Arlington National Cemetery at the Brigade marker. Roy leads us in a memorial ceremony to remember and honor those we marched among but who did not return with us from South Vietnam. We, the Bravo Bulls, 2/503, 173d ABN BDE (SEP) are the only company to continue to gather. I credit Roy's leadership, brotherhood, and continued devotion to his soldiers of yesteryear.

The leadership qualities of Roy Lombardo that instilled this very special brotherhood in us lo those many years ago, make us look forward to renewing, on a yearly

basis, that bond of camaraderie. While the years have added some mass to our frames, and removed some hair from our heads, and even though some found it difficult to remain in-step, we marched as a company this past Veterans Day at our 2011 reunion in Las Vegas.

The love we have for each other continues to grow. All of this can be attributed to LTC Roy S. Lombardo when he prepared those many young men from all four corners of the United States and Switzerland for war, and ultimately our return home to start families, continue our education, and begin rebuilding our lives.

For all of the above, I am honored to recommend LTC Roy S. Lombardo as Sky Soldier of the Year 2011.

~ A Bravo Bull ~

Ranger Roy, again leading the way with a squad of his Bulls at Vet's Day parade in Las Vegas, 2011.



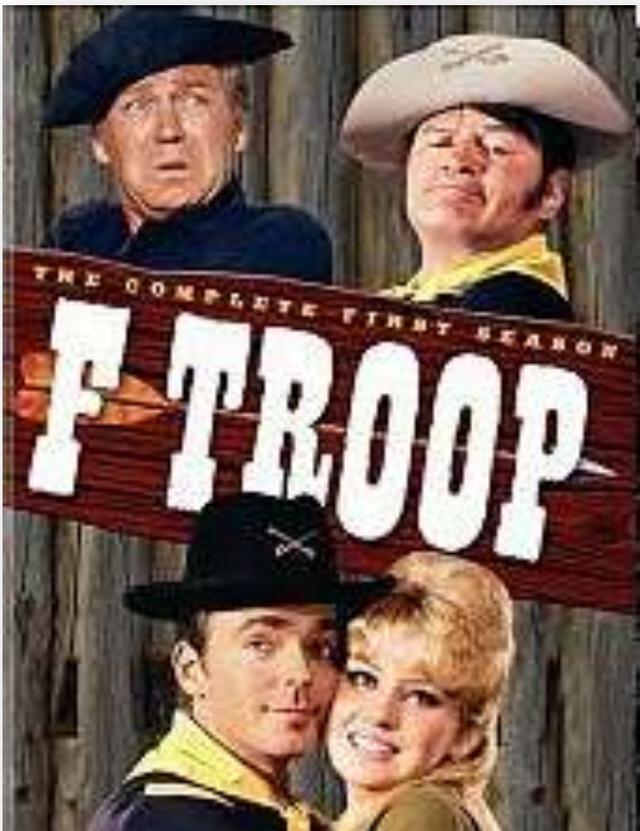
*Everywhere we go-oh . . . People wanna know-oh . . .
Who we are . . . Where we come from . . . So we tell them . . .
We are the Bulls . . . The mighty, mighty Bulls*

And, as BDQ Roy would often tell his Bulls some 47 years ago, and still tells them...

***“Take two salt tablets,
and drive on!”***



~ VIETNAM ERA TRIVIA ~



Jim Wilson, C/2/503d, sent in this trivia question last month:

“Might be a little trivia question for your next issue. Robert Stack was accompanied by a lesser known female television star when I met him, and her, at Dak To. Who was she?”

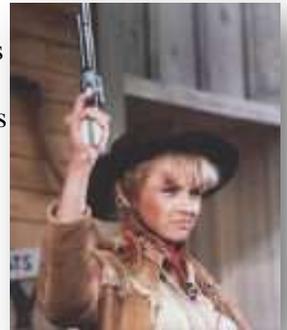
A little hint: The comedy TV show about a fictitious cavalry unit she co-starred in was cancelled in 1967 and the main stars were Forrest Tucker, Larry Storch and Ken Berry. Just wondered if anybody would remember. She was hot.”

A number of Sky Soldiers and Sky Soldierettes correctly identified the show as F Troop, and the actress as Melody Patterson, who visited 2/503d Sky Soldiers at Dak To. A little about the show and her....

F Troop is a satirical American television sitcom that originally aired for two seasons on ABC-TV. It debuted in the United States on September 14, 1965 and concluded its run on April 6, 1967 with a total of 65 episodes. The first season of 34 episodes was filmed in black-and-white, but the show switched to color for its second season. Reruns premiered on the ITV network in the United Kingdom on October 29, 1968, and were screened repeatedly until July 16, 1974. The series was also broadcast nationally in Australia on ABC-TV and in Ireland on Telefís Éireann.

The commanding officer is the gallant but chronically clumsy and accident-prone Captain Wilton Parmenter (Ken Berry), descended from a long line of distinguished military officers. He was awarded the Medal of Honor after accidentally instigating the final charge at the Battle of Appomattox. Only a private, he was ordered to fetch his commanding officer's laundry. As he rode away, pollen in the air caused him to sneeze repeatedly. A group of Union soldiers mistook his sneeze for an order to charge, turning the tide of the battle. His superiors, wishing to reward his action, promoted him to captain and—in view of his ineptitude—gave him command of remote Fort Courage, a dumping ground for the army's least useful soldiers and misfits. Much of the humor of the series derives from the scheming of Captain Parmenter's crooked but amiable non-commissioned officers, Sergeant Morgan O'Rourke (Forrest Tucker) and Corporal Randolph Agarn (Larry Storch). He tries to escape the matrimonial plans of his girlfriend, shopkeeper–postmistress Jane Angelica Thrift, known locally as "Wrangler Jane" (Melody Patterson), though he is seen to be a bit more affectionate towards her during the second season.

Melody Patterson (born April 16, 1949 in Inglewood, California) is an American actress best known for her role as *Wrangler Jane* in the 1960s TV series *F Troop*. She was 16 years old when she debuted on the show. Since the 1967 cancellation of *F Troop*, Patterson has worked in television, radio, and the theater, in addition to entertaining troops in Vietnam.



Melody as Wrangler Jane

Melody was married to actor James MacArthur who is best known for the role of Dan "Danno" Williams in the TV series *Hawaii Five-O*. During her marriage to MacArthur, she had to put her career aside to move to Honolulu, Hawaii. During the next seven years she appeared in many episodes of *Hawaii Five-O*, and started modeling and making commercials. While living in Hawaii she found herself again on the stage in the Herb Rogers Production of *"Butterflies are Free"* with Barbara Rush and Dirk Benedict. After that she kept busy doing other plays such as *"House of Blue Leaves,"* for the University of Hawaii, and the part of Peggy in *"The Front Page"* written by Charles MacArthur, and directed by her husband James MacArthur.





VA Launches Open Source Custodian

Open Source Electronic Health Record Agent Begins Operations

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced it has completed an important milestone on its joint path with the Department of Defense (DoD) to create a single electronic health record system for service members and Veterans. OSEHRA, the Open Source Electronic Health Record Agent, has begun operations and will serve as the central governing body of a new open source Electronic Health Record (EHR) community.

"We developed our open source strategy to engage the public and private sectors in the rapid advancement of our EHR software, which is central to the care we deliver to Veterans and service members and to our joint EHR collaboration with the Department of Defense," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"With the launch of OSEHRA, we begin the implementation of our strategy and we look forward to the creation of a vibrant open source EHR community."*

As part of the initiation of OSEHRA operations, VA has contributed its current EHR, known as VistA (Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture), to seed the effort. OSEHRA will oversee the community of EHR users, developers, and service providers that will deploy, use, and enhance the EHR software.

Individuals and organizations interested in participating in OSEHRA are invited to join through the community website. Established as an independent non-profit corporation during its initial phase of operation, OSEHRA is putting in place the framework and the tools that will enable the public sector, private industry, and academia to collaborate to advance EHR technology.

Draft documents describing key framework components, such as the design of its code repository and the definition of its software quality certification process, are available on the OSEHRA community website. Community feedback is welcome as the OSEHRA team finalizes these designs in preparation for launch of full technical operations this fall.

The design of OSEHRA is being led by The Informatics Application Group (tiag) under a contract awarded by VA in June 2011. Moving to an open source model invites innovation from the public and private sectors. It is an important element of VA's strategy to ensure that

VA clinicians have the best tools possible, and that Veterans receive the best health care possible.

Joseph Armstrong
B/4/503d
Veterans Service Officer
New England Chapter 9, John A. Barnes III (MOH)
173d Airborne Association

Service members, families honored at State House

AUGUSTA, Maine (NEWS CENTER) -- Years after being killed or injured serving our country, service members and their families were honored by the state Thursday. Relatives of service personnel who served in Korea, during World War II, and in Vietnam, were presented silver and gold star medals for the sacrifices their loved ones made.



It was an emotional ceremony at the Hall of Flags inside the Maine State House.

Allen Nadeau was overcome with emotion as he accepted his brother Larry's medal. He said he was filled with both pride and sadness, thinking back to those difficult days when his parents learned the news.

"To see my parents throughout the years go through that, I wouldn't wish that on anyone. Obviously I wouldn't want to bury one of my kids," said Nadeau. *"He gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country."*

The ceremony is part of an ongoing effort by Maine Veteran Services to identify relatives of services members killed, injured or missing while serving their country.

[Source: Chapter 9 Newsletter]

Larry Joseph Nadeau
Private
B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173RD ABN BDE, USARV
Army of the United States
Orono, Maine
August 11, 1947 to January 2, 1966
LARRY J NADEAU is on the Wall
at Panel 04E Line 048





Watergateamendment.com is the new website dedicated to the historical novel “*The Amendment*”

by John J. Fitzgerald, C/2/503d

What does the 25th Amendment have to do with Watergate? The information in this book and website will startle you.

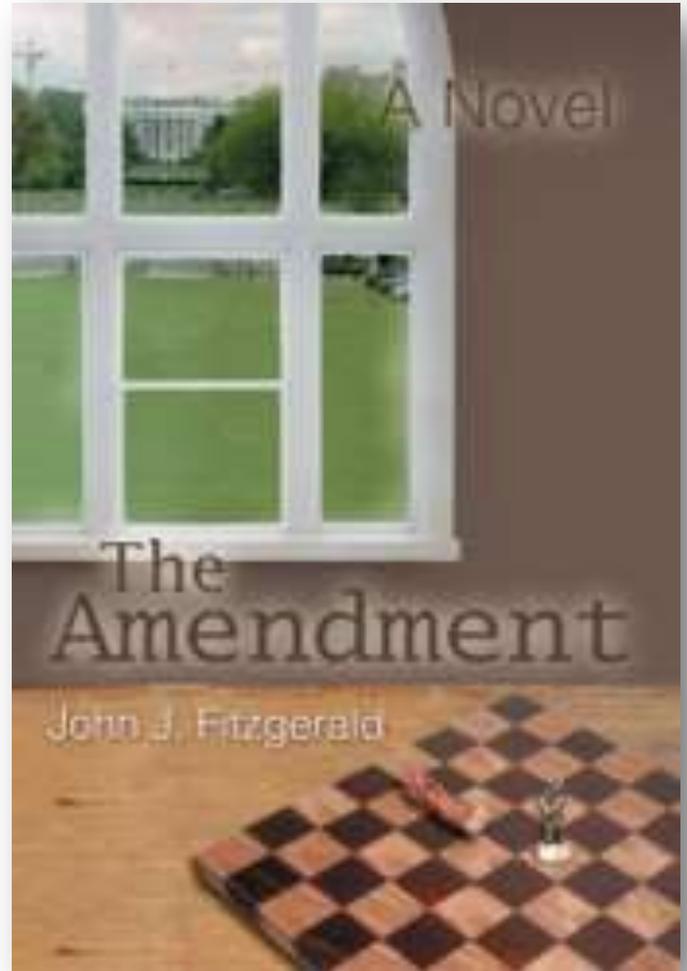
“To help answer the most asked question about the book...Is it true?”

Cincinnati, OH (PRWEB) June 24, 2011

Readers of ‘The Amendment’ will now have a website <http://www.watergateamendment.com> that will add information about the characters and historical data. The website will shed un-noticed information on the turbulent political times of the Watergate era of the sixties and seventies. This book takes a unique view into historic behind the scenes activity that directed a change by utilizing the Pentagon Papers, Watergate and other activities to help orchestrate this elaborate Conspiracy.

This included the amending of the constitution, the removal of the Vice President and the President. To help answer the most asked question about the book...Is it true? Author John Fitzgerald has unveiled the new website: <http://www.watergateamendment.com>

Mr. Fitzgerald said, ***“There is a great deal of fascinating events that happened during this historic era. Much of it was not reported or it was controlled to help create a specific effect or opinion, after many years a lot books and information have been revealed that shed new light on the events of that historic time. I want the reader to experience the fun of history to see some of what was known and not reported.”***



The new website: <http://www.watergateamendment.com> has some very interesting historical data that relates to the overall theme of the book. It also highlights some of the historical characters, Spiro Agnew, George Wallace and others; and has some unnoticed interesting information such as an example of why the 25th amendment went almost unreported during the ratification process. The relationship the New York based Rockefeller team had on Richard Nixon and how they manipulated him to run and then resign the Presidency. A view of Nixon’s letter of resignation, did it follow the requirements of the 25th Amendment?

“The Amendment is a fun read and I hope the website will add enjoyment, entertainment and education as well,”
Fitzgerald said.



Last Month's WHODAT?

Some buddies of his quickly identified the trooper with his M79 in this photo as Jimmy Castillo.

That's Jimmy Castillo!
Jerry Hartman, C/2/503d

Hey, the G.I. loading the M-79 is our own J. Castillo C/2/503, weapons platoon, 1966, Bien Hoa, behind weapons platoon tent.

Barry "Bear" Hart, C/2/503d



Chargin' Charlie Jimmy Castillo

Jimmy grew up in Guadalupe, California, on the Central Coast about 2-3 miles from the Pacific Ocean. He always wanted to go into the Marines, but when the time came, he decided to become a Paratrooper. *"I wanted it to be adventurous! I never regretted the decision I made."*

After graduating High School in December '65, he entered the Service at Fort Ord, CA, then on to Fort Gordon, GA, but not as an infantryman, but a 114H, anti-tank killer, where he had to ride on a jeep with a 106 recoilless rifle. Then to Fort Benning, GA for Jump School.

After proudly earning his Jump Wings, it was on to Vietnam where they sent him to an Airborne outfit called "The 173d Airborne Brigade". *"I asked around and nobody knew anything about them."*

"When I reported to the 2/503d, Charlie Co., they said Weapons Platoon was full and they instead assigned me to 2nd Platoon -- there went riding on the jeep...gone. Somehow, it worked out for me; I learned to survive on OJT. Have some stories about these events."

Returning to the states after his year of Combat Duty, he went to the 82nd Airborne at Ft. Bragg, where he tried to hook up with 3rd Bn, *"They were all ready to go. They went and joined the 173d."*

Some of the action he participated in with the 82nd were the riots in Washington D.C. when Rev. Martin Luther was killed.

Jimmy returned home following 3 years of service to his country. He went to work for a sugar factory, then Columbia Records for 12 years, and 26 years with Union 76, Tosco, Phillips, and ConocoPhillips oil refinery in Arroyo Grande, California. Today, he is retired and enjoying every day, *"with my up and down emotions."*

Jimmy keeps busy with lots of Honor Guard and Color Guard activity as a member of the *Boots & Chutes All Airborne Association*, and some of the reunions he attends with the 173d, CVVA Post 982, and the American Legion Post 371 *"(notice if you look at it backwards it's '173')."*

Jimmy and his wife, Ester, have 3 sons, 2 daughters, 11 grand kids, and 4 great-grand kids.

Jimmy, on Veteran's Day 2011 with Boots & Chutes All Airborne Association.



"Vietnam was what we had instead of happy childhoods."

~ Michael Herr, 1977



JOHN LINDGREN HAS

AN AFTERNOON
WITH
CHARLIE BRADFORD

By John L. Lindgren
503rd PRCT



Almost as soon as I got back from Nova Scotia, I called Charlie Bradford, the old 2nd Battalion surgeon, from my cousin's Watertown Massachusetts house on Standish Road [the next street west is Bradford Road named for one of Doc's forebears who have been in the state for some time].

"Is Doc Bradford there?" I ask.

I am astounded that the great man himself has answered the phone. I would learn later, he doesn't like to be called Doc, he prefers Charlie. We make some small talk then he tells me we must get together at the Harvard Club. I am pleased he seems anxious to see me. I hadn't expected this after hearing so many stories; he wants to be left alone, no visitors, he's not well, he has no time for the 503rd reunions and the rest.

He sounds enthusiastic about our meeting, "We'll have lunch there!" We arrange it for Friday but there is a small problem, he either doesn't drive or he doesn't have a car, I think he neither has a car nor does he drive.

"I'll try to arrange a ride and call you back," he tells me.

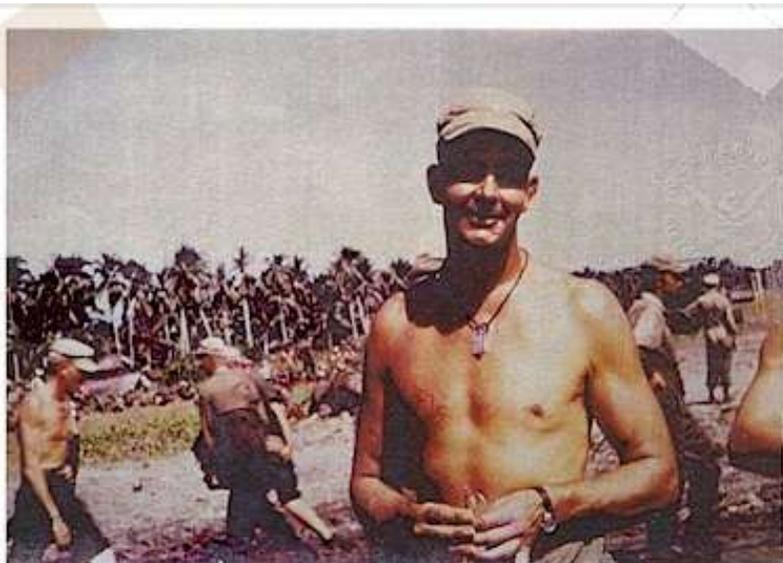
I hadn't known quite what to expect when I called. My friend, Bill Calhoun and I, two highly respected handwriting analysts, had Charley on his last legs after viewing a fairly long letter he had written me in a shaky spidery scrawl. I really hadn't had a letter from him since then for some time although I always can count on a Christmas card with a brief message. Long ago he used to send his holiday greeting on a physician's prescription blank, prescribing good cheer etc. His voice sounds strong and vibrant during our short conversation, I am happily surprised he has been snatched from the jaws of death, a remarkably speedy recovery in view of Calhoun's and my own gloomy diagnosis of his handwriting. He was clearly glowing with energy and enthusiasm.

He calls me back. He has a ride and I get detailed instructions on how to get to his club. It's not all that

difficult; go to the corner of Massachusetts Avenue [known to the locals as *Massav*] and Commonwealth Avenue [known to the locals as *Commonwealth Avenue*]. You can't miss it.

It's Friday and I am in my seersucker suit wearing my best four-in-hand tie. I had wanted to wear my bow tie, my daughter Yvonne had given me this past father's day but after several tries it didn't seem to tie too well. Doc had warned me, "You can't get in club without a tie. If you haven't got one we can get one there." He must have a low opinion of Californian's dress standards and I can't really fault him for that.

I am there in no time from Watertown. I park my stylish green rented Dodge Shadow and put two hours worth of coins in the meter. Plenty of time, Doc's benefactor has to return to Marshfield at one thirty and it is now nearly noon. I have been warned several times of the harsh treatment at the hands of the meter maids given parking offenders in Boston.



The indomitable Dr. Charles Bradford, one of the few true greats. "Doc" did not mind getting in and labouring with the troops. Notice that he's holding his glasses in his hands - with his poor eyesight, he usually wore them.

As I walked along Commonwealth Avenue it reminded me somehow of Amsterdam. The street is divided in the middle by a wide green swath [where the canal should be] planted with huge graceful maples; the club building faces this handsome street. On either side, large expensive looking old apartments face the mall. I have yet to see a stroller or a child or a nanny. I think to myself the YUPPIES must have given this section a miss or perhaps these houses aren't as expensive as they look.

(continued....)



I look across Massav and head for a large building with two flags displayed high above the entrance. The Stars and Stripes above all, and beneath it, a large blue Harvard Club flag, that turns slowly in a gentle breeze. I had been here before in 1947 with Jack Mara, an old D Company comrade and another time, just after the war, with my cousin. That was a long time ago and nothing is as I remembered it. I don't recognize a thing.

Entering the lobby, I go past the bar into a spacious lounge but Charley isn't there. In fact, no one is there. I look at the magazines piled on a large table to see if they have the *New Yorker* there with son John's poem in, but there are no *New Yorker* magazines at all. I look in a huge empty main dining room, obviously closed for lunch. I go back towards a second smaller dining room and look in another smaller lounge. I recognize Charley at once.

There he is sitting in chair, a pair of crutches leaning on a pillar beside him. He's wearing a bow tie and a Brooks Brothers *Madrass* shirt. He kind of tilts back his head looking through his glasses at me, exactly as I remembered him. He's a big man and looks exceptionally fit and trim as he gets up from his chair and we shake hands. He tells me severe arthritis has slowed him and he must walk with crutches. He suggests we go into the bar where he orders a Bristol Cream Sherry and I have one too. Something new! Everybody knows Doc Bradford never touched alcohol. I carry the drinks while Charlie moves on his crutches to the dining room. A waitress named Mary serves us. I haven't remembered much else but she looks familiar. They are apparently old friends and exchange pleasantries. Listening to their conversation I have the idea Charlie hasn't been at the club for a while.

We order, or rather Doc does. I suggested baked scrod but he nips that in the bud forthwith, "*It's no good. You wouldn't like it. We'll have the chicken,*" he tells Mary. He is in fine spirits. The customers in the small dining room are almost exclusively thin old ladies. Aside from us, there is one other man eating there. As I sip my sherry, I look out the window at the bright sun and the maple trees. I feel very good being here with Doc. We sit and he opens the proceedings and sets the agenda, so to speak. "*I never get to talk to people about the 503rd. Unless they were there, who could I tell all this to? They'd never know what I'm talking about.*"

He starts on his subject right away by taking a few shots at some traditional regimental whipping boys. The infamous disagreeable G, "*wasn't a bad sort really,*" he tells me, "*he simply behaved badly.*" He plows no new ground here as he ticks off the man's shortcomings. I listen saying very little. He sent a couple of rounds J's way. Nothing new here either.

It's been fifty years since R who avoided hazardous duty because of bad knees but Charlie is as incensed by the improper conduct as if it had happened yesterday. Doc has little use for any of these scoundrels and malingerers.



After he was through castigating these rascals I brought up M's return to the states from Noemfoor under a cloud so to speak, but Doc had somehow granted M absolution for his sins and I supposed it must be accepted by all as an act of faith. I didn't quite understand how M had behaved differently in such a way to be forgiven by Charlie for his [in my eyes] disgraceful conduct. Charlie explained it this way, "*M was a brave man who didn't fear combat. He simply wanted to go home, pulled a few strings and left.*" I don't quite understand his train of thought here, but I hold my tongue. How Doc could admire this man, a known malingerer, who purposely banged at his knee causing it to swell and then conspired with a physician to get a ticket home, is far beyond me. I don't ask the hard questions and thankfully we go to a new subject.

It is obvious he has given careful consideration to all of this and the thoughts pour out to his audience of one who can understand what he is saying. He lashes out at a few more who are guilty of certain lapses who probably will never be quite forgiven but these are minor offenders, misdemeanor cases. These people are those who stay at the command post and don't bother to visit the troops or are out taking pictures when they should be taking care of their men. He has hundreds of stories that he heard right from the horse's mouth so to speak as he questioned the wounded coming to his dispensary for treatment.

He wrote down these stories that are found in an unpublished manuscript called "*Combat Over Corregidor.*"

He talks of the 2nd Battalion heroes and the surgeon, of course, is one of them. He would join combat patrols whenever he could, which was often enough, to be where the action was. Charlie was the first person I saw coming through to the company after a bloody night battle. He got the Silver Star for his trouble.

(continued....)



The 503rd was not known for rewarding its heroes and only the most extraordinary feats of arms were recognized. Little Joe Whitson earned the Distinguished Service Cross for conspicuous bravery on Corregidor perhaps the bravest of the brave in Charlie's eyes. They knew each other well and Doc admired this officer twenty years his junior. He told of Frank Keller, a D Company paratrooper who stayed for two days with a wounded comrade in a ravine crawling with the enemy.

He was proud of his medics as well he should be. Jack Bowers, his senior medical enlisted man was sort of a rogue, but a brave and able man.

Bowers was wounded along with B at the mouth of Corregidor's Cheney Ravine. Bowers attended B although painfully wounded himself. B's wounds were [according to Charlie] superficial but he left never to return to his rifle company. B's conduct displeases Doc particularly since he was a graduate of a highly respected southern military school "*who should have behaved better.*"

John Prendergast was a tough Irishman and brave as a lion but in other ways not entirely scrupulous. Charley Leabhart was a first class medic and creator of one of Doc's favorite puns, "*It get's Corrugguder and Corrugeder.*"

We have, as he promised at the outset, spoken of nothing else but the war and the regiment. Perhaps he is writing his memoirs, who knows? He talks of his family a little. I mention my grandfather was a great admirer of Teddy Roosevelt. "*My father was a very good friend of Teddy Roosevelt. He was at our home quite often.*" Roosevelt died in 1919 and Doc [born in 1905] would certainly be old enough to remember Roosevelt when he visited.

I was told by others, that President Franklin Roosevelt had seen to it that Doc was returned from London when the US entered the war. He was a volunteer physician there helping the British war effort. I told him I thought the story true. Charlie laughs and tells me, "*It's a great story but not a word of truth in it.*"

He asks me if I knew his brother was governor of Massachusetts at one time. I told him I knew that. He obviously is enjoying himself telling his stories to one of his old comrades in arms. His comrade in arms, hanging



Doc Bradford

on his every word, is enjoying the afternoon immensely as well. Charlie is right, the only people you can talk to about these things, are those who were there. His Harvard Club number is 883 and he explains to me he has finally reached his club number 88. He is bright and sharp and I enjoy every minute listening to him.

I am startled when he blurts out at one point, "*I don't think I am of much use to anyone now and am ready to die.*" I tell him he looks like he is in good health and what's the rush. I wish I had remembered it at the time and I would have given him Mr. Maugham's admonition to a friend, "*Death is a dreary business, I advise you to have nothing to do with it.*" We go out in the lobby, Doc is moving along on his crutches and we sit down and talk some more in the leather easy chairs.

We're not there too long when two pretty young girls, perhaps six or seven years old, come up to us. These are the daughters of Charlie's friend who has driven him here from Marshfield. She has remained in the car parked in front of the club to fight off meter maids. We say goodbye. I walk out to the station wagon and Charlie and I say goodbye again.

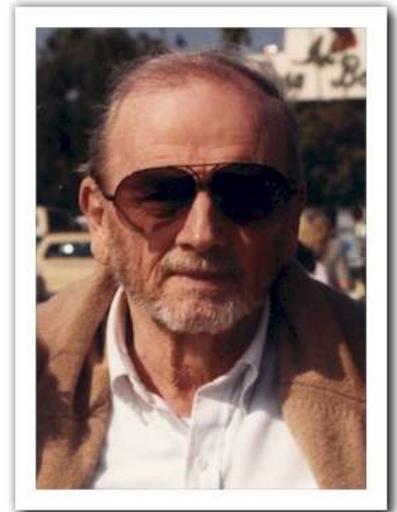
He is grinning broadly and looks at me through his glasses with his face raised up ever so slightly and I suddenly see him slowly lumbering toward our position like a big bear, the first man to reach us that February morning after D Company's bloody fight at Wheeler Point.

It has been a beautiful afternoon. I think Charlie had a good time too. The station wagon pulls away from the curb. I look at my watch and my heart sinks. It is nearly three-thirty and the rental Shadow has surely been towed. We had been talking for a long time.

[Source: 503rd Heritage Battalion web site]

"The closer you get to the individual soldier doing the dirty work, the closer you are to the truth in war."

~ John Lindgren



John "Jungle Fox" Lindgren (1987)



A Rare & Privileged Event – The 173d ABCT St. Michael's Jump at Aviano, Italy

By Leta Carruth

Honorary Member of the 503rd Regiment

A prayer to Michael the Archangel,
Patron Saint of Paratroopers by Lew Poorman:

*Angelic Michael, hear my call
As through the sky I now will fall.
Satan you once cast from here.
Aid me now to conquer fear.
My static line have hooked to hold.
And then my chute it to make unfold.*

*Suspension lines untangled be
And open up my canopy.
From other jumpers float me clear
As safely down I persevere.
On angel wings I hit the ground.
My father's favor I have found.
In thanks, St Michael, I do pray
For God has helped me - all the way.
Amen*

Last Monday, October 28, 2011, I had the privilege of witnessing the St. Michael's jump by the 173d ABCT from Camp Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. This was the first time in seven years that the 173d has held the St. Michael's jump. The event was coordinated by the 173rd Brigade Chaplain, MAJ Edward Cook.

I rolled out of bed at 04:30 - a feat in itself for me but, as the day unfolded, a feat that was beyond worth it. A couple of the men from the 2/503d (Steven Van Esch, Fabe Sesma) had made arrangements for me to join family members and attend the jump. I will never be able to thank those men enough for arranging this.

I walked across post to the 2/503d Battalion HQ where I had been told to be by 06:30 in order to board a bus for Aviano where the jump would take place. There was a bit of confusion about where the buses were - they were not at the 2/503d HQ. Around 06:20 I made my way into the building and inquired at the staff duty desk as to where I should be. The Soldiers asked around and directed me to the soccer field.

As I walked from the 2/503d BN building to the soccer field (retracing my steps from the hotel) I ran into SGT Rimmel who is a very cherished friend and who was participating in the jump that day. SGT Rimmel and I walked together to the soccer field where Soldiers from 2/503d, 1/503d and HHC were meeting to be taken to Aviano for the jump.



SGT Rimmel went onto the field to join the 2/503d Soldiers while I waited on the edge of the field. As I was waiting I met Jenn Cook, the Brigade Chaplain's wife, and their son Edward. Jenn took me under her wing all day. I am grateful to her for her guidance and support. I am so thankful our paths crossed.

A little after 07:00 they called for the Soldiers and a few family members who were there to board the buses. I had no idea where SGT Rimmel was or what bus to board. About that time CPT Andy Oliver came walking by and recognized me. I was still half asleep so I was thrilled to see a familiar face. CPT Oliver called out to someone to make sure I was on the bus with 2/503d Chosen Company. The next thing I knew I was not only on the bus with SGT Rimmel but we were seated next to each other. PERFECT!

We arrived at Aviano around 09:30 and a bit of the "hurry up and wait" began. The jump was scheduled for 15:00 (3:00 PM). As we were waiting MAJ Cook gave a history of St. Michael and the St. Michael's jump.

After MAJ Cook finished each of the Battalion Chaplains presented each of the Soldiers who were jumping with a St. Michael medallion to commemorate the jump. The three C-130s that would take the paratroopers up arrived.

The paratroopers were briefed on the LZ (Landing Zone). It was a little unnerving for me to listen to the person conducting the briefing discuss what to do if 1) you land in a tree, or 2) you land on a power line, etc. But good to know all bases are covered!

Then the paratroopers, by Battalion, were called out to "rehearse" the elements of the jump. A little while later they lined up to get their chutes from the conex. Then they completed some basic preparation before rigging up in the chutes. Not long after that it was time to "buddy up" and "rig up" in the chutes.



Rigging up

(continued....)





Leta and Sgt. Remmel

After they are all rigged up a Jump Master checks each paratrooper to make sure everything is in order and, I think, prepares the static line. For once I didn't ask a million questions - I tried to stay out of the way since I knew it was essential that this all be done properly to ensure the safety of each paratrooper.



Heading out to the C-130s

After we watched the paratroopers file out to the planes we hopped on a bus to go to the LZ (Landing Zone). We weren't there too long before we saw the planes approaching.



First chutes popped

As the first chutes popped it was both breath taking and an emotional moment for me. Not a "boo hoo" type of emotion but I couldn't stop the tears from streaming down my face. Jenn Cook came over and saw my tears. Before I even had the chance to explain myself she

assured me she understood. Then I told her about one of those men who was jumping out of the third aircraft.

He was shot during an ambush back in OEF VIII. He wasn't medevaced for about 3 hours due to the intensity of the fight and the helos not being able to land. Once he got to Asadabad he "died" 2 or 3 times but the incredible medical staff kept reviving him. By the time he got to Landstuhl he was on life support. His family was called and told that they (Landstuhl) would try to keep him alive until they got there. Another miracle happened and he stabilized enough to be sent to WRAMC (Walter Reed Army Medical Center).

Once at WRAMC his was in a comma and declared brain dead. As his family stood vigil for 10 days there was no change. Then, one more miracle, on the 10th day he woke up. He fought for 22 months at WRAMC to get healthy - to get well. His only goal was to return to the 2/503d. And he did. He did so by determination. He endured numerous surgeries and procedures; months of waiting; mountains of paperwork. He could have been medically retired from the Army but not this Paratrooper. It was all about getting back to his unit.

Not only did he return to the ROCK but he deployed with them in OEF X. What a stud!

So there I was standing at the Landing Zone in Aviano, Italy knowing that one of those Paratroopers beneath one of those canopies was this young man. Yep, I got emotional and I'll never apologize for that.

To be honest the emotion wasn't just about that one Paratrooper, though. It was about how damn fortunate I am to be allowed to love and to be so loved by so many of the ROCK Paratroopers and their families. Not one day passes in my life that I don't know how fortunate and blessed I am.



"Those are 'my' guys!"

(continued....)





“I hope you all had soft landings!”

As we were standing around waiting for all of the Paratroopers to make their way across the road from the LZ to where we were at the buses I noticed a gentleman with the name tape "Rohling". What a bonus! COL Andy Rohling who is now the 173rd ABCT Commander. I introduced myself and thanked him for the opportunity to be at the jump. COL Rohling was previously the S-3 and XO for 2/503d. COL Rohling was kind enough to chat with me for a few minutes. As we were chatting he handed me the St. Michael medallion that he had been given that day. I was beyond honored.

Some Italian Jump Masters had participated in the jump. After everyone was safely back on the ground, the chutes were stored away and everyone assembled near the buses. Both MAJ Cook and an Italian Commander had Soldiers from each country exchange jump wings. Then each Commander said a few words about what a special day it was. And it was SO special in every possible way.

When we boarded the buses to return to the airfield at Aviano MAJ Cook came to my seat. He told me that Jenn had filled him in a little on why I was there. Then he reached in his pocket and pulled out one of the St. Michael medallions and told me that he would like for me to have it. I was honored and speechless. I told him that COL Rohling had already given me his. MAJ Cook asked that I accept the one from him, too. Another blessing to my already more than perfect day.



The St. Michael medallion given to me by MAJ Cook and COL Rohling, showing the front and back.

Honored, humbled, privileged, grateful...there really just aren't words to fully describe my feelings for being allowed to experience the St. Michael jump. I am forever thankful. This day is absolutely one of the most cherished days of my life.

Jump week continued for the Paratroopers in Vicenza. On Tuesday I know some of the ROCK Paratroopers were at Aviano for day jumps from Chinooks and night jumps from the C-130s. Wednesday and Thursday there were more jumps. I hope all of the jumps on Tuesday - Thursday were as safe as the ones on Monday. I'm sure there were many pairs of wings buried on the landing zone last week. I'm told that tradition is that when a Paratrooper makes his/her last jump on an LZ they bury a pair of their wings. I know a couple of men who made their last jump as a member of the ROCK. I wish them well as they move on with their military careers and lives. They will always be ROCK Paratroopers to me. Once ROCK, always ROCK. Right?

Again, my thanks to Steven Van Esch, Fabe Sesma, Bob Remmel, Jenn Cook, MAJ Cook, COL Rohling, LTC Larsen and all of the ROCK Paratroopers for allowing me this once in a lifetime experience as well as your support to me.

AIRBORNE!!!

“SGT Remmel tucked this away in one of the pockets of his ACUs and jumped with it. Just minutes after his jump he handed it to me. There are no words for how special this is.” Leta



Leta's web site:

<http://paratrooperprayers.tripod.com/>



Leta Carruth was named an *Honorary Member* of the 503rd Regiment in recognition of her providing sustained physical, moral and substantive support to the warriors of the 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment from 2007 forward.

By order of the Secretary of the Army.



Loch Sport R.S.L.

~ ANZAC DAY ~



R.S.L. President, A.B. Garcia

At The Going Down Of The Sun I crouched in a shallow trench on the hell of exposed beach.
Steep, rising foothills bare of cover.
A landscape pockmarked with War's inevitable litter, piles of stores, equipment, ammunition and the weird contortions of death sculptured in Australian flesh.

I saw the going down of the sun
on the first Anzac Day.
The chaotic maelstrom of Australia's bleeding.
I fought in the frozen mud of the Somme.
In a blazing destroyer exploding on the North Sea.
I fought on the perimeter at Tobruk.
Crashed in a flaming wreckage
of a fighter in New Guinea.
Lived with the damned in a place called Changi.
Fought in the snow at a place called Korea.
And again in the jungles of Malaya, Borneo,
and South Vietnam.

I was your mate, the kid across the street, the medical student graduate, the mechanic at the corner garage, the biker who brought you the bread, the gardener who cut your lawn, and the clerk who sent your phone bill.

I was a private in the Army, a Naval commander,
an Airforce Bombardier.
No man knows me.
No name marks my Tomb
For I am
every Australian Serviceman.
For I am the UNKNOWN SOLDIER.

I died for a cause I held
just in the service of my land.
That you and yours may say in freedom...

I AM PROUD TO BE AN AUSTRALIAN.

Firstly, on behalf of the Committee of management, I would like to thank everyone for helping make our ANZAC Day such a success.

Our day began with a Gunfire Breakfast, the March and Service followed by a light luncheon and refreshments back at the Sub Branch.

The Loch Sport Restaurant served sixty-two breakfasts and over one-hundred lunches. What an effort by Duncan and Rhonda.

Our Sub Branch bar staff should also be congratulated for serving and looking after our members and guests, thank you.

Thanks also to Wellington Shire, Sergeant Brendan Mitchell and fellow personnel, Cr. Leo O'Brien, Rev. Des Benfield, our Flag Bearers, Flag Marshall, to the Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary, all Committee Members, Peter Marshall and Tracie Bray.

**A.B. Garcia
President
(HHC/2/503d)**



Flag Bearers



**Marching in
Lake Street**



Sergeant Brendan Mitchell



Aussie Speak

Thanks to digger John Arnold, 1RAR, for sending in this primer to help us better understand what Aussies are saying when they speak Down Under.



This will particularly come in handy when we go to the next war, as we know those total bastards will be right by our side. Photos added. Ed

You know you're Australian if...

- * You've made a bong out of your garden hose rather than use it for something illegal such as watering the garden.
- * You understand that the phrase 'a group of women wearing black thongs' refers to footwear and may be less alluring than it sounds.
- * You pronounce Melbourne as 'Mel-bin'.
- * You believe the 'l' in the word 'Australia' is optional.
- * You believe it makes perfect sense for a nation to decorate its highways with large fibreglass bananas, prawns and sheep.
- * You call your best friend 'a total bastard' but someone you really, truly despise is just 'a bit of a bastard'.
- * You think 'Woolloomooloo' is a perfectly reasonable name for a place.
- * You're secretly proud of our killer wildlife.

* You believe it makes sense for a country to have a \$1 coin that's twice as big as its \$2 coin.

* You believe all famous Kiwis are actually Australian, until they stuff up, at which point they again become Kiwis.

* You believe that every important discovery in the world was made by an Australian but then sold off for a pittance.



Australian killer wildlife

* You believe that the more you shorten someone's name the more you like them.

* Whatever your linguistic skills, you find yourself able to order takeaway fluently in every Asian language.

* You understand that 'excuse me' can sound rude, while 'scuse me' is always polite.

* You know what it's like to swallow a fly, on occasion via your nose.

* You know it's not summer until the steering wheel is too hot to handle and a seat belt buckle becomes a pretty good branding iron.

* You've only ever used the words - tops, ripper, sick, mad, rad, sweet - to mean good. And then you place 'bloody' in front of it when you really mean it.



* You say 'no worries' quite often, whether you realise it or not.

* You understand what no wucking furries means.

* You know that some people pronounce Australia like "Straya" and that's ok.

* You know that none of us actually drink Fosters beer, because it tastes like piss. But we let the world think we do. Because we can.



* And you will immediately forward this list to other Australians, here and overseas, realising that only they will understand.

**John Arnold
1RAR**



Reunions of the Airborne Kind



517 PRCT Florida Mini-Reunion, January 14 - 16, 2012, Ramada Hotel & Inn Gateway, Kissimmee, FL.

Contact:

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen

Phn: 813-335-8002

Eml: bverbeck@gmail.com



2012 Currahee Reunion, 3rd Battalion 506th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), May 2 - 5, 2012. Hilton Garden Inn, Columbus, GA

Contact:

Hoyt Bruce Moore, III

Web: www.506infantry.org/reunion.htm



101st Airborne, 2012 Snowbird Reunion. February 15 - 18, 2012. The Doubletree Hotel, Tampa, FL.

Hosted by the 101st Florida Gulf Coast and Sunshine State Chapters.

Contact:

Web: www.101abnfgcc.org



Recon, HHC, 2/503 '66-'67 is having a reunion in Lexington, Kentucky the same days as the 173d Association annual reunion next June. So far, about 12 members have indicated they will attend. Watch this space for details to follow.



82nd Airborne Div., Winter Weekend Getaway, February 24 - 26, 2012, Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa, Hilton Head, SC, hosted by Ben Vandervoort Chapter.

Contact:

Bill Eberle

Phn: 843-682-4171

Eml: airborneben#hargray.com



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See early notice on Pages 20-24.

Contact:

Dave Carmon

Eml: dcarmon@roadrunner.com

Web: www.skysoldier17.com



A Company 2/327, 101st Airborne, Vietnam Veterans 2012 Gathering. April 26 - 28, 2012, The Marten House Hotel, Indianapolis, IN,

Contact:

Dennis Sheridan

Phn: 817-504-1750



Casper Platoon Reunion 2012, June 28 - 30 & July 1, 2012, Hilton San Francisco Financial District, San Francisco, CA

Contact:

Steve Greene

Reunion Chairman

Web: greenaire@mac.com

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



The 2012 173d Reunion

Lexington, KY

June 6 -10, 2012

Hosted By Chapter 17

Room rate 115.00 plus tax per night with Free Parking

New Registration fees:

Sky Soldiers 99.00

Spouses & Guests 75.00

Gold Star 75.00

Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner

The Hyatt is taking reservations now.

Call 800.233.1234

Ask for the 173 Airborne guestroom block or code G-173A.

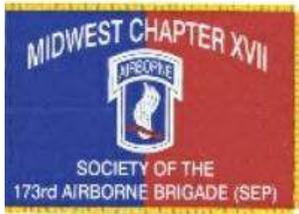
Also use this code when making reservations on-line
at the Lexington-Hyatt website - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Information and Forms will be posted soon at www.skysoldier.org and www.Skysoldier17.com



~ REUNION PROGRAM ~

Hosted by Midwest Chapter 17



June 6 - Wednesday

0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2230 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1800 – 2000 President's Reception @ Jasmine-Franklin

June 7 - Thursday

0700 – 1230 Golf Outing TBA GC
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
1300 – 1600 Operation Corregidor II, Kentucky Theatre

June 8 - Friday

0830 – 1030 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast @ Regency 1
0900 – 1100 Board of Directors Meeting @ Regency 3
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2200 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1000 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
1100 – 1500 Kentucky Veterans Memorial – Frankfort – VFW Lunch

June 9 - Saturday

0830 – 1000 Ladies Brunch @ Bluegrass Pre-function Area
0900 – 1130 General Membership Meeting @ Regency 1&2
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Regency 1 Foyer
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room

Banquet

1800 – 1845 Cocktail Hour @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1845 – 1900 Post Colors/Convocation @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1900 – 2035 Dinner @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2035 – 2115 Speakers & Awards @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2115 Retire the Colors

June 10 Sunday

0800 – 0900 Memorial Service @ Regency 1
1130 Reunion Closing

BE SURE TO ATTEND OPERATION CORREGIDOR II



173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION 2012 REUNION



JUNE 6-10, 2012, LEXINGTON, KY

~ Registration Form ~

Please print. Copy form for additional guest(s)

My Name: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Brigade Unit Served With: _____

Dates served: _____

Registration/Event Fees

(Check boxes)

Per Sky Soldier Association Member \$99.
Per Each Guest. (Number of Guest(s) _____) \$75.
Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner
Per Child or all other extra dinner only guests \$40.
Per Gold Star Family Member \$75.
Per Active duty Soldier (Not on Orders) \$75.
Per Active Duty Soldier on Orders Free
(i.e. Command, Color Guard)
Per Vendor Table \$75.
Ladies Brunch (Number attending _____) Includ
Per player in Golf Tournament (No: _____) \$45

Enclosed is my check for this Total Amount: \$ _____

Please make Check Payable and Mail to:

Midwest Chapter 17
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209

Hotel Reservations:

Hyatt Regency – Lexington, \$115.00 + tax per night.
Reservations: 1-800-233-1234
Request group rate for 173d Airborne Assn. guestroom block or code G-173A. This is also the code to use if making reservations on-line at - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Overflow Hotel:

To be announced

"HISTORY, HORSES & HOOCH"

2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / January 2011 – Issue 36

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OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

Honoring our WWII Paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT

Midwest Chapter 17 is proud to announce we will be inviting paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought throughout the Pacific during WWII to attend next year's 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade. This is *troopers honoring troopers* and is not sanctioned by either the 173d or 503rd Associations. It's a paratrooper thang.

In 2010, at the annual reunion in N. Myrtle Beach, SC hosted by South Carolina Chapter 30, five (5) troopers of the 503rd attended as guests of men of our Brigade and friends of the 173d and 503rd. As honest Abe once said,

“Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure,”

and that's just what we'll be doing in Lexington, honoring these men.

Of the over 3000 men who served with the 503rd during WWII, sadly, less than 100 troopers are still with us. We hope you'll join in not only helping out with the funding (until sufficient funds have been raised), but attending our reunion next June and meeting these troopers personally and attending the WWII interactive presentations.

To date, these Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d and 503rd have made contributions getting us to about 2/3 the way to where we need to be. Our thanks to each of you! *Airborne!!*



Steve Aballa, 2/503

Ron Amyot, 2/503
John Arnold, 1RAR
Jim Baskin, 4/503
Bob Beemer, 2/503
Jerry Berry, 4/503
Pat Bowe, 2/503
Wayne Bowers, 2/503
Jim Brookmiller, 4/503
Bob Bruce, 1/503
Bob Carmichael, 2/503
Chapter 27, Australia
Chapter 30, 173d
Bob Clark, 5th SF
Harry Cleland, 2/503
John Cleland, 173d Bde
Dave Colbert, 2/503
Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP
Terry Davis, 2/503
Bruce Demboski, C/2/503
George Dexter, 2/503
Roger Dick, 2/503
Tom Dooley, 2/503
Jim Dresser, 2/503
Frank Dukes, 2/503
Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn
Pat Feely, B Med
Paul Fisher, 3/503
Craig Ford, 1/503
Joe Franklin, 173d Bde
A.B. Garcia, 2/503
Tony Geishauser, Cowboys
Jim Gettel, 2/503
Johnny Graham, 2/503
Bernie Griffard, 2/503
Larry Hampton, 1/503
Tom Hanson, 3/503
Jerry Hassler, 2/503
Dick Holt, 2/503
Nick Hun, 2/503
Ken Kaplan, 2/503
Ed Kearney, 2/503
Jack Kelley, 2/503
Dave Kies, 2/503
Bill Knapp, 2/503
Gary Kozdron, 1/503
John Kyne, 2/503
Joe Lamb, 2/503
Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503
Joe Logan, 2/503

Roy Lombardo, 2/503
Bob Lucas, 2/503
Richard Martinez, 2/503
Jim Montague, 2/503
Butch Nery, 4/503, N75
Hal Nobles, 3/503
Bill Ostlund, 173d
Jack Owens, 2/503
Larry Paladino, 2/503
Ed Perkins, 2/503
Lou Pincock, 2/503
Jack Price, 2/503
Gary Prisk, 2/503
Lou Pincock, 2/503
Bill Reynolds, 2/503
Jack Ribera, 2/503
Jim Robinson, 2/503
Lee Robinson, 2/503
Graham Rollings, 2/503
Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Bill Shipp, 2/503 N75
Roy Scott, 3/319
Ken Smith, 2/503
Lew Smith, 2/503
Jerry Sopko, 2/503
Larry Speed, 1/503
Jim Stanford, 2/503
George Stapleton, 3/503
Mike Sturges, 2/503
Bob Sweeney, 2/503
Bill Thomas, 2/503
Marc Thurston, 2/503
Alt Turner, 2/503
Steve Vargo, 2/503
Jerry Wiles, B/2/503
Ron Woodley, 2/503
Bill Wyatt, 2/503

We're raising necessary funds to cover the cost associated with inviting between 3 and 5 503rd troopers and their spouses or a family member. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rto173d@cfl.rr.com for details, or use the form on the following page to send in your donation to this worthy effort.





~ OPERATION CORREGIDOR II ~



Honoring our WWII 503rd Paratroopers at 173d Reunion in Lexington

Yes! I am honored to support bringing to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association's annual reunion in Lexington, KY paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought in the Pacific during WWII as guests of our Brigade.

My name: _____ Unit: _____

To help offset the cost for this, enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____.

Please add to note line "503rd Guest Donation" and mail check payable to:

**Midwest Chapter 17
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209**

Note: Your donation, not to exceed \$100., will be used to help defray the cost of hotel rooms, reunion registrations and special gifts to our 503rd PRCT guests on behalf of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep).



L-R: WWII 503rd PRCT troopers who attended the Myrtle Beach Reunion in 2010 as guests of our Brigade: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charlie Hylton, Paul Hinds and John Cleland.



Chuck teaching lyrics to *Blood on the Risers* to 1st Bat's Craig Ford in SC.



Charlie ready to burst out in song before doing a mean Texas 2 Step.



You could hear a pin drop as Chet told of his PLF on *The Rock*.



Honoring those 503rd super troopers at 173d reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC, 2010.



"Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure"

~ President Abraham Lincoln





~ Operation Corregidor II ~

During our 173d reunion next June in Lexington, KY, the Chapter 17 reunion steering committee has secured the *Kentucky Theatre* just a couple blocks from reunion central at the Hyatt Hotel, to serve as site for *Operation Corregidor II*, the interactive meeting with WWII 503rd troopers; *Operation Corregidor I* having been held in N. Myrtle Beach at our 2010 reunion, and *Operation Corregidor* having been held in Corregidor in 1945. This historic building will be ideal for this gathering of paratrooper warriors and their families. Chapter 17 is even providing popcorn and cold drinks!



Publicity stunt for an early “talkie” featuring The Marx Brothers. (Courtesy, University of Kentucky Photo Archives)

More than just a movie house...

The Kentucky Theatre is a familiar Landmark to generations of Lexingtonians. It’s richly ornamented walls and glowing stained glass fixtures have hosted gala events and entertained overflowing crowds. They have also endured hard times and disasters, both natural and manmade. And so it stands today, a true palace of memories, a hall full of comedy, tragedy, drama, adventure, and just plain fun.

We hope you enjoy this brief look at her history and join us soon to continue the tradition by making some memories of your own.

1965

The Sound of Music. Thousands lined up daily to see this summer’s timeless hit.



The present Kentucky Theatre auditorium (by Lee P. Thomas)



October, 1921
Construction plans announced. The Builder, Lafayette Amusement Company offered \$20 in gold to name Lexington’s “palatial new photoplay house”.

The winner, of course, was the “Kentucky.”

April 24, 1927
Enter the “talkies”. In a major marketing coup, the Kentucky was the first to introduce Warner Brothers’ vitaphone sound films to Lexington.



Operation Corregidor II coming soon to the Kentucky



The concession area (by Raymond Adams)



INCOMING!



~ Unbelievable Sad News ~

Another sad note from the Col. Stapleton family. Mrs. Lynell Stapleton was killed in a South Carolina auto accident while enroute to her husband's funeral that was to be conducted at West Point. His son Greg, who is Chief of Training at the Fire Training Academy in Lexington, KY, is considering visiting with members of the 3rd Batt during the Herd Reunion to be held in Lexington 6-10 Jun 2012.

Mason Branstetter
HHC/D/E/3/503d

~ Still Wondering ~

Here is a pic of me examining enemy medical supplies at a jungle hospital sometime in early spring 1969 around the Bao Loc area. Notice the flag in background. I carried that with me until I was wounded in September along with SSGT Wendell Emmertson and Company medic Gus Ekinovich. I was a medic with LT Terry Rodenhaver's November Platoon, Bravo 3rd Batt. I believe the photo was taken by LT Rob Linscott our F.O. at the time. It was around this time that I was called upon to treat a wounded VC. When I reached the scene it was obvious to me the man was dead but his body was still heaving. As I pulled his body out of the hole in the middle of the jungle there was also another person in the hole, it was a six or seven year old girl attached to him in a sling of some kind. The last I ever heard was she might have been adopted by an officer. Over the years I have often wondered what became of her. Her picture was in the Herd newspaper with Capt. Traut. If anyone up the rank ladder knows anything about her I would appreciate knowing. Thank you much.

Richard "Doc" Guilbeault
HHC/B/3/503d
flatlander173rd@yahoo.com



Doc and his flag.

Note: Paul asked we include this final notice for Battalion coins.

Last Opportunity to Order Your Battalion Coin

I am introducing you to 4 coins I did to honor the service of the combat paratroopers of all 4 Battalions in the Brigade. AVAILABLE NOW.

They are \$10. per coin plus \$2.50 for shipping of one or two coins. Shipping for 3 or more coins is \$4.50 in U.S.

If interested please pass on to your readership the availability of these coins. I only produced 100 of the 1, 3, 4 Battalion coins, and 200 of the 2nd Batt coins. After they are gone I am done.

After expenses ALL profits are donated to the 173d Memorial and to a local Food Bank. ALL PROFITS are given away.

Please send a note indicating which coin(s) you are ordering and include your check payable to:

Paul R. Fisher, LTC (Ret)
3/503d
81 Oak Lane
Eatontown, NJ 07724

If you have any questions please call me:

Cell (908) 489-0366
Home (732) 542-1598

1/503d



2/503d



3/503d



4/503d



(Photos approximately 1/3 of actual size)



A Missing Sky Soldier

My name is Matt Kristoff and I work with the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I posted a message on one of the 173d message boards, but believe contacting you at the newsletter would probably have more chance of success.

I'm retired Army (Desert Storm vet), and am assigned to our section working Vietnam losses. One of my cases is PFC Thomas C. Van Campen. He was with B Company 2/503d, and was on a patrol on 24 June 1965. He became separated from the patrol, and was then hit by sniper fire and the unit was unable to recover his body.

Analysts from our office work hand-in-hand with the field teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) in Hawaii -- those are the guys who actually get boots-on-the-ground in country. We have several teams in country every year. But to justify going to a specific area to research a case, we need leads. Some of our very best leads come from the veterans.

I would very much like to speak with veterans of B Co, 2/503d who were on that patrol on 24 June 1965. If you have an appropriate section of your newsletter to print this appeal, it would be very appreciated. Please have people contact me at: Matthew.Kristoff@osd.mil, or by phone at: (703) 699-1240.

Thank You, and Welcome Home!

Matt

Note: Immediately upon receiving this note from Matt, we put him in touch with Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret) CO B/2/503 during that time, and men of the Bravo Bulls from 1965. We asked Matt to inform us on the results of his search so we can share the news with our guys. Roy stated he is making contact with Matt, and the following message was also sent to him by Jerry Nissley of Bravo Co. Ed

Hi Matt,

I'm not sure how much help I can be to you in your search for Van Campen, but I'll tell you what I know... and what I've heard. The "Jungle Telegraph" was typically more false rumor than fact. The guy who can give you the real story is Roy Lombardo. As Smitty mentioned, he was our CO at the time, and lead our mission that day in June, 1965.

I didn't know Van Campen personally. In my short three-month assignment with B/2/503, I was a mortar gunner. At Base Camp my squad staffed a perimeter machine gun position, physically separated from most of the balance of the company.

On that mission in late June, I marched with the column carrying a 60mm mortar. We were choppered into War Zone "D". I believe it was mid-day when word got out that a three-man M-60 machine gun crew had gotten separated from the company. I was told that they had come upon a couple of huts in a small clearing. Two men set up the machine gun to cover Van Campen while he moved forward to recon the huts. Viet Cong then opened fire, wounding Van Campen.

While one teammate provided cover fire with the M-60, the other moved forward to assist Van Campen back to the gun position. They then grabbed their gear and tried to carry Van Campen from the area, being pursued by the Viet Cong. The VC were gaining fast, and Van Campen apparently talked the other two (I wish I could remember their names) into concealing him in some heavy vegetation while they tried unimpeded (they were carrying him, apparently) to hook up with the company and return for him.

Once the two soldiers regained contact with the company, we remained in position while sending out patrols to find Van Campen. We remained in the area until very late in the day, but finally had to hustle to the LZ for extraction, without Van Campen. Capt. Lombardo got permission from Brigade to return the following day with the company and perform a search mission specifically for Van Campen. That effort, as thorough as it was, also proved fruitless. Huts were found and burned, but no VC contacted.

In August, I was reassigned from B/2/503 to D/16th Armor as a gunner on a mounted 4.2" mortar. It was a few months later when I was told that in July, the web gear and belongings of Van Campen (apparently verified by serial numbers on munitions) was found several kilometers from our original position on 24 June. I had heard later that his mutilated body had been discovered. Well, that apparently is not the case either. I had just discussed this issue with some friends at our Veterans Day Reunion in Las Vegas, and others had heard similar rumors. I am deeply saddened to learn that Van Campen is indeed MIA. I pray for him and his family, and for a successful search to recover his remains.

I wish I could be of more help to you. But as I mentioned, Roy Lombardo could give you specifics as to our location and our situation. I was pretty far down on the food chain, and like so many others, simply followed orders and followed the guy in front of me until the schidt hit the fan. Then it was teamwork...cover yourself and your buddy and destroy the enemy. I'm sure you know the drill.

(continued...)



I sincerely hope your search is successful. I really appreciate the diligent efforts to locate Van Campen and so many other MIAs. It must be rewarding to successfully close the cover on MIA victims. If you need to contact me for any reason, please feel free. I would really like to know the whole story once it's known. Like I say, the "facts" I recall and learned may be far from fact. I know that all of my Bravo Bulls buddies would like to know as well. Please contact us when you know the rest of the story. It would be a big help to us all.

Best of luck to you in your search.
Airborne ATW,

Jerry Nissley
B/2/503d

Note: Jerry has since learned it is likely Thomas was KIA before his body was hidden in the brush. Ed

Thomas Charles Van Campen
Private First Class
B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173D ABN BDE,
US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV
Army of the United States
Oroville, California
December 28, 1945 to June 24, 1965
THOMAS C. VAN CAMPEN is on the Wall
at Panel 02E Line 017



About DPMO

"Keeping the Promise", "Fulfill their Trust" and "No one left behind" are several of many mottos that refer to the efforts of the Department of Defense to recover those who became missing while serving our nation.

More than 83,000 Americans are missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the 1991 Gulf War. Hundreds of Defense Department men and women -- both military and civilian -- work in organizations around the world as part of DoD's personnel recovery and personnel accounting communities. They are all dedicated to the single mission of finding and bringing our missing personnel home. The mission requires expertise in archival research, intelligence collection and analysis, field investigations and recoveries, and scientific analysis.

Southeast Asia Analysts Case Coordination Conference

On November 17, analysts from DPMO's Southeast Asia (SEA) Division and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) participated in a Video-Tele-Conference (VTC) to review 165 cases of personnel loss, share research, and come to an analytic consensus as to what to do next on each case. The team identified recommended leads for each case during the four-hour VTC. Through this coordination process specific leads for JPAC field teams were selected, and information to support site surveys and excavations was shared. These analytical meetings ensure that the accounting community is working as a team towards the same goal - the fullest possible accounting of our service members lost from the Vietnam War.



Recently Accounted For

The families of these service members recently were briefed by their respective Casualty or Mortuary Offices. The highlighted names are linked to a more detailed news release on that serviceman's identification.

Pfc. Maximo A. Troche, U.S. Army, I Company, 3rd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, was lost on Feb. 4, 1951, during a battle near Yangpyeong, South Korea, and died as a POW in 1951. His remains were identified on Oct. 21, 2011.

Staff Sgt. John J. Bono, U.S. Army Air Forces, 327th Bomb Squadron, 92nd Bomb Group, was lost on Sep. 13, 1944, when his B-17G was shot down near Neustaedt, Germany. His remains were identified on Sep. 27, 2011.

(continued...)



Sgt. 1st Class Benny D. Rogers, U.S. Army, I Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, was lost on Nov. 2, 1950, during a battle south of Unsan, North Korea. His remains were identified on Sep. 26, 2011.

Staff Sgt. John E. Hogan, U.S. Army Air Forces was lost on Sept. 13, 1944, when his B-17G Flying Fortress bomber crashed near the German town of Neustaedt-on-the-Werra. His remains were identified on Sep. 17, 2011.

Staff Sgt. Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz, U.S. Army Air Forces, 347th Bombardment Squadron, 99th Bombardment Group, was lost on May 18, 1944, when the B-17G he was aboard crashed in Yugoslavia. His remains were identified on Sep. 15, 2011 .

2nd Lt. Hilding R. Johnson, U.S. Army Air Forces, 9th Air Force, 366th Fighter Group, 391st Fighter Squadron, was lost on Dec. 25, 1944, when his P-47D Thunderbolt crashed while he was attacking enemy targets near St. Vith, Belgium. His remains were identified on Sep. 15, 2011.

Pfc. Jimmie J. Gaitan, U.S. Army, Clearing Company, 2nd Medical Battalion, attached to the 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, was lost on Feb. 13, 1951, and died in POW Camp 1 near Changsong, North Korea. His remains were identified on Sep. 13, 2011.

A complete listing of recently accounted-for servicemembers can be found on the [Recently Accounted-For](#) page of our web site:

http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/accounted_for/

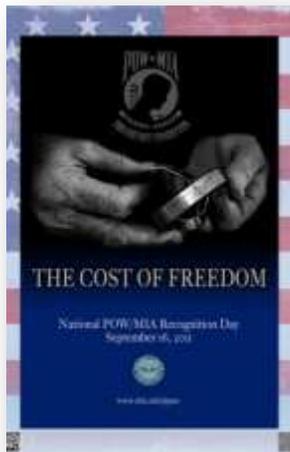
Lest we forget....

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

The President issues a proclamation commemorating the observances and reminding the nation of those Americans who have sacrificed so much for their country.

Observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities -- it is traditionally observed on the third Friday in September each year.

This observance is one of six days throughout the year that Congress has mandated the flying of the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag. The others are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.



The flag is to be flown at major military installations, national cemeteries, all post offices, VA medical facilities, the World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the official offices of the secretaries of state, defense and veterans affairs, the director of the selective service system and the White House.

A Pentagon ceremony for National POW/MIA Recognition Day was held on Friday, Sept. 16, 2011. This ceremony featured troops from each of the military services.

History of the National League of Families' POW/MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, *Florida Times-Union*, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations members states. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.



On March 9, 1989, an official League flag, which flew over the White House on 1988 National POW/MIA

Recognition Day, was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will stand as a powerful symbol of national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

(continued....)



On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "*as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation*".

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982.

With passage of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act during the first term of the 105th Congress, the League's POW/MIA flag will fly each year on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day on the grounds or in the public lobbies of major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all Federal national cemeteries, the national Korean War Veterans Memorial, the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House, the United States Postal Service post offices and at the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veteran's Affairs, and Director of the Selective Service System.

Source: 1998 National League of POW/MIA Families

Whodat?

Who is this strack 2/503d Sky Soldier?



Agent Orange

Agent Orange is the code name for one of the herbicides and defoliants used by the U.S. military as part of its herbicidal warfare program, *Operation Ranch Hand*, during the



U.S. Army Huey helicopter spraying Agent Orange over Vietnamese agricultural land

Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. Vietnam estimates 400,000 people were killed or maimed, and 500,000 children born with birth defects.

A 50:50 mixture of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, it was manufactured for the U.S. Department of Defense primarily by Monsanto Corporation and Dow Chemical. The 2,4,5-T used to produce Agent Orange was later discovered to be contaminated with 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzodioxin, an extremely toxic dioxin compound. It was given its name from the color of the orange-striped 55 US gallon (208 L) barrels in which it was shipped, and was by far the most widely used of the so-called "Rainbow Herbicides".

During the Vietnam War, between 1962 and 1971, the United States military sprayed nearly 20,000,000 US gallons (75,700,000 L) of chemical herbicides and defoliants in Vietnam, eastern Laos and parts of Cambodia, as part of Operation Ranch Hand. The program's goal was to defoliate forested and rural land, depriving guerrillas of cover; another goal was to induce forced draft urbanization, destroying the ability of peasants to support themselves in the countryside, and forcing them to flee to the U.S. dominated cities, thus depriving the guerrillas of their rural support base and food supply.

The US began to target food crops in October 1962, primarily using Agent Blue. In 1965, 42 percent of all herbicide spraying was dedicated to food crops. Rural-to-urban migration rates dramatically increased in South Vietnam, as peasants escaped the destruction and famine in the countryside by fleeing to the U.S.-dominated cities. The urban population in South Vietnam nearly tripled: from 2.8 million people in 1958, to 8 million by 1971. The rapid flow of people led to a fast-paced and uncontrolled urbanization; an estimated 1.5 million people were living in Saigon slums, while many South Vietnamese elites and U.S. personnel lived in luxury.



~ This Month in History, 1965-1975 ~

January 20, 1965

Lyndon B. Johnson takes the oath as president and declares, "We can never again stand aside, prideful in isolation. Terrific dangers and troubles that we once called 'foreign' now constantly live among us..."



January 27, 1965

General Khanh seizes full control of South Vietnam's government.

January 27, 1965

Johnson aides, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, send a memo to the President stating that America's limited military involvement in Vietnam is not succeeding, and that the U.S. has reached a 'fork in the road' in Vietnam and must either soon escalate or withdraw.

January 1965

Operation Game Warden begins U.S. Navy river patrols on South Vietnam's 3000 nautical miles of inland waterways.

January 30, 1965

State funeral of Winston Churchill



2/503d Bn CO LTC George Dexter and RTO Tom Conley on 2 Jan 66 during Op Marauder

January 1-8, 1966

Operation MARAUDER, Hua Nghia Province. The New year began with the 173d deploying from Bien Hoa to the swamps and canals in the Plain of Reeds, west of Saigon. Both the 1/503rd and the 2/503rd air assaulted into hot LZs; but the Vietcong found that the US Paratroopers were not so easy to push around. 2/503 reacted strongly on the hot LZ, counter-attacked, outflanked the enemy and killed at least 114 VC by body count and captured most of the important documents of the VC 506th Battalion. 1/RAR being airlifted into adjacent positions along the Oriental River in the Plain of Reeds area of the Mekong Delta. The next morning, the 2/503rd fought through a series of fortified enemy positions using air, artillery and tear gas to rout the VC. 326 VC suspects were rounded up along with large numbers killed in the actions decimating the VC 267th battalion.



An Australian sapper inspects a Viet Cong tunnel discovered during Operation Crimp, South Vietnam 1966.

January 7-14, 1966

Operation CRIMP, Binh Buong, West of Hobo Woods. The Australians made contact first, and after heavy fighting, the RAR and the 173d unmasked an extensive set of underground tunnels, captured several 12.7mm antiaircraft guns, killing over 128 VC and capturing another 91 while detaining 509 suspects. Operation CRIMP began on January 7, 1966 with the 1st Infantry Division being airlifted southwest of the Iron Triangle to Phu Loi. The mission was to destroy the Viet Cong Military Region political-military headquarters.

(continued...)



The 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment deployed as the lead element of the 173d Airborne Brigade and quickly made contact with the enemy and captured many weapons including four new 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns. The 173d Airborne Brigade operation in the Ho Bo Woods resulted in close to 130 VC killed, 90 captured and well over 500 suspects detained. A major operation, Crimp, the biggest American assault of the Vietnam conflict, had discovered what the French and Vietnamese knew years ago and could do nothing about a modern catacombs that took years to build. Paratroopers and infantrymen pushing about 25 miles north of Saigon failed to entrap Viet Cong insurgents who have lived there *in comparative comfort and safety underground* but they did find *what one soldier described as the New York subway*. "As we moved forward, we saw one trench and tunnel after another. Some of the trenches were at least 6 to 12 feet deep. Some of the tunnels were 1,640 feet long. There were side tunnels leading from the main ones. There were enough holes in the ground to house a division. The soil is hard clay, real hard. It just about puts a granite roof on the tunnel complex. The whole thing runs northwest toward the Cambodia border, probably stretching 35 or 40 miles. It was empty. Tear gas attacks only brought out some women and children and an old man. The complex is so built that it is easy to imagine the Viet Cong moving a lot of people a long distance without ever being exposed to attack for very long. We could see the Viet Cong from time to time but they couldn't be caught. They leaped into ordinary holes but the holes always had a corridor to a main tunnel and an exit. It's like trying to catch moles that have and a safe exit." To destroy the entire complex would take a month and enough explosives to dynamite a mountain. But that's what the American force is determined to do. This operation revealed the extensive tunnel complex in the Iron Triangle and the Cu Chi area. Cu Chi in Hau Nghia Province west of the Iron Triangle is one of the most heavily fortified enemy redoubts in the Saigon area.



Photo taken in 2001 of wall outside cemetery in Cu Chi cemetery of "Big Noses" battling VC. They called us Big Noses. See "U.S." on helmet of soldier pointing.

Its population, with the exception of a number of Catholic hamlets, was controlled by the VC. "Over time we found the tunnels contained headquarters and command and control facilities, hospitals, weapons factories, living and training facilities, kitchens, wells, caches of food and supplies, air-raid and bomb shelters, and even latrines and graveyards." The tunnels would continue to be a problem and serve as a staging area for the attack on Saigon during the January 1968 Tet Offensive. The problem would not be solved until 1970 when B-52s, using ground penetrating delayed-fused bombs, destroyed the tunnels by creating 30 foot deep craters in the laterite clay.

January 12, 1966

During his State of the Union address before Congress, President Johnson comments that the war in Vietnam is unlike America's previous wars, *"Yet, finally, war is always the same. It is young men dying in the fullness of their promise. It is trying to kill a man that you do not even know well enough to hate...therefore, to know war is to know that there is still madness in this world."*

January 17, 1966

Carl Brashear, the first African American United States diver, is involved in an accident during the recovery of a lost H-bomb which results in the amputation of his leg.



Chief Brashear
1931 - 2006

January 28 – March 6, 1966
Operation Masher was a combined U.S., ARVN, and ROKA operation that began on January 28, 1966. The name "Operation Masher" was changed to "Operation White Wing", because the name was deemed too crude for 'nation-building'.

January 31, 1966

Citing Hanoi's failure to respond to his peace overtures during the 37 day bombing pause, President Johnson announces bombing of North Vietnam will resume.

January 31, 1966

Senator Robert F. Kennedy criticizes President Johnson's decision to resume the bombing, stating that the U.S. may be headed *"on a road from which there is no turning back, a road that leads to catastrophe for all mankind."* His comments infuriate the President.

(continued...)



January 2, 1967

Operation Bolo occurs as 28 U.S. Air Force F-4 Phantom jets lure North Vietnamese MiG-21 interceptors into a dogfight over Hanoi and shoot down seven of them. This leaves only nine MiG-21s operational for the North Vietnamese. American pilots, however, are prohibited by Washington from attacking MiG air bases in North Vietnam.

December 7, 1966 - 5 January 5, 1967

Operation CANARY/ DUCK, Phu My to Bear Cat. The 173d conducted a two phase highway security operation along Highway 15 from Phu My to Long Binh and from Phu My to Bear Cat for elements of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and the 9th Infantry Division.



American Soldier Canvassing Tunnel by Flashlight (Original Caption): Iron Triangle, South Vietnam. Flashlight in hand and pistol at the ready, Cpl. Charles Patchin, 23, of Auburn, New York, a member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, searches a Viet Cong tunnel which his unit came across. The brigade is taking part in operation Cedar Falls, a drive to rid the Iron Triangle of the Viet Cong who have controlled it for years. (Corbis/Images)

January 5-25, 1967

Operation NIAGARA/ CEDAR FALLS Cau Dinh Jungle Iron Triangle. With most of the other units occupying blocking positions, the 173d's three infantry battalions swept and cleared the Iron Triangle locating and destroying small troop concentrations and tunnel systems. The 51st Chemical Detachment, 173d Engineer Company, as well as infantry volunteer "tunnel rat" teams, fearlessly explored the VC tunnels, bringing

out large caches of weapons and supplies and VC captives. The combined effort resulted in over 1,000 tons of rice and 200 crew-served and individual weapons captured. Sixty-five enemy were taken prisoner of war; many were routed out of the extensive tunnel and bunker systems. The Brigade left 85 enemy dead in the rice paddies and jungle of the Triangle. "E" Troop of the 17th Cavalry alone accounted for 73 VC killed in action.

January 8-26, 1967

Operation Cedar Falls occurs. It is the largest combined offensive to date and involves 16,000 American and 14,000 South Vietnamese soldiers clearing out Viet Cong from the 'Iron Triangle' area 25 miles northwest of Saigon. The Viet Cong choose not to fight and instead melt away into the jungle. Americans then uncover an extensive network of tunnels and for the first time use 'tunnel rats,' the nickname given to specially trained volunteers who explore the maze of tunnels. After the American and South Vietnamese troops leave the area, Viet Cong return and rebuild their sanctuary. This pattern is repeated throughout the war as Americans utilize 'in-and-out' tactics in which troops arrive by helicopters, secure an area, then depart by helicopters.

January 10, 1967

U.N. Secretary-General U Thant expresses doubts that Vietnam is essential to the security of the West. On this same day, during his State of the Union address before Congress, President Johnson once again declares "We will stand firm in Vietnam."

January 14, 1967

The New York Times reports that the U.S. Army is conducting secret germ warfare experiments.

January 23, 1967

Senator J. William Fulbright publishes *The Arrogance of Power* a book critical of American war policy in Vietnam advocating direct peace talks between the South Vietnamese government and the Viet Cong. By this time, Fulbright and President Johnson are no longer on speaking terms. Instead, the President uses the news media to deride Fulbright, Robert Kennedy, and a growing number of critics in Congress as "nervous Nellies" and "sunshine patriots."

January 30 – February 16, 1967

Operation BIG SPRINGS War Zone D. Twenty-six base camps were discovered in "D" Zone, and enemy troops were often encountered during the search of these camps by the 173d. Brigade elements located and destroyed over 1,000 bunkers, 78 huts, more than 24 tons of rice and 24 weapons. Brigade ground units with air support accounted for 79 Viet Cong dead.

(continued....)



January 5, 1968

Operation Niagara I to map NVA positions around Khe Sanh begins.

January 14, 1968

The Green Bay Packers win *Super Bowl II*.



North Vietnamese artillery impacts Khe Sanh

January 21, 1968

20,000 NVA troops under the command of Gen. Giap attack the American air base at Khe Sanh. A 77 day siege begins as 5000 U.S. Marines in the isolated outpost are encircled. The siege attracts enormous media attention back in America, with many comparisons made to the 1954 Battle of Dien Bien Phu in which the French were surrounded then defeated. *"I don't want any damn Dinbinfoo,"* an anxious President Johnson tells Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Earle Wheeler. As Johnson personally sends off Marine reinforcements, he states *"...the eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh..."* Johnson issues presidential orders to the Marines to hold the base and demands a guarantee "signed in blood" from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that they will succeed. Operation Niagara II then begins a massive aerial supply effort to the besieged Marines along with heavy B-52 bombardment of NVA troop positions. At the peak of the battle, NVA soldiers are hit round-the-clock every 90 minutes by groups of three B-52s which drop over 110,000 tons of bombs during the siege, the heaviest bombardment of a small area in the history of warfare.



Johnson after Tet

January 31, 1968

The turning point of the war occurs as 84,000 Viet Cong guerrillas aided by NVA troops launch the Tet Offensive attacking a hundred cities and towns

throughout South Vietnam. The surprise offensive is closely observed by American TV news crews in Vietnam which film the U.S. embassy in Saigon being attacked by 17 Viet Cong commandos, along with bloody scenes from battle areas showing American soldiers under fire, dead and wounded. The graphic color film footage is then quickly relayed back to the states for broadcast on nightly news programs. Americans at home thus have a front row seat in their living rooms to the Viet Cong/NVA assaults against their fathers, sons and brothers, ten thousand miles away. *"The whole thing stinks, really,"* says a Marine under fire at Hue after more than 100 Marines are killed.

January 16, 1968 - 31 January 31, 1969

An Khe Operation WALKER, 173d Airborne Brigade.

September 19, 1967 - January 31, 1968

Operation BOLLING 1 Tuy Hoa / Phu Hiep. The 2/503rd along with A/3/319th returned to the coastal area for a short time to regroup and refit its units with men and equipment while conducting patrols in their TAO. A/3/319th returned to the Dak To area after a short time.

January 31 - March 7, 1968

In the Battle for Saigon during Tet, 35 NVA and Viet Cong battalions are defeated by 50 battalions of American and Allied troops that had been positioned to protect the city on a hunch by Lt. Gen. Fred C. Weyand, a veteran of World War II in the Pacific. Nicknamed the *"savior of Saigon,"* Weyand had sensed the coming attack, prepared his troops, and on February 1 launched a decisive counter-attack against the Viet Cong at Tan Son Nhut airport thus protecting nearby MACV and South Vietnamese military headquarters from possible capture.

January 31 - March 2, 1968

In the Battle for Hue during Tet, 12,000 NVA and Viet Cong troops storm the lightly defended historical city, then begin systematic executions of over 3000 "enemies of the people" including South Vietnamese during operations, government officials, captured South Vietnamese officers, and Catholic priests. South Vietnamese troops and three U.S. Marine battalions counter-attack and engage in the heaviest fighting of the entire Tet Offensive.



Marine gets his wounds treated in Hue City, 1968

(continued...)



They retake the old imperial city, house by house, street by street, aided by American air and artillery strikes. On February 24, U.S. Marines occupy the Imperial Palace in the heart of the citadel and the battle soon ends with a North Vietnamese defeat. American losses are 142 Marines killed and 857 wounded, 74 U.S. Army killed and 507 wounded. South Vietnamese suffer 384 killed and 1830 wounded. NVA killed are put at over 5000.

January 1, 1969

Henry Cabot Lodge, former American ambassador to South Vietnam, is nominated by President-elect Nixon to be the senior U.S negotiator at the Paris peace talks.

January 12, 1969

Super Bowl III: The New York Jets of the American Football League defeat the heavily favored Baltimore Colts of the National Football League 16-7.



American Football League New York Jets quarterback Joe Namath gives his father, who is wearing an Orange Bowl hat, a big hug in the Jets' crowded dressing room on Jan. 12, 1969. Namath led his underdog team to a 16 to 7 win over the National Football League champion Baltimore Colts in the Super Bowl III game in Miami, Fla. (AP Photo)

January 20, 1969

Richard M. Nixon is inaugurated as the 37th U.S. President and declares "...the greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker. This honor now beckons America..." He is the fifth President coping with Vietnam and had successfully campaigned on a pledge of "peace with honor."

January 22, 1969

Operation Dewey Canyon, the last major operation by U.S. Marines begins in the Da Krong valley.

January 25, 1969

Paris peace talks open with the U.S., South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the Viet Cong all in attendance.

March 30, 1968 - January 31, 1969

Operation COCHISE Bong Son.

January 15, 1970

The final military units from the Philippines, 1st Philippines Civic Action Force, leave South Vietnam.

January 21, 1970

Pan American Airways offers the first commercially scheduled 747 service from John F. Kennedy International Airport to London Heathrow Airport.

April 15, 1969 - January 1, 1971

Operation WASHINGTON GREEN, Binh Dinh Province. April 1, 1970 3rd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment continued operations in Area of Operations Rock with negative contact. At 3:35 a.m. LZ Uplift received one incoming 82mm mortar round. At 4:45 a.m. Company A was placed on 30 minute standby by 173d. Between 4:35 a.m. and 5:05 a.m. LZ Uplift took 14 incoming 82mm rounds. A Flaeship and Gunship were called in and expended all ordinance with unknown results. Total U.S. casualties were 29 WIA. Company B's 3rd Platoon found one .50 caliber ammunition can at BR 839796 with bandages and methiolate belonging to one male. Also found were unknown-type batteries (C type), U.S.-type stationary and assorted documents. LZ Uplift went on red alert status later in morning due to enemy activity. LZ English and LZ Bits were mortared.

January 1, 1971 - April 21, 1971

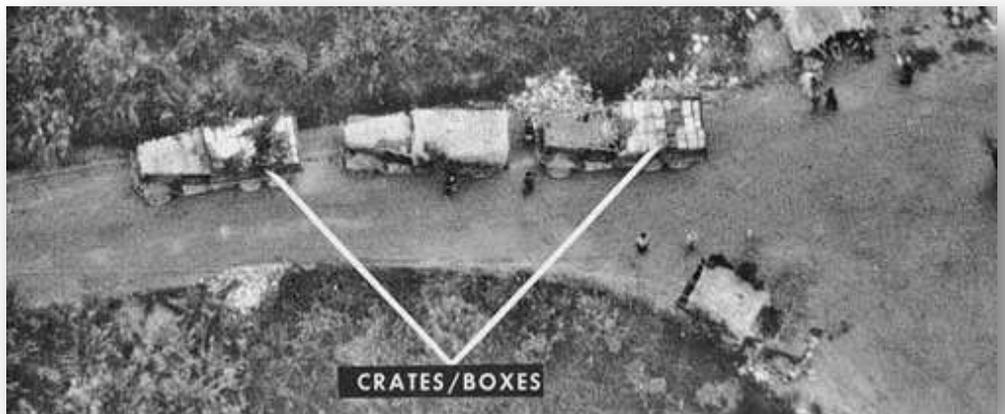
Operation GREENE LIGHTNING, Binh Dinh Province. The 173d Airborne Brigade conducted its 52nd operation, Operation Greene Lightning, in Binh Dinh Province.

January 4, 1971

President Nixon announces "the end is in sight."

January 19, 1971

U.S. fighter-bombers launch heavy air strikes against NVA supply camps in Laos and Cambodia.



Aerial reconnaissance photo of North Vietnamese trucks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

(continued...)



January 21, 1971

In Los Angeles, Charles Manson and three female "Family" members are found guilty of the 1969 Tate-LaBianca murders

January 30-April 6, 1971

Operation Lam Son 719, an all-South Vietnamese ground offensive, occurs as 17,000 South Vietnamese soldiers attack 22,000 NVA inside Laos in an attempt to sever the Ho Chi Minh trail. Aided by heavy U.S. artillery and air strikes, along with American helicopter lifts, South Vietnamese troops advance to their first objective but then stall thus allowing the NVA time to bring in massive troop reinforcements. By battle's end, 40,000 NVA pursue 8000 South Vietnamese survivors back across the border. The South Vietnamese suffer 7682 casualties, nearly half the original force. The U.S. suffers 215 killed, over 100 helicopters lost, and over 600 damaged while supporting the offensive. NVA losses are estimated up to 20,000 as a result of the intense American bombardment. Also among those killed was *Life* magazine photographer Larry Burrows who had been working in Vietnam for ten years. Although an upbeat President Nixon declares after the battle that "*Vietnamization has succeeded*," the failed offensive indicates true Vietnamization of the war may be difficult to achieve.



An assembly of ARVN Rangers prior to commencement of Operation Lam Son 719

January 5, 1972

From San Clemente, President Richard Nixon announced that the United States would develop the space shuttle as the next phase of the American space program, with 5.5 billion dollars allocated to the first reusable spacecraft. "*It would transform the space frontier of the 1970s into familiar territory*," said Nixon, "*easily accessible for human endeavor of the 1980s and 1990s.*"

January 25, 1972

President Nixon announces a proposed eight point peace plan for Vietnam and also reveals that Kissinger has been secretly negotiating with the North Vietnamese. However, Hanoi rejects Nixon's peace overture.

January 1, 1973

CBS sells the New York Yankees for \$10 million to a 12-person syndicate led by George Steinbrenner (3.2 million dollars more than CBS bought the Yankees for).

January 8, 1973

Kissinger and Le Duc Tho resume negotiations in Paris.



U.S. Presidential Adviser Henry A. Kissinger shakes hands with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho as they meet outside the communist-owned villa in suburban Gif-sur-Yvette near Paris. They are meeting in new and possibly the final round of talks aimed at ending the Vietnam cease-fire violations. (UPI photo)

January 9, 1973

All remaining differences are resolved between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. President Thieu, once again threatened by Nixon with a total cut-off of American aid to South Vietnam, now unwillingly accepts the peace agreement, which still allows North Vietnamese troops to remain in South Vietnam. Thieu labels the terms "*tantamount to surrender*" for South Vietnam.

January 23, 1973

President Nixon announces that an agreement has been reached which will "*end the war and bring peace with honor.*"

January 27, 1973

The Paris Peace Accords are signed by the U.S., North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Viet Cong. Under the terms, the U.S. agrees to immediately halt all military activities and withdraw all remaining military personnel within 60 days. The North Vietnamese agree to an immediate cease-fire and the release of all American POWs within 60 days. An estimated 150,000 North Vietnamese soldiers presently in South Vietnam are allowed to remain. Vietnam is still divided. South Vietnam is considered to be one country with two governments, one led by President Thieu, the other led by Viet Cong, pending future reconciliation.

(continued....)



January 27, 1973

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announces the draft is ended in favor of voluntary enlistment.

January 27, 1973

The last American soldier to die in combat in Vietnam, Lt. Col. William B. Nolde, is killed.

William B. Nolde was killed by shell fire at An Loc eleven hours before the cessation of all hostilities in accordance with the Paris Peace Accords.



William Benedict Nolde

Colonel

ADV TEAM 47, 3RD REG ASSIST CMD (TRAC),
MACV ADVISORS, MACV

Army of the United States

Menominee, Michigan

August 8, 1929 to January 27, 1973

WILLIAM B NOLDE is on the Wall
at Panel 01W Line 112

January 19, 1974

The Battle of the Paracel Islands was an engagement fought between the naval forces of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) in the Paracel Islands.

January 19, 1974

The UCLA men's basketball team sees its 88-game winning streak end at the hands of Notre Dame.

January 8, 1975

NVA general staff plan for the invasion of South Vietnam by 20 divisions is approved by North Vietnam's Politburo. By now, the Soviet-supplied North Vietnamese Army is the fifth largest in the world. It anticipates a two year struggle for victory. But in reality, South Vietnam's forces will collapse in only 55 days.

January 14, 1975

Testifying before Congress, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger states that the U.S. is not living up to its earlier promise to South Vietnam's President Thieu of "severe retaliatory action" in the event North Vietnam violated the Paris peace treaty.

January 21, 1975

During a press conference, President Ford states the U.S. is unwilling to re-enter the war.

January 24, 1975

Larry Fine, actor (3 Stooges), dies at 72.

[Source: Many of the details presented here are from www.historyplace.com, photos added]

IF

By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run -
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man my son!

A poem for my main man, Aidan Lewis (Smittytoo) Smith and my main lady, Sofia Danielle (Smitty) Smith and all our little main men and main ladies. Ed



RTO Smitty



Paratrooper Smittytoo



Thanks to Jim Strickland of VA Watchdog dot Org, the current issue of our newsletter will now appear on their website.



About VAWatchdog

VAWatchdog dot Org was the brainchild of Larry Scott. It opened in 2005.

Larry's goals and the mission of the VAWatchdog was simple; he set out to provide veterans with important news and benefits information that weren't being broadcast anywhere else.



Larry Scott

While there are many veteran-centric sites on the Internet, Larry saw that too many of them were populated with "experts" who remained anonymous as they gave out information about what veterans should or shouldn't do. Much of this information veterans were being fed was incorrect. Rumors and hype were the standard and Larry decided to avoid all that. He published facts that were supported by evidence.

I joined forces with Larry in 2006. I was appealing my claims with VA, unemployed and unable to work. I'd started blogging and teaching myself how to build web sites while I waited on the VA to make a decision on my claim. I was unhappy with the process and even more disillusioned with the Veterans Service Organization that (mis)represented me.

I wrote to Larry seeking his advice. Not long after that we established a friendship via our email communications. Larry read some of my writing and invited me to send him a column about how to seek benefits.

In 2007, we started a partnership that lasts to this day. I wrote "Jim's Mailbag", a popular Q&A feature published twice each week. As Larry became busier with the politics behind VA and the workings of Congress, I was point man for benefits issues.

The Fine Print...Please Read!

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Jim Strickland

Email: jim912@gmail.com

Fax VAWatchdog dot Org: 1-888-658-5058

Note

The web site of **VAWatchdog dot org** offers a wealth of information of interest and importance to vets, including, but certainly not limited to news about:

- Agent Orange**
- Veteran Benefits**
- ChampVA healthcare for spouses**
- Diabetes**
- Compensation Rates**
- How to file a claim with the VA**
- Prostate cancer**

I urge you to checkout their web site: Ed

www.vawatchdog.org/Vietnam.html

"I see light at the end of the tunnel."

~ Walt W. Rostow, Nat. Security Adviser, Dec. 1967



Fallen Heroes Our Last Salute

Captain Michael Davis O'Donnell

Dak To, Vietnam

Killed in Action: 24 March 1970

Republic of Vietnam

Promoted to Major after status
changed to MIA.

Aircraft: UH1H "Iroquois"

DOB: 13 August 1945

Hometown: Springfield, IL



Michael O'Donnell was recommended for the Medal of Honor for his actions on March 24, 1970. On that date he, along with crew mates Berman Ganoë, John C. Hosken, Rudy M. Becerra, John Boronski, Gary A. Harned and Jerry L. Pool, went Missing In Action. His remains were ultimately recovered, and although remains for all crewmen were not, this crew is now considered accounted for. Michael was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart as well as promoted to the rank of Major following his loss incident. O'Donnell was highly regarded by his friends in the "Bikinis." They knew him as a talented singer, guitar player and poet. One of his poems has been widely distributed.

Maj. O'Donnell
170th Av Co

~ Remember Them ~

**If You Are Able...
Save for them a place
inside of you,
and save one backward glance
when you are leaving,
for the places they can no longer go.
Be not ashamed to say
you loved them,
though you may or
may not always have.
Take what they have left
and what they have taught you
with their dying
and keep it with your own.
And in that time
when men decide, and feel safe,
to call the war insane,
take one moment to embrace
those gentle heroes
you left behind.**

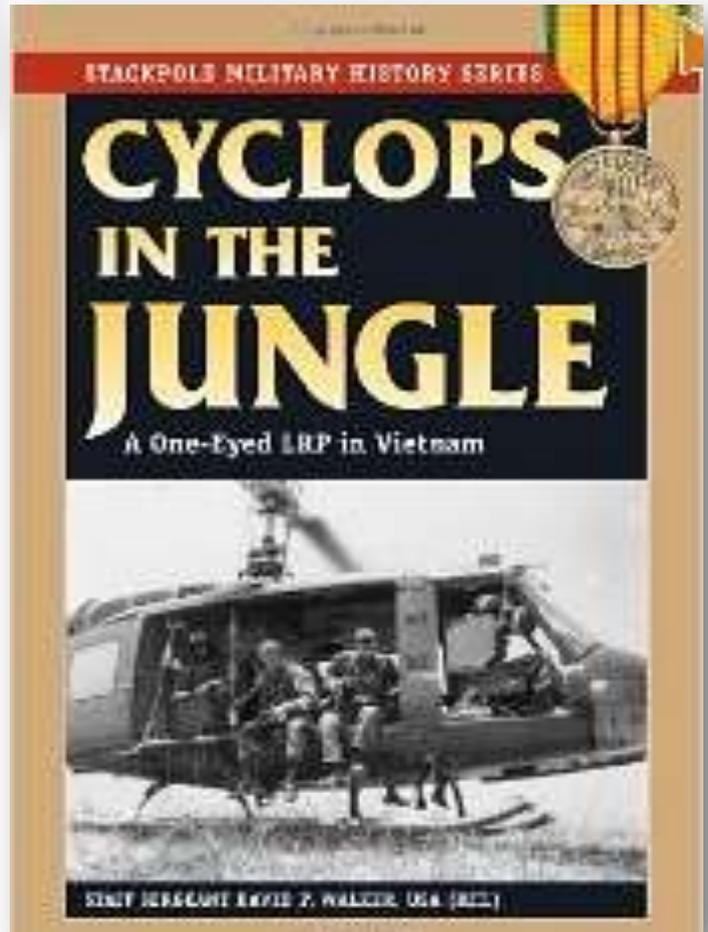
By Michael O'Donnell

For more information about Major O'Donnell visit
<http://www.taskforceomegainc.org/o021.html>

A One-Eyed LRP in Vietnam

By David P. Walker
173d Ranger/LRRP

"Written in a no-holds-barred, from-the-gut style; this one-of-a-kind story of resilience and determination during the Vietnam War focuses on action with a long-range patrol (LRP) team."



Available at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Cyclops-Jungle-One-Eyed-Stackpole-Military/dp/0811734927>

Correction

There is an error on page 29, last paragraph in the December issue. It mentions that a former POW who died after September 30, 1999, and who was continuously rated totally disabled for a period of at least one year "immediately following death." This probably should have read "one year prior to the death", as once you are dead you "certainly" are continuously rated totally disabled!

Jim "Doc" Gore
A/B/D/E/2/503d



Possible Compromise on Labeling of Combat-Related PTSD

Some Army officers and mental health advocates have been calling for a change in the "PTSD" moniker on the basis that calling it a "disorder" is stigmatizing soldiers and preventing them from getting the help they need.



Marines in southern Afghanistan
(Photo by Patrick Baz/AFP/Getty Images)

BY DANIEL SAGALYN

A skirmish has been brewing between U.S. Army brass and a seemingly unlikely interlocutor -- the American Psychiatric Association (APA) -- over a possible name change for combat-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the mental illness that has afflicted hundreds of thousands of American soldiers.

But now indications of a possible compromise have emerged, even as the issue has triggered a wide-ranging debate among mental health professionals.

Some Army officers and mental health advocates have been calling for a change in the "PTSD" moniker on the basis that calling it a "disorder" is stigmatizing soldiers and preventing them from getting the help they need. Initial indications were that the 167-year-old APA -- which is in the process of updating diagnostic standards

for PTSD and other conditions -- felt the affliction should continue to be termed a disorder, based on traditional medical definitions and precedents. However, Dr. John Oldham, the group's president, said in an interview last week that he would be open to the suggestion of changing the name if it would help encourage those who have it to seek help.

"If it turns out that that [the word 'injury'] could be a less uncomfortable term and would facilitate people who need help getting it, and it didn't have unintended consequences that we would have to be sure to try to think about, we would certainly be open to thinking about it," Oldham told the *NewsHour* in a telephone interview last week.

Oldham's comments come six weeks after Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli sent the American Psychiatric Association a letter requesting that the group consider dropping the word "disorder" from the diagnosis and simply call it Post Traumatic Stress.

In an October interview with the *NewsHour*, the four-star general said using the term "disorder" perpetuates a bias against the condition and *"has the connotation of being something that [was] a pre-existing problem"* for an individual before entering the Army. In the eyes of some troops, it *"makes the person seem weak,"* Chiarelli said.

The number of combat veterans diagnosed with PTSD has skyrocketed over the past decade as hundreds of thousands of troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, some multiple times. Rates of PTSD within the Army are estimated at 10 to 20 percent for combat infantry soldiers who experienced direct combat. In some units that experienced high combat, the rates of PTSD affliction are as high as 25 to 30 percent, according to military surveys.

The Army has come under fire for not doing enough to identify and treat soldiers with PTSD, compounding the stigma problem. Forty-nine percent of junior enlisted soldiers who tested positive for mental health problems said that seeking help would be seen as an indication of weakness. A comparable number -- 42 percent -- thought that other members of their unit might have less confidence in them if they received mental health services, according to the most recent survey.

See entire report at:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/july-dec11/ptsd_12-06.html]



Current Information Regarding DD-214's

Please pass on to other vets. It's official: DD-214 discharge papers are NOW ONLINE. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online.

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his/her DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

[Sent in by John "Top" Searcy, HHC/2/503d]

Bravo CO and his Radar Hook-up Over 4 Decades Later

I left "Nam" on my first tour in April 1967. One of my RTOs was Harry Cleland. Harry and I have been exchanging emails for the past year or two but not until a few days ago (December 1) have we gotten together. Harry and his lovely wife, Marilyn, were on their way to Williamsburg, VA to celebrate their 41st wedding anniversary. They stopped off to spend a few hours with Bunny and I. This photo is of the two of us. That's Harry with all the hair and it's me who is bald.



Hawkeye & Radar

It was really good seeing him after nearly half a century.

Ken Kaplan
CO B/2/503d

More on Last Month's Cover Photo



We had identified this photo as simply "Sky Soldiers".

It was taken on June 24, 1965: "After their unit (2/503d) landed in the middle of a Viet Cong staging area, PFC Andrew J. Brown of Chicago draws his pistol while protecting fellow Sky Soldier, Tony Legon (C/2/503d), from sniper fire in the jungle near Thuong Lang, about 10 miles northeast of Bien Hoa. Brown and medic Gerry Levi crawled through the jungle to treat the paratrooper while a live grenade lay nearby."

(AP Photo/Horst Faas)

Here is Levi and Brown carrying Legon to Dust Off. Gerry would be killed in action while providing medical aid to wounded Charlie Company troopers on 2 January 66 during Operation Marauder in the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta. (See story beginning on next page).



Gerald Levy

Specialist Five

HHC, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173D ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Meriden, Connecticut

May 1, 1945 to January 2, 1966

GERALD LEVY is on the Wall at Panel 04E Line 050

Rest easy Doc. We think of you often.



OPERATION MARAUDER: ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE MEKONG DELTA



January 1, 2012, marks the 46 year anniversary since the 2/503d embarked on Operation Marauder in the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta. For many of our troopers this would be their final battle. Ed.

On New Year's Day 1966, with Australian and New Zealand forces attached, the 173d Airborne Brigade struck VC positions

By: Colonel Thomas E. Faley
U.S. Army (Ret)
CO C/2/503d

(This article originally appeared in the February 1999 issue of *Vietnam* magazine, and also appeared in Issue 10 of our newsletter. Since this report first appeared, our readership has grown from around 300 to perhaps 2000+. Photos added).



Tom Faley

2/503d troopers prepare to load cattle cars at Camp Zinn on 1 Jan 66 for ride to Bien Hoa Air Base (the 'Snakepit') to start Operation Marauder.

The 173d Airborne Brigade started out the new year on January 1, 1966, with a major strike into the Mekong Delta. Operation Marauder, as the mission was dubbed, soon found its quarry, the VC 267th Main Force Battalion, and a three-day battle ensued. An article in the January 14, 1966, issue of *Time* magazine aptly summarized the significance of Marauder: *'Members of the 173d Airborne swept out in Operation Marauder into the Plain of Reeds to the Mekong Delta. Penetrating an area so thoroughly held by the VC that government troops had not ventured in for six months, they killed 114 VC in their major contact, rooting the enemy out of beehive bunkers built into the ground along the canals.'*

During its first year in Vietnam, the 173d Airborne Brigade was a tri-national brigade. Its major subordinate combat units included two U.S. infantry battalions (the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 503rd Infantry), one artillery battalion (the 3rd Battalion, 319th Artillery), an Australian infantry battalion (the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment) and artillery battery (the Royal Australian Artillery), and a New Zealand artillery battery (the 161st Gun Battery of the Royal New Zealand Army).

(continued...)



Armor and cavalry included two American units, Troop E of the 17th Cavalry and D Company, 16th Armor, and an Australian unit, the Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop.



The 'Snake Pit' at Bien Hoa Air Base, 1 January 66.
L-R: C Company CO Capt. Fred Henschell,
HHC Commo Officer, Capt. Tom Goodwin.

The U.S. paratroopers in the brigade referred to themselves as 'Sky Soldiers,' a nickname given to them a year earlier by the people of Taiwan. The Australians and New Zealanders used their traditional nicknames -- they were known respectively as 'Diggers' and 'Kiwis.'

In 1965-66 the 173d Brigade's base camp was located adjacent to the Bien Hoa Air Force Base. Ironically, the Vietnamese translation of Bien Hoa was '*land of peaceful frontiers.*' The brigade's initial mission was to secure, patrol and neutralize any threat to the air base, but within months that mission was expanded into conducting multi-battalion strikes on major VC targets of opportunity through central South Vietnam.



L-R: Bn CO's RTO PFC Conley, along with PFC Love,
Sp4 April and Capt. Goodbold get ready to load chopper
on 1 Jan '66 at Bien Hoa Air Base.

In late December 1965 the 173d Airborne was ordered to locate and destroy the 506th VC Local (Province Mobile) Force Battalion, reported by intelligence sources to be near Bao Trai in the Mekong Delta. The 506th Battalion had been operating with relative

impunity in the area for a year or more. In addition, units of the 267th VC Main Force Battalion of the Dong Thap Regiment were said to be passing through the area.

The brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Ellis Williamson, planned to launch Operation Marauder on New Year's Day 1966. His plan called for the establishment of a brigade command post and fire support base near the Bao Trai airfield in Hau Nghia province, 35 miles west of Saigon. On the same day, the U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry (1/503), would be helilifted into an LZ west of the Vam Co Dong river with instructions to conduct search-and-destroy operation to the west. Shortly afterward, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1/RAR), would be helilifted into an LZ east of the river with orders to perform search-and-destroy operations to the northeast sector.



BG Williamson

The 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (2/503), would then be moved to the brigade base at Bao Trai, with a first-day mission of being prepared to reinforce either the 1/503 or the 1/RAR if either of those units made significant contact with the enemy. If no significant contact was made the first day, the 2/503 would be helilifted the following day into the LZ southeast of the river, with the instructions to search and destroy in that sector and eventually link up with the Australians to the north.

On New Year's Day the forward brigade command post was established at Bao Trai without incident. Then the 1/503 commander, Lt. Col. John Tyler, airlifted his unit to LZ Whiskey at the brigade base and waited until the brigade's artillery established its fire support base at Bao Trai.



LTC John Tyler

Shortly after noon, the 1/503 was helilifted into LZ Vodka, near Tra Cu on the west side of the Vam Co Dong river. Initially the 1/503 encountered only light enemy resistance, but two hours after beginning its sweep, B Company found between 50 and 60 VC with some automatic weapons in small bunkers near the river.

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Paratroopers of the 2/503d lining-up in sticks at Bien Hoa Air Base.

A short firefight ensued, with B Company sustaining three wounded. Artillery fire and airstrikes were called in on the enemy positions, and approximately an hour later the VC broke contact with the Americans and escaped to the south.

On the same day, the 1/RAR battalion commander, Lt. Col. Alex Preece, also helilifted his unit into LZ Whiskey. When the choppers returned from inserting the 1/503 during the late afternoon, the Australians were helilifted into LZ Scotch, on the east side of the Vam Co Dong near the village of Can Thuy. The Australians encountered little opposition but reported finding many unoccupied enemy bunkers.



Platoon Sergeant Paul Weedman (left), C Company, 8th Platoon, 7th Royal Australian Regiment, checks in with his operational command during Marauder, assisted by Private Thomas Hunt. During its first year in Vietnam, the 173d Airborne was a tri-national brigade.

(National Archives)

All the units involved in the operation reported mobility problems because many of the rice paddies and sugar cane fields there were flooded. Crisscrossing the area were numerous streams and canals, which were 5 to 15 feet wide and 3 to 5 feet deep, with a lot of silt on the

bottoms. The banks of the canals were formed by dikes, which rose about 3 feet above the paddies and had trees and other vegetation planted along them.

Many unoccupied enemy bunkers were discovered in the dikes bordering the canals and paddies. The bunkers possessed good fields of fire, since elevations in the area were less than 5 meters. An article on Operation Marauder in the January 5, 1966, issue of *The New York Times* provided a good description of the setting and gave some idea of how difficult search-and-destroy operations were in that area: *"The gloomy and dismal Plain of Reeds is full of chest-deep canals, standing water, and fetid, nauseating, smelly mud."* Small forested patches and villages were interspersed among the canals and watery fields.

Up to that point, neither the Americans nor the Australian battalion had made enemy contact significant enough to warrant the insertion of brigade reserve, the 2/503.

The events of the first day of the operation were summarized by Tom Reedy in an *Associated Press* release: *"Although the enemy offered some brisk skirmishes and steady sniper fire at the start of Operation Marauder New Year's Day, the Viet Cong withdrew into the marshes of the Plain of Reeds. By late afternoon there was only occasional contact with the guerrillas"* As a result, the 2/503 remained at Bao Trai overnight.

The next morning, January 2, the 2/503 commander, Lt. Col. George Dexter, planned an air assault into LZ Wine in the southeast sector. After landing, Dexter wanted to move his B and A companies abreast southwest of the river and then northwest to eventually link up with the Australians.



Col. George Dexter

Dexter's reserve was a one platoon of C Company. The two remaining C Company platoons had been temporarily attached to the brigade's D Company, 16th Armor (D/16), which became the brigade reserve at Bao Trai. Brigade headquarters planned to move the mechanized force to Dexter if any significant enemy contact was made by the 2/503d.

Prior to the air assault on LZ Wine at 0800 hours, Colonel Dexter sent in airstrikes, artillery fire and helicopter gunships in an attempt to clear the area.

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As the helicopter gunships were departing the LZ, they encountered heavy ground fire, a sure sign that a large enemy force was somewhere nearby. Consequently, Dexter decided at the last-minute to land his battalion 500 meters northwest of LZ Wine. It proved to be a wise decision.



2/503d depart Bao Trai for assault on LZ Wine, 2 Jan 66.

B Company landed first and moved through a cane field southwest of the landing site while receiving sporadic fire to the front and left flank. By the time the next company -- A Company -- landed, the enemy fire had increased. Two helicopters took many hits -- one door gunner was killed and some troopers were wounded as they exited the helicopters.

In this army photo are Battalion XO, LTC Bob Carmichael (then Major) and his RTO, Lew Smith, at Bao Trai airfield on the morning of 2 January 1966. Their's was one of two helicopters hit by incoming fire during the heliborne assault into LZ Wine. It was Smith's first combat mission in Vietnam



and he must have looked terrified. Over the roar of the chopper blades Carmichael leaned over and yelled, "Don't worry, Smitty, this LZ is secure!" He barely got the words out of his mouth when the roof above their heads was torn apart by incoming rounds. Carmichael knew the armored unit had been deployed to secure the LZ, but he didn't know they would become bogged down in mud and never arrived the landing zone; and they were instead now heading into a hot LZ. Ed

After landing, A Company attempted to move south to go on B Company's left flank. As it did so, both companies became pinned down by heavy fire from numerous bunkers 100 to 300 meters to the southwest. The 2/503 had found the 267th VC Main Force Battalion. An enemy machine gun, located in a concrete bunker at the point where B and A companies had intended to link up, was pouring enfilade fire into B

Company and inflicting heavy casualties on its left flank platoon. The B Company commander, Captain Les Brownlee, had only been in command for two weeks. One of the supporting aircraft dropped a bomb on B Company, killing four troopers and wounding six. [Years following the war, Brownlee would become Acting Secretary of the Army].



**Les Brownlee
Cap**

A Company continued its attempt to swing the hinge and come abreast of B Company, but a large volume of fire precluded any significant movement, and A Company remained mired in the paddy marsh and mud, seeking whatever cover was available. The A Company commander, Captain (later Lt. Gen.) Carmen Cavezza, recalled being upset about not getting the artillery support he needed at that point. Because of the close proximity of all battalion units, battalion headquarters retained control of artillery fire at that stage in the battle. The situation changed several hours later, however, when each company was provided an artillery battery for direct support. Cavezza also found the use of his mortars was limited because his mortar men were vulnerable to enemy fire in the open paddies.

In an unusual twist of fate, an Air Force FAC who was piloting his Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog' at low level along the line of contact accidentally flew into a volley of outgoing friendly artillery fire. There was a loud 'pop,' and the troopers looked up to see an artillery round strike the tail of the little aircraft. The Bird Dog dived into the ground, killing the pilot instantly.



Similar to the FAC shot down at LZ Wine.

Insert: It was later reported by Steve Haber, he and other members of C Company were among the first to later reach the downed aircraft, only to find inside the be-headed pilot. Ed.

(continued...)





LTC Dexter and RTO Conley at LZ Wine.

At 1030, Colonel Dexter had brigade headquarters release to him the two C Company platoons and the D/16 Armor. Dexter planned to have this mechanized force move southwest around A Company and outflank the VC positions. However, around noon the armored vehicles bogged down in the mud in the vicinity of Ap Tho, two kilometers away from the 2/503.



2/503d trooper works his way through the muck.

The two C Company platoons slogged through the mire. They did not reach the area near the firefight until late afternoon. One of the troopers, Specialist Jim Morton, later remembered that the approach took hours because of *'the tough going in the muck and water from dike to dike.'* As Morton's unit neared the battle area, he remembered receiving lots of small-arms fire and seeing the downed spotter aircraft.



Attack at the dike line.

Meanwhile, A Company's Captain Cavezza was eagerly awaiting the C Company reinforcements to come up on his flank. Years later he recalled, *'It seemed like it was taking forever.'* The January 3, 1966, *New York Times* summarized this phase of the battle: *'For eight hours the Americans crouched in the muck, behind paddy dikes and watched bombs, napalm, artillery, and mortar shells hit the enemy.'*



Troopers of Bn Command Group watch airstrike along tree line during Marauder.

Around 1600, the two platoons linked up with the 2/503, and Dexter ordered all three companies to attack to the southwest. A massive firefight ensued, but the battalion was still progressing slowly, with A Company obtaining the best results. The key event occurred an hour into the attack, when five men of A Company's 2nd Platoon managed to overrun a position on the enemy line adjacent to the concrete bunker and then move along the dike, clearing enemy positions one at a time. That enabled A Company to fully penetrate the 267th Battalion's defense.

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Alpha Company RTO on PRC-25 as troopers hunker down, 2 Jan 66.

Captain Cavezza was shot in the stomach and had to turn his company over to his executive officer, Lieutenant Linn Lancaster. Cavezza's last words to Lancaster before lapsing into unconsciousness were,

“Win this battle first, then evacuate the casualties.”



Dexter's battalion command group. Seated wearing steel pot with his arms folded is Maj. Bob Carmichael, Bn XO.

Dexter was a highly respected, courageous leader, and one of his greatest assets was his ability to analyze situations. When he later reflected on the battle, he wondered what the outcome would have been had he ordered the night attack, since the enemy was in disarray at that point and the moon was full -- providing plenty of light for a nighttime move. In a monograph he prepared for the Infantry School in 1968, Dexter summarized the factors weighing against the night attack, including the following:

He had fought off one enemy battalion (267th Main Force), but he had no idea where the remainder of the other (506th Local Force) was. He knew that he had already expended his reserve that afternoon, and he knew that he had sustained almost complete turnover of key leadership personnel since he last conducted a night

attack. For example, two of the three line company commanders that night had been in command for less than two weeks. His troops were exhausted.

While the 2/503 was battling the 267th Main Force Battalion, the 1/503 encountered little enemy opposition in its operating area. The troops had discovered an extensive tunnel system, but no VC remained in the tunnels.

The 1/RAR also had experienced little enemy contact. Small groups of VC harassed the Diggers but were driven off by small-arms fire. An unusual incident was later reported by Australian author Colonel Bob Breen in his book *First to Fight*: One of the harassing VC was nicknamed 'H&I (Harassment and Interdiction fire) Charlie' because of his ability to pin down members of the Digger battalion headquarters, located on a small section of dry ground surrounded by a flooded area. According to Breen, this lone VC 'kept popping up from the surrounding waters and spraying the area with rounds from a Thompson submachinegun.' He would pop up, fire, disappear under water and reappear later in a different place.

Eventually, Captain Bob Hill solved the problem when he directed one of the Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop's armored personnel carriers to drive out in the water and wait. Shortly afterward, when H&I Charlie popped out of the water, he was killed by the carrier's machine-gunner.

After midnight on January 3, Dexter sent orders to his 2/503

companies to continue the attack to the southwest at daybreak. Just after daylight, the battalion started to move out as planned. Then, suddenly, tragedy struck C Company. The company's artillery forward observer, Sergeant Jerry Morton, had called in marker white phosphorous rounds ahead of the company from the support New Zealand gun battery and then called for 'fire for effect' on a suspected enemy position in front of the company.



Burst at LZ Wine

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The rounds were passing over the heads of the members of C Company, and Morton, apparently sensing trouble, yelled into his radio handset, 'Cease fire, cease fire!' Morton, medic Jerry Levy, Pfc George Geoghagan and Sergeant Johnny Graham were crouched near each other behind a paddy dike. Levy, Geoghagan and Graham were making small talk, and Graham had just tossed Geoghagan a pack of cigarettes. Suddenly, Graham heard a loud 'Woomp' and was thrown into the rice paddy. Two short artillery rounds had landed in the midst of C Company. When Graham looked up, he saw Morton apparently dead from the concussion and Geoghagan dead from head wounds. Geoghagan had just joined the unit the day before as a new replacement. Graham remembered that Geoghagan had said that he was married and was from Georgia. Levy was bleeding profusely in the groin area and had part of one leg blown off. Seven other troopers in the company were also wounded, including the company commander, Captain Fred Henschell, Graham himself and Specialist Reid.



2/503 WIA troopers being Dusted Off at LZ Wine
(cover photo)

Vester Reid recalled that the impact of the rounds sent him flying through the air, and he landed 20 feet away with stomach wounds. Tom Tiede, a special correspondent, reported in a subsequent press release:

“After the initial explosion Levy crawled to the aid of a wounded soldier. Even though ripped open by the blast, Levy continued to administer to the soldier. Then Jerry looked down at his own body and fell over mortally wounded.”

C Company's movement ceased. The brigade staff journal indicates that the Kiwi gun battery commander, Major Don Kenning, immediately rechecked the data on the guns and found it to be correct. It appeared that the short rounds were due to damp powder.

The 2/503 Command Group was approximately 600 meters northeast of C Company when word of the short-round incident and casualties were radioed back to the battalion commander. Dexter immediately turned to me, his S-3 air operations officer, and told me that Captain Henschell had been wounded and that I was now the C Company commander. Dexter also told me to evacuate the casualties, reorganize as needed and quickly get the attack moving again. Major Dick Terry, the S-3 battalion operations officer, reiterated the details of the attack plan for the day.

I started moving unaccompanied toward C Company, but I found that movement was extremely difficult because I kept getting bogged down in the mud. Bullets often struck in the water around me as I went, and I can remember hearing an occasional 'crack' as bullets passed overhead. When I looked to my left, in the direction the gunfire was coming from, I realized that several VC had apparently moved around the southern flank of C Company. I thought, 'either these guys are toying with me or they are terrible shots.' In any case, the gunfire provided the impetus to find C Company as soon as possible.

Shortly afterward, I reached what was left of C Company's command group and was able to talk with Henschell about the company situation for a few minutes while he was being treated by medics. In addition, I looked over the other casualties, telling the medics to evacuate the most seriously wounded first. I saw Levy, who was mortally wounded, being treated by the 1st Platoon medic, Specialist Andrew 'Doc' Brown. I noted the severity of Levy's injuries and asked, 'Can you do something for him?' Brown sadly shook his head.

The enemy gunfire that concentrated on C Company continued as the medevacs began arriving. As Sergeant Emilio Solis and James Nabors carried Reid, suffering stomach shrapnel wounds, on a stretcher toward the helicopters, Reid was shot in the leg, breaking both bones below the knee.

I quickly reorganized the command group and radioed the platoon to echelon to the southwest so that the VC on C Company's southern flank would be engaged. That tactic worked, and the survivors of C Company soon caught up with A and B Companies. The battalion attack then proceeded as planned.

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The 2nd Battalion has pushed what appeared to be an enemy stay-behind force to the west when in mid-afternoon the enemy stopped firing and retreated to the south. As a result, the 2nd closed in on the banks of the Vam Co Dong and formed a perimeter for the evening of the 3rd. That evening the battalion restocked its ammunition and rechecked its casualty statistics for the past 36 hours -- 16 killed and 67 wounded.



2/503d troopers capture VC fortifications and headquarters during Operation Marauder.

Jack Foisie of the *Los Angeles Times* joined the 2/503 that evening and later reported that his 'neighbor for the night' was Specialist Ron Robinson, whose C Company resting place oozed with water. Robinson grumbled,

“This has been just one bad thing after another,”

referring to the deadly short artillery rounds. But as Foisie noted:

“Robinson was soon sleeping. He was a soldier, and neither sadness nor hardship would get him down for long.”

On January 4, the 2/503 sent out platoon-size patrols throughout its sector, and they returned to the battalion perimeter in early evening with few reports of significant enemy contacts. The same mission was conducted the next day. Early on the 5th, the troops got a lucky break. Before the patrol departures, Staff Sgt. Leroy Davis, a squad leader with C Company's 2nd Platoon, while digging a better night-defensive position in a dike, had uncovered a Browning Automatic Rifle, ammunition, data books and the international Communist flag, red with a white crossed hammer and sickle in the middle. All the items had been carefully wrapped in waterproof blue plastic. When the find was reported to battalion,

Colonel Dexter requested mine detectors from brigade, and soon other buried weapons and munitions were discovered within the perimeter.



L-R: Sgt. Brinkle, LTC Dexter & Capt. Faley display captured communist flag.

On January 6, the 2/503 patrols struck a 'mother lode' in the vicinity of Ap Xuan Khanh when they discovered the abandoned headquarters area of the 506th Local Force Battalion. The area was heavily mined and booby-trapped, and a special brigade mine detection and demolition team was helilifted in to deal with the situation. After a careful search, six automatic weapons, 400 grenades and a large amount of ammunition were discovered, including 57mm recoilless rifle rounds.



C Company commander Capt. Tom Faley (L), along with Capt. Bencer and Sgt. Belcher and men study materiel captured from Viet Cong on 6 Jan 66.

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Most important, they found more than 7,000 documents, including personnel rosters down to squad level, lists of Communist party members, training documents, maps and even blank letters of commendation.



2/503d grunts uncover enemy bunkers during Operation Marauder.

Between January 2 and January 6, the 1/503 patrolled in sector and apprehended numerous VC suspects. They also questioned residents of the area, who indicated that the 506th Local Battalion had long been operating throughout the brigade sector. They noted, however, that in the past several days they had seen elements of the 506th breaking down into small groups and infiltrating out of the area.

The Australians also were engaged in extensive patrolling activity during the January 2-6 period. They, for the most part, had made small, sporadic contact with the enemy in their sector, killing two VC. However, the Diggers also found an ammunition cache and several large rice caches. On January 5, a Digger patrol made contact with a VC platoon in the vicinity of Hoa Khanh, but the enemy soon broke contact and fled to the southwest.



On right, CSM Mish and Battalion Command Group cross stream during continuation of Operation Marauder, on 3 Jan 66.

On January 8, 1966, the 173d Airborne Brigade terminated Operation Marauder and initiated Operation Crimp, displacing all its combat elements

to a new area of operations in the Ho Bo Woods and Binh Duong province. The brigade report later forwarded to MACV commander summarized the results of Marauder as follows: *"The Viet Cong 267th Main Force Battalion was engaged, outfought and routed from its positions with over 100 VC killed by body count. This Battalion will not be an effective fighting unit again until extensive recruiting and mending is accomplished. In addition, much of the headquarters of the 506th Battalion was destroyed. Intelligence indicates that the bulk of the Viet Cong forces have withdrawn south of the Brigade area of operation."*



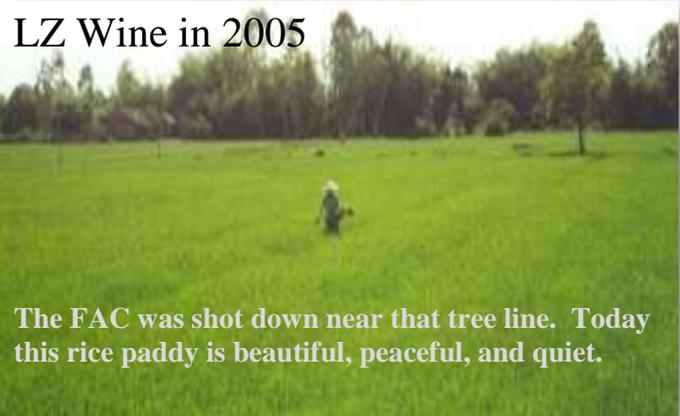
2/503 Troopers Operation Marauder

During his several tours in Vietnam, Colonel Thomas Faley served as a reconnaissance platoon leader in the 101st Airborne Division, a rifle company commander in the 173d Airborne Brigade, and a senior adviser to a South Vietnamese airborne battalion.

[Most photos herein were provided by 2/503 troopers Tom Goodwin, Tom Faley and George Dexter]

Sky Soldiers KIA....Operation Marauder

- SGT Timothy W. Aikey, A/2/503d**
- SP4 Ruben C. Alston, HHC/2/503d**
- SSG Wallace E. Baker, B/2/503d**
- PFC Noel M. Bartolf, B/2/503d**
- PFC Jack D. Bixby, A/2/503d**
- SP4 George E. Geoghagen, C/2/503d**
- PFC Johnny H. Leake, E/17th**
- SP5 Gerald Levy, HHC/2/503d**
- SP4 Gary F. Lewis, HHC/2/503d**
- PFC Walter E. McIntire, B/2/503d**
- PVT Elliott L. Merkle, St Clair, A/2/503d**
- SGT Jerry W. Morton, A/3/319th**
- PVT Larry J. Nadeau, B/2/503d**
- PFC Robert G. Smith, C/2/503d**
- PFC Juvencio Torres-Acevedo, A/2/503d**



The FAC was shot down near that tree line. Today this rice paddy is beautiful, peaceful, and quiet.





My Time With The Army Security Agency (ASA)

By Mark Carter
173d LRRP, E-17 Cav

After I left Vietnam I joined the ASA. They like to think of themselves as the 10%ers. ASA troops were outside the Dept. of Army structure and answered directly to the DoD, via the NSA. My MOS was 98J2P, Electronic Signals Analyst/Operator.



Mark

I worked in northern Japan, in a small room, in a building that the post commander couldn't enter. My project just happened to have been a Navy project. Every few months a suit from the Puzzle Palace would drop by to give us inspirational talks and pat us on the head. My daily mission was to listen to funny noises on headphones and watch squiggly lines on an oscilloscope. Some of what I watched (1968-the end of 1970) was real-time drama in the skies over SEA. We watched the moon landing on our own equipment. Stuff like that.

Many ASA troops were in college or had degrees. By 1968 some of them were joining up because the recruiters promised them that there were no ASA troops in Vietnam. In fact, however, one of the guys killed there early on was an ASA RDF operator named Davis. Some ASA troops were in SOG units. When I was in training at Fort Devens, I saw about a thousand guys run through basic Morse intercept classes, all of them headed for various places in either Vietnam, Thailand, or Laos. I was in a non-Morse MOS, dealing with fire-control radars and missile telemetry.

The Air Force and Navy versions of the ASA were AFSS and NSG, respectively. All of us were NSA flunkies, at the collection level. The guys on the Pueblo were ASA troops. So were the guys on the Super Constellation that was shot down by North Korea. In the mid 1970's these services were disbanded and their mission funneled into INSCOM, so that they could be attached directly to army, navy and air force units as organic assets.

In Vietnam, ASA troops broke VC codes and monitored their radio traffic. You will be astonished to learn just how badly our radio traffic had been infiltrated, and then turned against us. Many dead Americans came from lazy radio operators and bad radio procedure. Much of the suspicion was cast toward our Vietnamese allies were because of VC disinformation efforts. They knew their jobs well. In Laos, ASA and AFSS troops manned isolated outposts, to provide DF coverage of North Vietnam for the B52 and other air strikes there. To some extent some bases in Thailand did this. Both in Thailand and Laos, ASA troops were in Mike Force, or other strike units, usually comprised of trans-border mountain tribes who had no love for the Vietnamese, either north or south.

In spite of their more or less non-military bearing, ASA troops were fanatics when it came to the mission. We often worked extra shifts in Japan, voluntarily, to make the mission run smoothly. Many times our product disappeared down some classified rat hole. Other times we watched our work fall out of the sky in flames. The basic classification of my job was SECRET. The stuff we did at work was TOP SECRET, and elevated another couple of notches with a code word. We were read into the job by a guy who told us that we could get confined for ten years per unauthorized disclosure. When we went to the post dentist, a security officer went with us, in case we mumbled while anesthetized.

Our schooling at Fort Devens was done in a vault, behind a door that looked like it should be on a bank safe. I went to the NSA building at Fort GG Meade to polish up my skill on the latest equipment before going to the job in Japan. I saw rooms in the lower basements that were supposed to house the folks selected to survive the missile strikes that they thought were very possible. The cold war stopped being a joke by then. In Japan, I sat on position in Internal Analysis, while another analyst and I tried to figure out whether a Soviet missile launch was a photo recon, or an ICBM.



Russian ICBM's

(continued....)



This happened every time the Soviets shot one up. The guys in DC waited for us to tell them if the world would end in 20 minutes. I believe our site was one of about a dozen tasked with launches.

When I was a grunt I was sometimes afraid, but I had the teams around me. There was an actual "THEY" and THEY were trying to kill me, sure. When I got into the ASA I found out that THEY were trying to kill everybody.

Anyhow, when I was in Vietnam, I had never heard of the ASA, and had only a vague notion that we had guys working their radio traffic. That came later. I DEROSSED. I decided to kick it, and I told the recruiter I wanted to be a spy. Crikey. Hell, he didn't know what the ASA was either.

I hope this web site gives you some interesting stuff. Look at the "Lessons Learned" pamphlets from 1970 for a good overview of what the RRU's were doing at the time.

<http://www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/asa.htm>

The Lima site below, was air force.

If anybody's interested, I have copies of other ASA – related publications.

Mark Carter
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ASA Site 85



Phou Pha Thi, Laos

Photo courtesy of LTC Jeannie Schiff USAF (Ret)

In the latter half of 1966, the idea was conceived to install a Radar Bombing Control System (MSQ-77) at TACAN Channel 97 (Site 85) in Laos. The MSQ-77 is a sophisticated piece of electronic equipment to direct air strikes without the pilot actually seeing his target. The advantages being 1) that the aircraft can fly at an altitude reachable only by Surface to Air Missiles (SAM) and 2)

bombing can be accomplished in all types of weather day or night. The advantages were obvious, but the political obstacles were going to be difficult. Laos was a neutral country.

Placing this equipment in northern Laos would imply that Laos was allowing another country to use their country to mount an attack on a neighbor, which had recognized their neutrality. But this neighboring country, North Vietnam, was using their soil to transport men, equipment and supplies through the Laos panhandle into Cambodia and South Vietnam (Ho Chi Min Trail).

March 11, 1968, Site 85 was overrun by PAVN commandos. Eleven of the nineteen brave men on Phou Pha Thi (Site 85) were KIA or POW/MIA, no bodies or remains have ever been found. This was the largest single ground combat loss of USAF personnel during the Vietnam War.

[For entire story visit: <http://limasite85.us/>]

Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration Set for March 31, 2012

The Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration for military members and their friends and families will be held on Saturday, March 31.

The USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, with support from the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters, announced that they will hold an incredible *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration* for military members and their friends and families that will be held on March 31.

Vietnam veterans never received the type of homecoming celebration that today's troops receive as they return from service. To honor those who served and the military members who returned from combat, the USO of North Carolina is holding a long, overdue homecoming celebration.

Hosted by the USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, the *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration 2012* is set to be an unforgettable experience featuring live entertainment, displays and demonstrations, military salutes, and much more.

Visit this web site for details:

http://www.charlottomotorspeedway.com/tickets/vietnam_veterans_homecoming_celebration_2012/600589.html

[Sent in by Larry Hampton, A/1/503d]





Fort Benning, Georgia



History

The idea for the creation of the airborne program as well as the school, was derived from watching the smokejumpers train at the smokejump center in Missoula, Montana. After seeing the effectiveness of the jumpers, the idea was pitched to the higher ups in DC.

Ground Week

During Ground Week, students begin an intensive program of instruction on how to properly wear the T-10D and T-11 parachutes to build individual airborne skills, which prepares them to make five parachute jumps, and five safe landings. They train on a mock door of a C-130 or C-17 aircraft to prepare themselves for a proper exit from each aircraft. Students also learn and practice the parachute landing fall (PLF), a landing technique specifically developed to ensure a safe landing for personnel as they impact the ground while wearing a parachute. Students train to exit the 34-foot (10 m) tower, which prepares them for a safe exit from an aircraft in flight by exposing the students to the physical sensation of an actual jump. Students train on the lateral drift apparatus (LDA) to develop proper technique for controlling a parachute during descent. To progress to Tower Week, students must individually qualify on the 34-foot (10 m) tower, the LDA, successfully complete all PLFs, and pass all PT requirements.

Tower Week

A team effort is added to the training with the "mass exit" concept. Here students will learn the proper technique to exit an aircraft in flight in mass quantity. Students are informed of proper in flight instructions given before a jump. Students are also trained on the 34' tower with all equipment that will be used on the jumps. On the 34' tower they get a chance to work on exiting the aircraft with all their equipment and also lowering their equipment prior to landing. The last 2 days of the week are used



Jump School in the 50s & 60s



The big one

(continued....)



Jump Week

During Jump Week students make five parachute jumps into Fryar Drop Zone (DZ) located in Alabama, which is part of the Fort Benning Military Reservation. Trainees must run to the air field, conduct pre-jump training, and then get into their harnesses and await their turn to jump. Generally, the first two jumps are "Hollywood", in that the jumper only wears the parachute and reserve. The remaining three jumps are "combat equipment jumps", in which the jumper carries a ruck sack and a dummy weapon. At least one jump, typically the last, is required to be at night. It is possible due to weather and other factors, such as holidays, a student may have all five jumps during daylight hours.

Instructors

The Airborne School instructors are commonly referred to as "Black Hats", due to the black baseball cap with their dress uniform rank insignia and parachutist badge that is the distinguishing part of their uniform.



Black Hat

However, all students within the school are required to call them "Sergeant Airborne" (or Petty Officer Airborne in case of a Navy instructor).

Unusual for an Army school, instructors may come from the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy or Air Force. The reasoning behind this is because students from four branches of the military are able to attend, so each branch insists that they have at least one representative to ensure quality instruction. They train students in the use of static line deployed parachutes. The U.S. Coast Guard does not usually participate in Airborne training as it does not directly relate to the branch's duty of Homeland Security and their daily search and rescue missions.



C-130's were the "new" aircraft

The Battalion

The battalion is organized into six companies: Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) for administrative actions and command and control; four

Line Companies (A, B, C and D) execute the Basic Airborne Course Program of Instruction (POI) and Company (E) provides parachute rigger support. D Company has been disbanded in recent times and a week- long buffer between class cycles occurs.



Peaceful, quiet and with a great view.

Students

The vast majority of students at Airborne School come from the U.S. Army. These include soldiers on assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, 4th BCT 25th Infantry Division, 173d Airborne BCT, 75th Ranger Regiment, or the Special Forces Qualification Course. Also Marine Recon units as well as ANGLICO Units attend. Recent BUD/S graduates, USAF Combat Controllers, USAF Special Operations Weather Technicians, USAF Pararescuemen and Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) also attend the school in order to be jump qualified. Summer classes are frequently made up of substantial numbers of cadets from ROTC and West Point. The United States Army Parachutist Badge (commonly referred to as "Jump Wings") is awarded to U.S. Armed Forces personnel upon completion of Airborne School regardless of branch or MOS. Upon arrival, students are given roster numbers which must be put on their equipment. Since military rank is not taken away during training, enlisted, cadets, NCOs, and officers are distinguished by a plain number, C, N, or A placed in front of their roster number, respectively.

Airborne....All The Way!



Troopers of the 503rd...They Earned Their Wings



George Dexter
Bn CO 2/503d



Pat Bove
Recon/2/503d



John Stepisnik
A/2/503d



Dave Griffin
HHC/B/2/503d



Freddie Parks
A/2/503d



Carl Dognilli
503rd PRCT



Matt Roberts
B/2/503d



Rick Patterson
A/2/503



Adrian Cavazos
C/2/503d



Corky Corcoran
HHC/2/503d



Jimmy Castillo
C/2/503d



Jim Wilson
C/2/503d



Ken Redding
HHC/2/503d



Charles Durden
503rd PRCT



Jim Dresser
A/HHC/2/503d



Kris Klix
A/HHC/2/503d

(continued....)



Troopers of the 503rd...They Earned Their Wings



Chuck Breit
503rd PRCT



Art Frey
A /2/503d



John Smith, Jr.
A/2/503d



Joe Lacari
C/2/503d



Johnny Graham
C/2/503d



Jack Moore
C/2/503d



Marvin Smith
HHC/2/503d



Les Fuller
A/2/503d



Joe Parffit
B/2/503d



Kris Russell
B/2/503d



Richard Moorehouse
B/2/503d



Ed Wilby
HHC/2/503d



Jim Green
B/2/503d



Dave Fultz
HHC/2/503d



Mike de Gyurky
B /HHC/2/503d



Wayne Tuttle
C/2/503d

(continued)



Troopers of the 503rd...They Earned Their Wings



Chet Nycum
503rd PRCT



Rick Reynolds
E/2/503d



Harry Cleland
HHC/B/2/503d



Wayne Bowers
C/2/503d



Robert Guy
HHC/2/503d



Lew Smith
HHC/2/503d



Jim Mullaney
503rd PRCT



Jack Owens
A/B/2/503d



Lee Robinson
B/2/503d



Connie Walker
HHC/2/503d



Herbert Murhammer
B/2/503d



Jack Leide
C/2/503d



Wambi Cook
A/2/503d

~ The Paratrooper Creed ~

*I volunteered as a parachutist, fully realizing the hazards of my chosen service and by my actions will always uphold the prestige, honor and high esprit-de-corps of the only volunteer branch of the Army. I realize that a parachutist is not merely a soldier who arrives by parachute to fight, but is an elite shock trooper and that his country expects him to march farther and faster, to fight harder, to be more self-reliant, and to soldier better than any other soldier. Parachutists of all allied armies belong to this great brotherhood. **Airborne....All The Way!***



~ Robert Wesley Haas ~
(1950 - 2011)
A Sky Soldier

Robert Wesley Haas, 61, passed away Friday, December 2, 2011. The funeral was held in Mount Olivet Chapel, with interment at Mount Olivet Cemetery. Robert was born May 17, 1950, in Roswell, N.M., to Robert and Ola Haas. He was in the 173d Airborne in the Army during the Vietnam War, where he was awarded two Bronze Stars. He was a mechanic for Trinity Industries for 19 years. Robert was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Thomas Haas, and sister, Marilyn Cook. Survivors include his son, John Robert Haas and wife, Adriana, daughter, Christina Marie Haas, granddaughters, Erica Delara, Chelsea Haas and Courtney Leiann Ramirez, grandson, Christopher Daniel Salas, sister, Kay Hill, and brother, Kenny Bates.



Note: We were informed of Robert's passing by Bud Sourjohn, A/2/503d, who had read about it in his local newspaper. We asked Bud if he could learn more details, allowing us to share the sad news with the 173d family. Bud sent in this note:

Here is all I could find out about Robert Wesley Haas. He served two tours in Vietnam from '69 to '70. He was only 61 when he passed so he was one of us young ones.

My lady, Susan, and I attended the services. I made it a point to wear my mini medals, complete with wings and CIB, on my coat, a red beret, and this time I was able to secure a "herd" patch (thanks to Susan), and wore it on the front of my blazer. As we were walking out of the chapel a lady of the family kind of let out a little gasp as she saw the patch and asked if I had served in the 173d, and I said yes. She then asked if I had known Robert, and I had to say no but as we wore the same patch that made us brothers, that was why I am there. I quizzed her if she knew which battalion he was in but she did not know, however, there was a young lad there who was his son. He said his dad talked about serving with the 173d and was so proud of it. We visited a short while and I gave him a Texas Chapter challenge coin with the Herd patch on the front of it.

It was a good gathering and I could tell Robert was loved very dearly by his family and will be missed. That's all I can say about that without choking up anymore.

Bud

Rest easy Trooper





VVA Urges All Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange be Screened for Prostate Cancer

(December 7, 2011, Washington, D.C.) *“Veterans exposed to Agent Orange are at least twice as likely to develop prostate cancer; their recurrence rates are higher; and recurring cancers are more aggressive,”* noted Dr. Thomas Berger, Executive Director of VVA’s Veterans Health Council, before today’s Congressional Men’s Health Caucus Prostate Cancer Task Force. Berger urged his fellow Vietnam veterans to get screened, noting *“it’s worth the fight.”*

Said Berger, ***“Some three million veterans served in Southeast Asia, and no one knows for sure how many of these veterans were exposed to Agent Orange.”***

In 1996 the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences concluded there is *“limited evidence of a positive association between prostate cancer and exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam, including Agent Orange.”* As a result of IOM’s findings, Jesse Brown, then-Secretary of the Veterans Administration (VA), issued the final rule, recognizing prostate cancer as a service-connected, presumptive disease associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other phenoxy herbicides during military service, allowing such exposed veterans to become eligible for VA disability compensation and health care.

In 2008, University of California-Davis Cancer Center physicians released results of research showing Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange have greatly increased risks of prostate cancer and even greater risks of getting the most aggressive form of the disease as compared to those who were not exposed. The research was also the first to use a large population of men in their 60s and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. More than 13,000 Vietnam veterans enrolled in the VA Northern California Health Care System were stratified into two groups, exposed or not exposed to Agent Orange between 1962 and 1971. Based on medical evaluations conducted between 1998 and 2006, the study revealed that:

- twice as many Agent Orange-exposed men were identified with prostate cancer than non-exposed;
- Agent Orange-exposed men were diagnosed two-and-a-half years younger than non-exposed; and

- Agent Orange-exposed men were nearly four times more likely to present with metastatic disease than non-exposed.

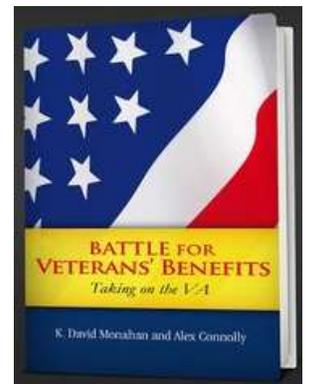
Further buttressing this link, in 2009, a study of 1,495 veterans in five cities who underwent radical prostatectomy to remove their cancerous prostates showed 206 exposed to Agent Orange had a near 50 percent increased risk of their cancer recurring, despite the cancer seeming nonaggressive at the time of surgery. And the cancer came back with a vengeance. The time it took the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, level to double – an indicator of aggressiveness – was eight months versus more than 18 months in non-exposed veterans.

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

Battle for Veterans’ Benefits: Taking on the VA (Xlibris, 148 pp)

By K. David Monahan and Alex Connolly

The book is organized into four parts, each of which is divided into many short, clearly written sections with titles such as *“Who’s Entitled to VA Benefits,” “What you need to File a VA Claim,”* and *“Who is Eligible for Death Pension.”*



The authors are both Air Force veterans who receive disability compensation and who have personal experience with everything they write about. They also worked as veterans service reps at the VA adjudicating claims.

There is no index, so finding some subjects such as “widows” isn’t easy. Scanning the detailed table of contents helps, but it doesn’t contain the word “widows.” I did find the phrase “Agent Orange” in the table of contents, and because I have done a lot of research on that subject, I read that section with particular care.

The authors do a good job of delineating what veterans should do to file a claim for a disease they have that is presumptively related to AO. That section is detailed, extensive, and useful.

<http://battleforveteransbenefits.com/index.htm>

~ David Willson



VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS Of The Sky Soldier Kind

In Issue 35 (December 2011) of our newsletter, we included *Critical Information for Surviving Spouses of deceased veterans*. We also put out a call for “Sky Soldier” Veterans Service Officers, who are willing to provide assistance to our spouses to help them maneuver through the Veterans Administration upon the death of their military-retired or VA-disabled veteran spouse. To date, these troopers have stepped forward. We suggest you print this list and keep it with details from the earlier report.

~ Sky Soldier VSOs ~

Joe Armstrong

B/4/503d
Sanford, ME

Phn: 207-490-2094

cwomaine@myfairpoint.net

I am the Veterans Service Officer for the John A. Barnes III (MOH) New England Chapter 9, 173d Airborne Association. If any surviving spouse has a question they should not hesitate to contact me at the email address or phone number above. If I do not know the answer immediately I promise I will find the answer and/or refer the spouse to someone who does know the answer.

Joan Haber

(Spouse of Steve Haber, C/2/503d)
Sarasota, FL

Phn: 941-921-9197

joan1@comcast.net

Thanks so much for printing the Critical Information for Spouses. I am hoping this will save many widows some of the daunting task of figuring this all out when they are in the first stages of their grief. As part of my ministerial training was in grief counseling, I would be happy to be listed as a free resource for widows (and widowers) to talk to in their time of need. If you think that is appropriate, you have my permission to list me in the resource guide.

Vic Marciano

HHC/Recon, 1/503d
Palm Bay, FL

vmarciano@cfl.rr.com

I was an American Legion Post service officer. I won't do claims but will give advice on how to ask the right questions of the VA.

Steve Piotrowski

(AKA *The Professor*)

C/3/503d

Madison, WI

Phn: 608-255-3953

Cell: 608-770-2900

I was a county veterans service officer for a number of years, and spent 15 years as the Veterans and Military Case Worker for a US Senator. I am now retired. I have a good grasp of the system and what it takes to win claims, and can offer some help and advice. I am no longer able to take the stress of regular claims work, but would be happy to assist on occasion.



NACVSO was recognized officially by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs “for the purpose of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs”, solely for the purpose of claimant representation before the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also included was the statement that “Accreditation of representatives associated with your organization will be handled on an individual basis...”

County Veteran Service Officers

When you come into the County Veterans Services Office you will be referred to a service officer for assistance. The County Veterans Service Officer has a compassionate understanding of the problems, which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and children. The County Veterans Service Officer knows the extent, the meaning and the application of laws that have been passed by the U.S. Congress in the interests of veterans and their dependents. They also know the rules and regulations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to clarify and implement those laws. The County Veterans Service Officer will apply specialized knowledge in the best way suited to the needs of every individual veteran or other beneficiary who comes to the office for assistance.

Need Assistance? Want Advice?

If you want assistance or need help in obtaining benefits, contact us and we will do our best to answer your questions or help you contact the County or State Veterans Service Officer nearest your place of residence, or you may go to the “[Contact Us](#)” page on our web site and contact one of our officers directly. In your e-mail, please include the name of your city, county and state. You will receive a response within 24 hours.

<http://www.nacvso.org/index.php>

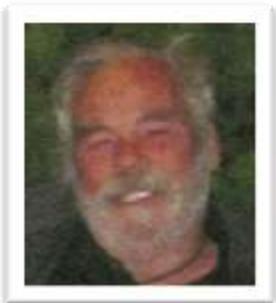




~ A SALUTE AND FAREWELL ~
 TO OUR SKY SOLDIER, RANGER & VETERAN BROTHERS
 WHO LEFT US ON THEIR FINAL JUMP THIS PAST YEAR



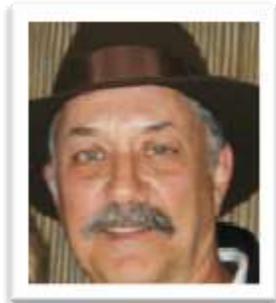
~ ALL THE WAY, BROTHERS ~



Ernest "Nasty" Asbury



Roy Benavidez



Terry Boggs



Charlie Carmichael



Lloyd Christensen



Jamal Clay



Chuck Drake



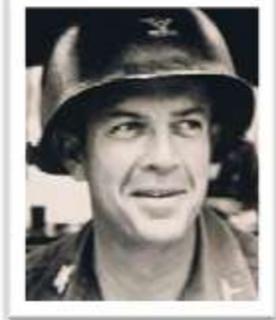
George Drish



Lawrence Kelly



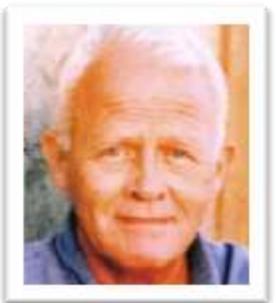
Mike Ludas



William McLain



Leonard Negles



Dick Noonan



Dale Olson



Donald Reeder



Vincent Roegiers

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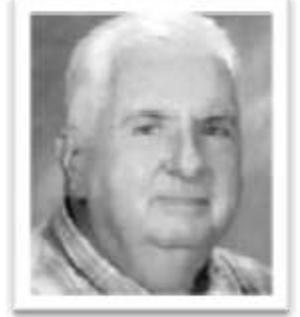
Norman "Tex" Samples



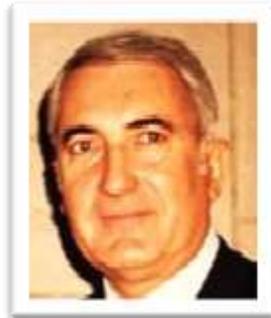
Carl Shefferd



Lee Simpson



Scott Smith



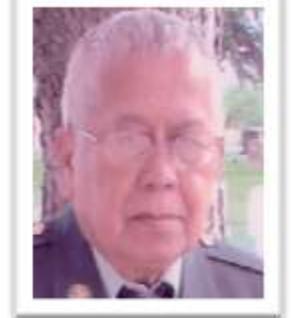
George Stapleton



Michael Strange



David Taitano



Juvenal Vidal Vallejos



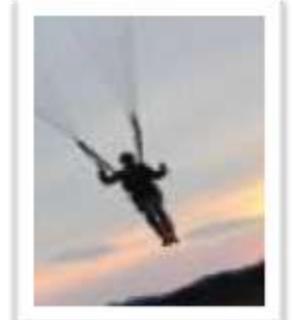
John Wassink



Richard Wilson



Ronald Wiseman



***They are gone and I must follow
 To the golden fields above
 Where the mighty God of justice
 Shall reward the patriots love
 Sweet it where I live and love thee
 Sweeter far for thee to die
 With the flower-clad hills around me
 Echoing back my last good-bye.***

The Dying Soldier, lyrics by Rev. P. MacThomas

(Sadly, to be continued)



Veteran's Day at Sunset

A Sky Soldier Remembers



Photo taken on the Idaho-Oregon border on the bridge over the Snake River, Payette Idaho, of Joashua Adam Salazar (C/2/503d), *Veterans Day at Sunset*, 11 November 2011.

