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Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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

~ 2/503 Photo of the Month ~

The Aftermath



C/2/503 troopers taking care of their buddies, circa '66/'67. Photo by Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d.



Chaplain's Corner

He Died For Us

Once more into the battle...it was St. Crispin's Day - the year 1415. We're in France near Agincourt. The two enemies, France and England, face one another, and exchanging taunts designed to provoke an attack. King Henry marches his force close enough to allow his archers to unleash a hail of arrows upon the French. The French knights charged forward only to be caught in a slippery quagmire of mud, and were unable to effectively swing their broadswords because of the tight quarters of the battlefield and the continuing forward rush of their comrades behind them. Henry's archers fire lethal storms of arrows into this dense mass of humanity until the French begin to retreat. The archers then dropped their bows, picked up what weapons they could find and joined the English knights in slaying their foe.

William Shakespeare bases his King Henry V play on this battle, and from his play come the words... "*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.*" That's been our theme these past five months in the Chaplain's Corner.

For many of you the charge forward, the quagmire of mud or perhaps the tight quarters of the battlefield might bring back memories of battlefields that you and I served on. But in all battles there comes a time when one soldier will risk it all to protect, defend and even lay down his life for another soldier. Been there. Seen that!

One of my favorite Scriptures is "*Greater love has no one than this -- that one lay down his life for his friends*". John 15:13. Each of us might have stories that either we have heard about or even witnessed personally where someone gave his or her life for another. I've heard it happen off the Carolina coast in a lifesaving attempt, or on a crowded street when someone, in an attempt to save the life on another, lost theirs in the attempt to rescue another. For me, here's the story that best illustrates that Scripture.

January 13th, 1982 a graduate of The Citadel, was a passenger aboard Air Florida Flight 90, which crashed on take-off in Washington DC into the Potomac river killing 78 people. He was among the six people to initially survive the crash. His actions after the crash, handling the initial rescue efforts as a first responder, became a well-known example of extraordinary heroism. The six grabbed the tail of the plane, their hands were freezing as they clawed and slipped from the wet steel. They were only 40 or so yards from the shore, surrounded by jagged ice.



"Cap"

Boats could not be used and a helicopter was called, but its chance of success was not good, as the whipping snowstorm would be risky, just as it was when it brought the airplane down. Nevertheless, twenty minutes after the crash and as the sun was going down a rescue chopper came. One victim was hoisted out, and then as the cable was lowered again something miraculous happened. The man who grabbed it, passed it on to another who was hauled out. Again the cable was lowered and the man passed it on to another who was lifted out. Again the same thing happened. As the chopper seconds later wheeled to again drop the cable, the man had vanished beneath the icy water. Who was he? Arland Dean Williams, Jr. Why?

Have you ever witnessed something like this? Has it ever happened to you...that one would lay down their life for you, or for me? It happened to me! Not on a battlefield in Vietnam. The person who sacrificed his life for me didn't drown, nor was He killed by a grenade, claymore or enemy fire. The man who sacrificed his life for me died this way...He was nailed to a cross, a crown of thorns was placed on his head and a spear was thrust into his side...and He, Jesus, died for me...and for you.

There is a call for each of us to reach out for those who don't know Him, and the need is great. Jesus said "*The harvest is great, but the workers are few*"- Matt 9:37. But for each of us, there is a calling and the response can be met by...

*"We few, we happy few,
we band of brothers"....*

Rev. Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret)
Former CO, A/2/503, RVN
JackTKelley@aol.com



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Editor's Addendum

Written about Mr. Williams...

"So the man in the water had his own natural powers. He could not make ice storms, or freeze the water until it froze the blood. But he could hand life over to a stranger, and that is a power of nature too. The man in the water pitted himself against an implacable, impersonal enemy; he fought it with charity; and he held it to a standoff. He was the best we can do."

R. Rosenblatt, "*The Man in the Water*"
Time Magazine, January 25, 1982



PFC Shane W. Cantu

A Sky Soldier



By Robert Burns
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was another week at war in Afghanistan, another string of American casualties, and another collective shrug by a nation weary of a faraway conflict whose hallmark is its grinding inconclusiveness. After nearly 11 years, many by now have grown numb to the sting of losing soldiers like Pfc. Shane W. Cantu of Corunna, Mich. He died of shrapnel wounds in the remoteness of eastern Afghanistan, not far from the getaway route that Osama bin Laden took when U.S. forces invaded after Sept. 11, 2001, and began America's longest war.

Cantu was 10 back then.

Cantu, who joined the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade on Sept. 11 last year and went to Afghanistan last month, was among five U.S. deaths announced this past week, as the Democrats and Republicans wrapped up back-to-back presidential nominating conventions. American troops are still dying in Afghanistan at a pace that doesn't often register beyond their hometowns. So far this year, it's 31 a month on average, or one per day. National attention is drawn, briefly, to grim and arbitrary milestones such as the 1,000th and 2,000th war deaths. But days, weeks and months pass with little focus by the general public or its political leaders on the individuals behind the statistics.

Each week at war has a certain sameness for those not fighting it, yet every week brings distinct pain and sorrow to the families who learn that their son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother was killed or wounded.

Cantu died Aug. 28, but the Pentagon did not publicly release his name until Wednesday. He was memorialized by his paratrooper "sky soldier" comrades in Italy on Thursday and honored in his hometown of Corunna, where the high school football coach, Mike Sullivan, was quoted in local news reports as saying the energetic and athletic Cantu had been *"the toughest kid I've ever coached — ever known."*

He would have turned 21 next month.

His roommate in Afghanistan, Pfc. Cameron Richards, 23, remembers Cantu as a larger-than-life figure, a guy with an infectious smile who took pride in whipping up spaghetti, tacos and other dinners on his portable skillet. It was a knack he attributed to having grown up with five sisters with whom he shared family meal duties. *"He was the type of person you wanted to be around every day,"* Richards said in a telephone interview Friday from the brigade's headquarters in Italy, where he returned after being wounded by shrapnel from a hand grenade two weeks before Cantu was killed.

"When he was in the room you knew he was in the room. He'd be the loudest one laughing," he added. *"He impacted everybody."*

As the war drags on, it remains a faraway puzzle for many Americans. Max Boot, a military historian and defense analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations, has called Afghanistan the *"Who Cares?"* war. *"Few, it seems, do, except for service personnel and their families,"* he wrote recently. *"It is almost as if the war isn't happening at all."*

One measure of how far the war has receded into the background in America is the fact that it was not even mentioned by Mitt Romney in his speech last week accepting the Republican presidential nomination. President Barack Obama has pledged to end the main U.S. combat role in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, but current plans call for some thousands of U.S. troops to remain long after that to train Afghans and hunt terrorists.

Read entire article:

<http://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/War-weary-US-is-numbered-to-drumbeat-of-troop-deaths-3852301.php#ixzz26XMBmLVg>

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~ Rest Easy Trooper Cantu ~





Dear Dad,

Remember the time you told me that real courage is putting your fear aside and doing the job?

I thought about that a lot this morning. You see Dad, here in the Army, everything you taught me really means something.

There's a lot you can learn about in the Army. Confidence. Determination. Self-discipline. And pride. The qualities that can help you get an edge on life.

ARMY. BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

[Sent in by Bill Nicholls, A/2/503d]



What Combat Has Taught Veteran Troopers:

'Viet Nam Has Not Made Us

The Fayetteville Observer Editor's Note: Last Monday Peter Arnett won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of the war in Viet Nam. A year earlier Horst Faas won a Pulitzer for his photographs of the war. In this dispatch the two Pulitzer winners tell of what the 173rd Airborne has learned in its years in Viet Nam. Both men have been along on many 173rd operations.

The Fayetteville Observer, May 8, 1966

By: Peter Arnett and Horst Faas

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP) – The 173rd Airborne Brigade ranks as the American unit with the longest combat experience in Viet Nam. It observed this week the first anniversary of service on Vietnamese soil, and some of its men talked of the things they've learned.

Many of those who landed a year ago "*behaved like they were immortal*," one officer recalls. Some of them were to learn the truth the hard way.



Sky Soldiers arrive Vietnam, May 1965

The paratroopers, all volunteers, were a swaggering lot of soldiers, confident of their ability and believing the scruffily dressed, emaciated-looking Viet Cong appeared more like bandits than soldiers.

The 173rd still has swagger and confidence. But it has learned that the enemy in tattered clothes, dragged from an "iron triangle" tunnel or a delta hut, was much more tenacious and fanatical than his appearance suggested.

"He is tough, fanatical and resourceful," says a company commander. "We didn't give him the credit, and we paid with blood for our ignorance."



War Lovers'

The 173rd had shed blood over much of Viet Nam, ranging from the coast of the South China Sea across to the Cambodian border in the Northern Mekong Delta, Zone D, the Iron Triangle, and the Central Highlands.

The paratroopers have bronzed forearms cross-hatched with white thorn scars from bamboo thickets. Hours of straining for the enemy seems to have fixed their eyes a bit deeper in their faces.

The sun shimmering off the rice paddy waters has bleached their hair and etched crow's feet around the eyes. The 19-year-olds leaving for home after completing a year look much like the 35-year-olds arriving.

Looking back over the year, some of the best men in the brigade see a big gap between what the 173rd should have been when it arrived, and what it was.

"We still have a lot to learn, like maneuver, survival, endurance, discipline. And all of us should use our brains more," says one of the most respected sergeants in the brigade.

"When something is goofed up or doesn't work out as it should, we always say, 'You can't help it, that's the Army. The Army is always like that.' That excuse is not valid for Viet Nam if we really want to kick the Viet Cong in the teeth and out of here."

This feeling of dissatisfaction is expressed only by perfectionists in the brigade. Most of the paratroopers are proud of their achievements.

The 173rd came in from its Okinawa base to bolster Vietnamese forces sagging under Viet Cong threats. It was calculated escalation of the war.

The most modern brigade was self-sufficient in artillery and helicopters and trained for two years in Pacific jungles. But 173rd came with strings attached.

"We came defensively oriented," a battalion commander said. He meant the 173rd was told not to take heavy casualties, particularly the loss of a battalion or company. They were told the political and propaganda aspects of a defeat were far greater than the military implications....

(continued...)



...These political considerations slowed the brigade down. They were poised to assist embattled Vietnamese battalions at the battles of Dong Xoai and Duc Co but never directly committed.

As time went on it became evident that North Viet Nam was responding to the mounting U.S. buildup with a troop buildup of its own. The 173rd began to flex its muscles.

Unwieldy brigade-sized sweep operations were dropped in favor of battalion-sized moves. One officer put it this way; *"In the long run, we became more willing to take a chance."*

The more the paratroopers looked for the Viet Cong, the more they found them. These were usually bloody little encounters of short duration fought around a primitive bunker or a row of trenches that even when taken would have to be abandoned when the paratroopers returned to base.

This proved a major frustration. *"We keep going back, back in the same places,"* one sergeant said. *"We see the helmets of our buddies killed the month before, and the piles of C-ration cans we left behind."*

The Viet Cong decided in late March to try and teach the 173rd a lesson. It launched human wave assaults against the dug-in paratroopers. The Viet Cong lost 400 dead. Paratroop losses were negligible.



Troopers of HHC/2/503d humping the "D" Zone jungle enroute to LZ Zulu-Zulu, site of the 16 March 66 battle during Operation Silver City. Photo by Tom Goodwin

The official total of enemy dead by body count at the end of a year was 1573 almost exactly a 10 to 1 kill ratio favoring the Americans. The brigade says it didn't lose a weapon to the enemy, but captured 800 of theirs. Viet Cong bullets and mines accounted for about 600 paratroopers wounded.

Some officers would like to see a far bigger effort by the United States in Viet Nam. One of them said; *"We understand the political background of the war, but it's difficult to understand why we don't go all-out to win. We seem to be fighting here not to win a war, but for political considerations."*

"It seems a war is being fought here to forestall a bigger war. Sometimes on these operations I have the feeling that lives are wasted. I hate to think that some people might say of us, 'They were sacrificed in Viet Nam, just like the French.'"

There is little comparison between the Americans and the French, however. One officer said; *"The Army does a lot for us, the supplies are always in, no day in the field hungry, all-year-round medevacs (medical evacuations) and fine hospitals. And we never operate understrength."*

Many officers and NCOs feel they have started to learn the basics of jungle warfare. *"But next month I am going home,"* one said. *"For purely military considerations I think that officers and the sergeants at least should stay two or three years in Viet Nam. But you won't find anyone willing to be quoted on that because they all want to go home."*

Some officers have extended for another year, mainly to help their careers. Other officers have found that the

Infantry is still the roughest and most dangerous occupation in the Army, and seek softer spots.

The 173rd infantrymen have made some discoveries about field gear:

Their tropical olive-drab uniforms are light enough, but too fragile and sometimes tear when the troops leap from helicopters, leaving legs and thighs exposed to red ants, other jungle denizens.

They reject flak-vests because of the heat, and argue about steel helmets but continue to wear them for protection against shrapnel.

They find that C-ration chocolate is usually too old to eat, that night flares are too dim, that the Australians have better air mattresses and ponchos, and that bayonets are useless.

The Armalite "sweet sixteen" rifle is prized by all. Many troopers carry twice the basic load of ammunition. Some complain the base of the cartridge is too weak and breaks sometimes....

(continued...)



...The M79 grenade launcher, praised by most branches of the armed services, is not much good for jungle fighting, the 173rd finds, because of the hazard if the grenade bounces off a branch. Some paratroopers fire it like a mortar.

The paratroopers don't lug the big .50 caliber machine guns through the jungle, leaving the destruction of heavy enemy machine guns to the artillery. They would like to see the old 60mm mortar back in operation.

The 173rd also uses heavy artillery against snipers. "We are weaned on maximum utilization," said one officer. "We would rather fire 100 rounds of artillery to knock out a machine gun, than lose one man."

The infantrymen have also discovered that underwear is useless on long jungle forays. They carry more socks, and three extra water canteens.

Asked what he would like most in Viet Nam, a top sergeant of one company said, "I want less heroes and more soldiers in Viet Nam. Every guy over here thinks he deserves the Medal of Honor."

But the 173rd had plenty of genuine heroes, including two of three medals of honor won in Viet Nam this past year. The 1st Battalion of the 173rd is the most decorated battalion in the country.

Has the 173rd had tangible success in its year here?

Lt. Clarence Johnson, from Des Moines, Iowa, observes: "We Americans are an idealistic lot, and therefore after a year here we look for tangible evidence of success. But there is none after all our battles."

Other officers see the continued fighting posture of the 173rd as success enough.

Most of the men who came to Viet Nam with the 173rd one year ago have gone home now. New men have replaced them.

A company commander, Capt. Romey L. Brownlee, from Odessa, Tex., spoke some kind of epilogue for those who are going home from the unit: "Nobody who has seen our own dead will forget them, or the wounded, as they were brought in, or the memorial services after every operation."

"But we did not get used to being shot at. We have only learned to be more careful when we are shot at."

"Viet Nam has not made us war lovers."

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[In addition to *The Fayetteville Observer*, this article also appeared in the *173d Scrapbook* issued by the U.S. Army Command Information Unit, Washington, DC. [Photos added]

STEVEN FRANCIS BAEVICH

7-4-1935 ~ 8-17-2012

Steven F. Baevich, a former resident of Denton Circle in Springfield, MA died August 17, 2012 at 7:36 P.M. at Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. Born July 4, 1935, he was a member of the Springfield Boy's Club; attended Hooker Elementary School; Van Sickle Jr. High and Technical High School; and was active in the local basketball leagues. After High School he worked at Hamilton Standard, Windsor Locks until he was drafted into the Army. While proudly serving in the Army, he became a paratrooper serving with the 101st Airborne Division; helped activate the 173d Airborne Brigade; plus served with the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Okinawa, where he earned his Green Beret and Master Parachutist status. His combat experience was in Vietnam, during 1964 with Special Forces (Provisional); 1965-1966 with SOG; 1969-1970 with Headquarters, U.S. Army (Vietnam). His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal; Bronze Star/2 awards; Good Conduct Medal w/clasp, Bronze 4 loops; National Defense Service Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea); Meritorious Unit Commendations; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; Vietnam Service Medal w/1 silver and 2 Bronze stars; Combat Infantry Badge; U.S. Master Parachutist Badge; Republic of China Parachutist Wings; Vietnam Parachutist Wings. He retired in 1978 at the rank of Chief Warrant Officer. Mr. Baevich was preceded in death by his sister Wanda Basilisco of Florida; Daughter: Kim Louise Baevich of San Antonio, Texas; Mother: Sadie (Sopet) Baevich of Springfield and Father Stephen Baevich of Feeding Hills. He is survived by his best friend and beloved wife, of over 58 years Dorothy A. (Waite) Baevich, San Antonio, TX. formerly of Springfield. Cherished children: Son Gary F. Baevich and wife Teresa of Richmond, Texas; Daughters: Sharon A. Vasquez and husband Edward of Corpus Christi; Dawn E. Gammill of Corpus Christi, Texas. Grandson: Joseph W. Gammill of San Marcos; Grand Daughters: Dr. Stephanie A. Bond-Huie and husband William L. of Austin, TX, Alyssia M. Ford and husband Justin of Richmond Texas, Lauren N. Grady and husband Luke of Dallas, TX.; Great Grandson; Ethan B. Huie of Austin, TX. Steve desires NO FLOWERS but to send donations to the Wounded Warrior Project, 12672 Silicone Drive, Suite 105, San Antonio, TX 78265 in Honor and Memory of his and their service to our country. This obituary was composed by Steve who wishes to stress how dearly he loves his family and his Truly Wonderful Great Country.



**"It is well that war is so terrible,
or we should get too fond of it."**

General Robert E. Lee



Combat stress can cause soldiers long-term brain damage, research finds

September 24, 2012



A US marine has a close call after Taliban fighters opened fire. Photo: Reuters

THE STRESS OF COMBAT can change the way soldiers' brains are wired, resulting in a reduced cognitive function, such as the ability to focus on tasks. Published in the journal *PNAS* this week, the results showed that exposure to "combat stress" - including armed combat, enemy fire, combat patrols and improvised explosive device blasts - affected the structural integrity of the midbrain and its ability to interact with the pre-frontal cortex.

Julie Krans, a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of New South Wales, said the study findings illustrated that exposure to highly stressful situations wasn't just expressed via post-traumatic stress disorder. "[The soldiers] may not be suffering a clinical disorder but they are still impairing their daily life," she said. Dr. Krans said more attention should be given to the effect of combat stress on cognitive functions such as attention, memory, problem-solving and decision-making.

The research studied a group of NATO soldiers before they were deployed to Afghanistan and compared the results with tests taken six weeks after the troops returned from a four-month stint.

The researchers, from Dutch institutions including the University of Amsterdam and the Ministry of Defence,

used a range of measures including functional MRI to compare brain changes tied to "executive functions", which rely on attention and working memory for planning and decision-making.

The 33 soldiers who participated were selected from the NATO International Security Assistance Force peacekeeping operation. The researchers used 26 soldiers, who had never been deployed to a combat zone, as a control group.

The results showed reduced activity in the midbrain six weeks after exposure to combat stress.

Upon follow-up 18 months later, changes to the connections between the midbrain and the pre-frontal cortex remained, suggesting combat stress may have long-lasting effects on cognitive brain circuitry.

Sandy McFarlane, director of the Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies at Adelaide University, said the study demonstrated the need for regular time away from combat zones to allow soldiers' brains to "re-set". Professor McFarlane said the findings were consistent with similar studies, including an American one that found working memory was adversely affected by exposure to combat.

"[That study showed] this slowly corrects itself with time, except in those who go on to get post-traumatic stress disorder."

"Source: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/combat-stress-can-cause-soldiers-longterm-brain-damage-research-finds-20120903-25ami.html#ixzz25RJeUkn0>

[Sent in by John Arnold, 1RAR]



Go Navy!



Note: As a way of expanding readership of our newsletter and in an attempt to dig out more Sky Soldiers, we contacted all the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) representatives in the country, plus to get info on becoming a member. See Page 25 herein for information about VVA. We received this interesting note from a new Navy buddy, a VVA member, and new reader. Ed

Even The Navy Fought Shadows

Sure wish I knew you were looking for a VVA Chapter to join. We are the fastest growing VVA Chapter around. We received our charter on 9 January 2012 but didn't do much of anything until 3 March when we held elections and were sworn in by Ben Humphries, Florida State VVA President. We had 36 members and have just signed up our 81st member. Our goal is to have 100 by years end. If you need an application and can't get it off the internet I can mail you one.

I am a retired US Navy Chief Petty Officer (E-7). I served on seven different Destroyers, one being the U.S.S. Maddox (DD-731). If you remember we were attacked by North Vietnamese Torpedo Boats. We sunk one and between air cover and our gunners we damaged the other two and left them smoking and adrift. That was on 2 August 1964. Two days later we returned to the same area with the USS Turner Joy.

Both ships fought a battle with no enemy presence. At the time of the non-battle it was totally black-out dark. Our sonar and radar personnel were giving flawed information to our Combat Control Center which resulted in us fighting a two hour battle against shadows. One of the Navy's bigger embarrassments, because based on the second so-called engagement, President Johnson got Congress' blessing to declare war against the North Vietnamese.

In December of 1966 I received orders to report to Mare Island, Calif. to undergo three months of special ops small boat training which included all kinds of firearms, medical communications and a lot of physical fitness. There were 500 of us who were the initial all volunteer force who were entering into riverine warfare on converted landing craft. (To learn more Google Mobile Riverine Force Association).

I served on a Command and Communication's Boat (CCB-112-1). We arrived in-country in March of '67 and were sent to Vung Tau where we operated in the Rung Sat Special Zone for three months and then went South to Dong Tam. We operated in the Mekong River, and all of the canals and tributaries, all the way over to what is known as the "parrots beak" on the Cambodian border. Our job was to transport the 9th Inf Division to various points to meet the enemy head on, to act as a

blocking force when needed, to take Vietnamese Marines into battle and assist Seals as needed. Our best victory was an eight hour battle and killing 235 VC from a local battalion. That was a joint 9th Inf. Battalion and Vietnamese Marine operation. I left Vietnam shortly after Tet.

Gary Newman
USN

USS MADDOX

The USS *Maddox* (DD-731), an *Allen M. Sumner*-class destroyer was named for Captain William A. T. Maddox, USMC. She was laid down by the Bath Iron Works Corporation at Bath in Maine on 28 October 1943, launched on 19 March 1944 by Mrs. Harry H. Wilhoit, granddaughter of Captain Maddox, and commissioned on 2 June 1944.

Maddox screened the ships of the Fast Carrier Task Force during strikes against enemy targets in the western Pacific where she was struck by an enemy Japanese kamikaze aircraft off Formosa on 21 January 1945. She also covered the Marine landings at Okinawa, operated with the 7th Fleet in support of United Nations Forces during the Korean War, and alternated operations along the west coast and in Hawaiian waters with regular deployments to the western Pacific with the Seventh Fleet. At first steaming with fast carrier groups in the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, she headed south 18 May and established patrols off the coast of South Vietnam. During the Korean War, the *Maddox* participated in the Blockade of Wonsan, a 861 day siege bombardment of the city.



(continued...)



Gulf of Tonkin Incident

On 31 July 1964 she commenced her first leg of a DESOTO patrol in the Tonkin Gulf. Initially a routine patrol, it would later develop into a naval action with global repercussions. On 2 August 1964, *Maddox*, cruising in international waters 28 miles off the coast of North Vietnam, engaged three North Vietnamese Navy P4 Motor Torpedo Boats, from Torpedo Squadron 135. The P4's, sixty-six-foot-long aluminum-hulled torpedo boats each armed with two torpedoes which mounted a 550 lb TNT warhead and capable of exceeding 40 knots, approached at high speeds from several miles away. The commander of the 7th Fleet's Destroyer Division 192, Captain John J. Herrick, who was aboard the *Maddox* in charge of the mission, ordered the ship's captain (Commander Herbert Ogier) to have gun crews fire upon the torpedo boats if they came within 10,000 yards. When they did, the American sailors fired three rounds to warn off the North Vietnamese boats.

The NVN torpedo boats were commanded by three brothers: Van Bot commanded boat *T-333*, Van Tu commanded *T-336*, and *T-339* was commanded by Van Gian. The torpedo boats initially conducted their attack in numerical order, with *T-333* spearheading the assault. Maximum effective range for their torpedoes was 1,000 yards, but the USS *Maddox's* 5-inch gun's range was 18,000 yards. As the boats pressed home their attack and came within 5,000 yards, *T-333* attempted to run abeam of the *Maddox* for a side shot, while the remaining two boats continued their stern chase. The two chasers, *T-336* and *T-339*, fired first, but due to the *Maddox's* heavy fire of 5-inch shells, the torpedo boats had discharged their torpedoes at excessive range, all four underwater missiles missing their mark. *T-333* fired its torpedoes, without effect, but dueled the *Maddox's* 5-inch and 3-inch guns with its twin 14.5 mm machinegun, achieving one hit on the destroyer. The ship altered her course to avoid the torpedoes, which were observed passing on the starboard side.

Soon, four F-8 Crusaders from an aircraft carrier in the region, the USS *Ticonderoga*, arrived on the scene and attacked the three torpedo boats. The combination of fire from the *Maddox* and the F-8s severely damaged all three boats, and forced them to retreat to the bases from which they came. Several NVN sailors were wounded, and four were killed. No US sailors were killed or wounded, and the *Maddox* did not sustain serious damage; one of the four Crusaders sustained some 14.5 mm machinegun fire hits, as a large portion of his left wing was "missing", but managed to limp back to his carrier.

On 4 August, another DESOTO patrol off the North Vietnamese coast was launched by *Maddox* and the USS *Turner Joy*, in order to "show the flag" after the first incident. This time their orders indicated that the ships were to close to no more than 11 miles from the coast of

North Vietnam. During an evening and early morning of rough weather and heavy seas, the destroyers received radar, sonar, and radio signals that they believed signaled another attack by the North Vietnamese navy. For some two hours the ships fired on radar targets and maneuvered vigorously amid electronic and visual reports of enemies. At 0127 Washington time, Herrick sent a cable in which he admitted that the attack may never have happened and that there may actually have been no North Vietnamese craft in the area: "Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by *Maddox*. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action taken."

Since then, numerous accounts have supported the theory that there was no attack on 4 August at all, including North Vietnamese military commander Vo Nguyen Giap, who in 1995 admitted the 2 August attack but asserted that the 4 August attack had never occurred.

After arrival at Long Beach, *Maddox* remained in a leave and upkeep status until mid-January 1965, then conducted training exercises and repairs in preparation for her next WestPac deployment. She departed Long Beach on 10 July and commenced operating with the fast carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin in early August. For the next 4 months, *Maddox* alternated duty with the carriers with gunfire support missions off the coast of South Vietnam. At the end of November she sailed for home, arriving at Long Beach 16 December.

Maddox was decommissioned in 1969, and assigned to the Naval Reserve Force. She was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 2 July 1972. On 6 July 1972 she was transferred to Taiwan and renamed *Po Yang*. The ship was scrapped in 1985.

Maddox received four battle stars for World War II service, and six for Korean service.

Heading: MAILGRAM ----- (150415Z) ----- MAILGRAM

IT IS WITH DEEP PLEASURE THAT THE SQUADRON COMMANDER WISHES TO EXPRESS HIS GRATIFICATION FOR THE FINE AGGRESSIVE SPIRIT EXHIBITED BY ALL SHIPS OF THIS SQUADRON DURING THE RECENT ATTACK ON SICILY. ALL SHIP'S COMPANIES CONDUCTED THEMSELVES SPLENDIDLY THROUGHOUT. IT IS AN HONOR TO COMMAND SUCH AN OUTFIT. WE ALL MOURN GENE SARGFIELD AND HIS CREW IN THE MADDOX BUT WE KNOW HE WENT DOWN FIGHTING. LET THE LOSS TO THE MADDOX BE AN INSPIRATION TO US TO GREATER EFFORT TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR EXACTING TOLL FROM THE ENEMY WHEN WE NEXT MEET HIM.

From: COMDESRON-17	Date: 9/21/63	Originated: MAIL-G	Released by:
Action To: DESRON-17, MC LAHAN	Deferred: <input type="checkbox"/>	Radio: <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Routine: <input type="checkbox"/>	Visual: <input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Priority: <input type="checkbox"/>	Mailgram: <input type="checkbox"/>	Secret: <input type="checkbox"/>



~ This Month in History ~

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

~ October 1965 ~

4th: USSR launches Luna 7; crash lands on Moon.

7th: 50 mph gust carries 165 lb Robert Mitera's tee shot 447 yards at Miracle Hills in Omaha, Nebraska to score world's longest hole-in-one.



8th: Began on September 7th, Operation Big Red ends in Ben Cat, Puoc Vinh, Di An, Phu Loc. Following an airmobile assault, the 1/503rd destroyed two VC hospitals, a signal school, and several training camps. As a result of the combat operations, 17 village chiefs, some of whom had not been to their villages in over a year, returned. Elections and religious ceremonies were also held.



8th-14th: 173d Airborne conduct Operation Iron Triangle, a lightning strike by helicopters in Ben Cat following the first B-52 air strike in support of ground troops which resulted in 106 VC killed.

9th: Beatles' "Yesterday," single goes #1 & stays #1 for 4 weeks.

15th: The National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam stages the first public burning of a draft card in the United States.

16th: 100,000 protest Vietnam war nationwide in 80 cities, including London and Rome.

19th: North Vietnamese Army troops attack the U.S. Special Forces camp at Plei Me in a prelude to the Battle of Ia Drang Valley in South Vietnam's Central Highlands.



21st-27th: The 2/503rd and B/3/319th conduct Operation New Hope in Di An, Phu Loi, clearing the area in preparation for the establishment of the 1st Infantry Division in that area.

23rd: The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in conjunction with South Vietnamese forces, launch a new operation, seeking to destroy North Vietnamese forces in Pleiku Province in II Corps Tactical Zone (the Central Highlands).



October 1965

30th: 25,000 march in Washington in support of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The marchers are led by five Medal of Honor recipients.

30th: Just miles from Da Nang, United States Marines repel an intense attack by wave after wave of Viet Cong forces, killing 56 guerrillas. Among the dead, a sketch of Marine positions was found on the body of a 13-year-old Vietnamese boy who sold drinks to the Marines the day before.

~ October 1966 ~

Oct. '66: The Viet Cong's 9th Division, having recovered from battles from the previous July, prepares for a new offensive. Losses in men and equipment have been replaced by supplies and reinforcements sent down the Ho Chi Minh trail from North Vietnam.

2nd-24th: The U.S. 1st Air Cavalry Division conducts Operation Irving to clear NVA from mountainous areas near Qui Nhon.

2nd: LA Dodgers' Sandy Koufax clinches 3rd LA pennant in 4 years.



2nd-27th: The 5th and 6th Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment conduct search and destroy mission during Operation Bathurst in Phuoc Tuy Province.

3rd: The Soviet Union announces it will provide military and economic assistance to North Vietnam.

6th: LSD is declared illegal in the United States.




6th-10th: The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment conducts search and destroy mission during Operation Canberra, reinforced with an APC squadrom, to assist in securing Route 15 in the 1st Australian Task Force TAOR in support of the receipt and initial positioning of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Bear Cat.






October 1966

(continued...)



 **8th-Dec. 4th:** The 4/503rd, 173d Airborne Brigade conducts search and destroy mission during Operation Winchester, to relieve the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines and to occupy and maintain control of an assigned sector of the Da Nang TAOR.

 **9th:** Operation Sioux City, which began September 26 in Xom Cat, ends. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 173d Airborne Brigade along with artillery support deployed 23 kilometers northeast of Bien Hoa. They discovered numerous food, weapons and vehicular maintenance caches.


  **10th-17th:** 173d Airborne Brigade and 5RAR conduct Operation Robin in Phu My to Bear Cat. Elements of the brigade provided highway security from Phu My north to Bear Cat along Highway 15 for the newly arrived 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

13th: 173 US airplanes bomb North-Vietnam. (Bob Milner, A/2/503: There's that number again).

15th: LBJ signs a bill creating Department of Transportation (DOT).

15th: Black Panther Party was created by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

16th: Joan Baez & 123 other anti-draft protestors arrested in Oakland.

 **17th-26th:** The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment conduct search and destroy during Operation Gold Queanbeyan in Phuoc Tuy Province area including Nui Thi Vai and the region north and west of it.

25th: President Johnson conducts a conference in Manila with America's Vietnam Allies; Australia, Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, South Korea and South Vietnam.

26th: President Johnson visits U.S. troops at Cam Ranh Bay. This is the first of two visits to Vietnam made during his presidency.

President Johnson meets the Airborne in Vietnam.



26th: US aircraft carrier *Oriskany* catches fire in Gulf of Tonkin, 44 die.



The carrier was on station the morning of October 26, 1966, when a fire erupted on the starboard side of the ship's forward hangar bay and raced through five decks, killing 44 men. Many who lost their lives were veteran combat pilots who had flown raids over Vietnam a few hours earlier. *Oriskany* had been put in danger when a magnesium parachute flare exploded in the forward flare locker of Hangar Bay 1, beneath the carrier's flight deck. Subsequent investigation showed the flare functioned as designed and the cause of the fire was human error. A seaman accidentally ignited the flare, and in a panic, threw it into the weapons locker where the flares were kept for storage, instead of throwing it over the side into the water; this ignited all the flares in the locker and caused horrific damage. Some of her crewmen jettisoned heavy bombs which lay within reach of the flames, while others wheeled planes out of danger, rescued pilots, and helped quell the blaze throughout the next three hours. Medical assistance was rushed to the carrier from aircraft carriers *Constellation* and *Franklin D. Roosevelt*. Later investigation by Captain John H. Iarrobino of the *Oriskany* and analysis by the Naval Ammunition Depot in Crane, Indiana, showed that one in every thousand flares could ignite accidentally if jarred. Five crew members were court-martialed as a result of the incident but were acquitted. After this incident and others, the flare design used by the Navy was changed to a safer design immune to accidental ignition, and crews were increased to stabilize numbers so all activities could be properly supervised. *Oriskany* steamed to Subic Bay on October 28, where victims of the fire were transferred to waiting aircraft for transportation to the United States. A week later the carrier departed for San Diego, arriving on November 16.

(continued...)



San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard completed repairs on March 23, 1967, and *Oriskany*, with Carrier Air Wing 16 embarked, underwent training. She then was stationed out of San Francisco Bay on June 16 to take station in waters off Vietnam. Designated flagship of Carrier Division 9 in Subic Bay on July 9, she commenced "Yankee Station" operations on July 14. On July 26 she provided medical assistance to the fire-ravaged attack carrier USS *Forrestal*. On October 26, 1967, then-Lieutenant Commander John McCain flew off *Oriskany* in an A-4 Skyhawk on his 23rd bombing mission of the Vietnam War. He was shot down that day and was a prisoner of war until January 1973.



27th: Matt Drudge, American blogger, born.

29th: National Organization of Women (NOW) founded.

~ October 1967 ~

Oct. '67: A public opinion poll indicates 46 percent of Americans now believe U.S. military involvement in Vietnam to be a "mistake." However, most Americans also believe that the U.S. should "win or get out" of Vietnam.



October 1967

Oct. '67: 173d Airborne Brigade conducts Operation Bolling from 19 September '67 to 31 January '68 in Tuy Hoa/Phu Hiep. The 2/503rd along with A/3/319th returned to the coastal area to regroup and refit its units with men and equipment while conducting patrols in their TAO.

2nd: Thurgood Marshall sworn in as 1st black Supreme Court Justice.

3rd: Woodrow Wilson "Woodie" Guthrie, US folk singer/guitarist, dies at 55.

4th: 1st World Series since 1948 not to feature Yankees, Giants or Dodgers.

5th: Hanoi accuses the U.S. of hitting a school in North Vietnam with anti-personnel bombs.

10th: Operation Medina was a search and destroy operation conducted in the Hai Lang Forest Reserve of South Vietnam. It lasted till the 20th of October.

12th: US Secretary of State Dean Rusk states during a news conference that proposals by the U.S. Congress for peace initiatives were futile because of North Vietnam's opposition.

14th: Operation Greeley, 173d Airborne Brigade, which began on 18 June, ends in Dak To, Kontum. See the Special Edition on *The Battle of the Slopes*, Issue 29, June 2011.



***The Slopes* in 2011, as viewed from the banks of the Po Ko River. Today, peaceful, beautiful, and quiet.**

(Photo by Wambi Cook, A/2/503d)

15th: **Levitate the Pentagon?** On this date, the class clowns of the anti-war movement in the United States, the Yippies, led by Abbie Hoffman, led 50,000 people to an 'Exorcism of the Pentagon'. They had announced their intent to, by means of their combined psychic energy, levitate the Pentagon and exorcise it of the evil spirits that were killing Americans and Vietnamese people thousands of miles away.

(continued...)



The Pentagon was protected by more than 2500 Army troops and US Marshals. As the group surrounded the Pentagon and began chanting 'Ommmmm', the US Marshals moved in and began arresting demonstrators. A photograph taken at that demonstration was to become a symbol of the American anti-war movement. The photograph showed a protester putting a daisy into a police officer's gun. The addition of flowers to readied weapons was the order of the day. While a total of 681 demonstrators were arrested, others continued to approach the soldiers and put flowers in the barrels of bayoneted M-14 rifles. One girl, dancing as she approached the soldiers, kept asking 'Will you take my flower? Please do take my flower. Are you afraid of flowers?' The Pentagon didn't move noticeably.



At the Pentagon

17th: The Battle of Ong Thanh was a battle of the Vietnam War which saw the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry (the "Black Lions"), ambushed and subsequently decimated by a well-entrenched and prepared National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF), or Viet Cong, regiment outnumbering the Americans almost 10-to-1.

17th: "Hair" premieres on Broadway.

19th: Amy Carter, President Carter's daughter/peace activist, born.

20th: Seven KKK members are convicted of conspiracy in the 1964 murders of three civil rights workers.

20th: A purported bigfoot is filmed by Patterson and Gimlin.



This proves it....he's real.

21st-23rd: Anti-war protesters march on and storm the Pentagon. "Diggers" exorcise the Pentagon. Overall 35,000 – 55,000 demonstrators are at the pentagon, 647 are arrested. In London, protesters try to storm the U.S. embassy.

26th: The Government eliminates draft deferments for those who violate draft laws including burning draft cards or interfering with military recruitment for the war.

27th: Four people from Baltimore pour blood on selective service records.

28th: Julia Roberts, Smyrna Georgia, actress (Mystic Pizza, Pretty Woman), born.



31st: President Johnson reaffirms his commitment to maintain U.S. involvement in South Vietnam.


31st: Nguyen Van Thieu took oath of office as 1st president of South Vietnam.


~ October 1968 ~

Oct. '68: Operation Sealord begins the largest combined naval operation of the entire war as over 1200 U.S. Navy and South Vietnamese Navy gunboats and warships target NVA supply lines extending from Cambodia into the Mekong Delta.



October 1968

 **Oct. '68:** The 173d Airborne Brigade conducts Operation Walker from January 16 '68 to 31 January '69, in An Khe.

 **Oct. '68:** The 173d Airborne Brigade conducts Operation Cochise from 30 March '68 to 31 January '69 in Bong Son.

11th: Apollo 7 was the first manned mission in the United States Apollo space program, and the first manned US space flight after a cabin fire killed the crew of what was to have been the first manned mission, AS-204 (later renamed Apollo 1), during a launch pad test in 1967. It was a C type mission—an 11-day Earth-orbital mission, the first manned launch of the Saturn IB launch vehicle, and the first three-person US space mission. The crew was commanded by Walter M. Schirra, with Command Module Pilot Donn F. Eisele, and Lunar Module Pilot R. Walter Cunningham,

(continued...)



12th: 19th Olympic Games open at Mexico City, Mexico.

14th: The United States Department of Defense announces that the United States Army and United States Marines will be sending about 24,000 troops back to Vietnam for involuntary second tours

16th: During Olympics Tommie Smith & John Carlos give black power salute.



20th: Jacqueline Kennedy marries Aristotle Onassis on the island of Scorpios.

21st: The U.S. releases 14 North Vietnamese POWs.

27th: In London, 50,000 protest the war.

31st: Operation Rolling Thunder ends as President Johnson announces a complete halt of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam in the hope of restarting the peace talks.

~ October 1969 ~

Oct. '69: An opinion poll indicates 71 percent of Americans approve of President Nixon's Vietnam policy.



Oct. '69: The 173d Airborne Brigade conducts Operation Washington Green from 15 April '69 to 1 January '71, in Binh Dinh Province.



October 1969

1st: Concorde 001 test flight breaks sound barrier.

5th: Monty Python's Flying Circus begins airing on BBC.

9th: Supremes release "Someday We'll Be Together".

10th: Brett Favre, NFL quarterback (Green Bay Packers-Super Bowl 31), born.

12th: Sonja Henie, figure skater (Olympic-gold-1928, 1932, 1936), dies at 57.

14th: Race riots in Springfield, Mass.

15th: Declared Peace Day there are 500,000 protesters nationwide.

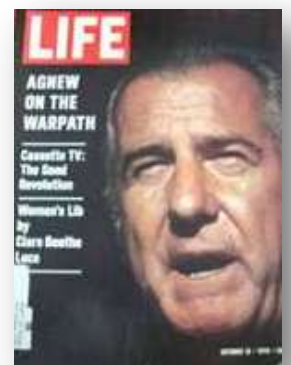
16th: Met's Cleon Jones awarded 1st base when shoe polish on ball proves he is hit by a pitch, he scores on a HR in World Series. The "miracle" New York Mets win the World Series.

29th: Supreme Court orders end to all school desegregation "at once".

31st: Race riot in Jacksonville, Florida.

~ October 1970 ~

In October Nixon announces a plan for a cease fire and announces that a further 40,000 American troops will be withdrawn from South Vietnam by the end of the year. As a result of all the turmoil, pressure, and disillusionment concerning the war, legislation is passed which denies the administration funds for the introduction of ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand but does not include a proposed ban on further operations elsewhere in Southeast Asia.



October 1970

2nd: Plane carrying Wichita State University football team crashes killing 30.

(continued...)



4th: Janis Joplin, singer, born January 19, 1943, dies from a reported overdose of heroin.

"Don't compromise yourself. It's all you've got."

Janis Joplin

"You can destroy your now by worrying about tomorrow."

Janis Joplin



4th: Herbert Schmitz makes highest parachute jump from a tower by leaping from a 1,984 ft TV mast in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

7th: During a TV speech, President Nixon proposes a "standstill" cease-fire in which all troops would stop shooting and remain in place pending a formal peace agreement. Nixon announces a new five-point peace proposal to end the Vietnam War. Hanoi does not respond.

8th: Matt Damon, Cambridge, Massachusetts, American actor (Good Will Hunting, Ocean's trilogy, Bourne trilogy), born.

9th: Khmer Republic (Cambodia) declares independence.



Khmer Rouge. Now these were some freaky bastards. One of their mottos: "To keep you is no benefit. To destroy you is no loss."

24th: South Vietnamese troops begin a new offensive into Cambodia.

26th: "Doonesbury" comic strip debuts in 28 newspapers.

28th: US/USSR sign an agreement to discuss joint space efforts.

30th: The worst monsoon to hit the area in six years causes large floods, kills 293, leaves 200,000 homeless and virtually halts the Vietnam War.

~ October 1971 ~

1st: Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida opens.

3rd: Running un-opposed, President Thieu of South Vietnam is re-elected.

9th: Members of the U.S. 1st Air Cavalry Division refuse an assignment to go out on patrol by expressing "a desire not to go." This is one in a series of American ground troops engaging in "combat refusal."

11th: Switzerland recognizes North Vietnam.

11th: Chesty Puller, the most decorated Marine in history, dies.

Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller (June 26, 1898 – October 11, 1971) was an officer in the United States Marine Corps. Puller is the most decorated U.S. Marine in history, and the only Marine to be awarded five Navy Crosses. During his career, he fought guerrillas in Haiti and Nicaragua, and participated in some of the bloodiest battles of World War II and the Korean War. Puller retired from the Marine Corps in 1955, spending the rest of his life in VA.



12th: "Jesus Christ Superstar" opens at Mark Hellinger NYC for 711 performances.

13th: Sacha Baron Cohen, Hammersmith, London, comedian/actor (Ali G, Borat, The Dictator), born.

14th: 2 killed in Memphis racial disturbances.

15th: The start of the 2500-year celebration of Iran, celebrating the birth of Persia.

20th: Snoop Doggy Dogg [Calvin Broadus], Long Beach, California, rap singer (What's My Name, Gin & Juice), born.

31st: The first Viet Cong POWs are released by Saigon. There are nearly 3000 Viet Cong prisoners.



October 1971

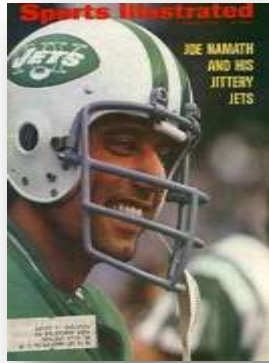
(continued...)



~ October 1972 ~

1st: Louis Leakey, English anthropologist, dies at 68.

8th: The long-standing diplomatic stalemate between Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho finally ends as both sides agree to major concessions. The U.S. will allow North Vietnamese troops already in South Vietnam to remain there, while North Vietnam drops its demand for the removal of South Vietnam's President Thieu and the dissolution of his government.



October 1972

12th: Enroute to her station in the Gulf of Tonkin, a racial brawl involving more than 100 sailors breaks out injuring 46 aboard the United States Navy aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk*

16th: Henry Kissinger awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

16th: **Leo G. Carroll**, actor (Topper, Man From Uncle), dies at 80. Leo Grattan Carroll was born in Weedon, England on October 25, 1892, to Irish parents. He became an apprentice wine merchant at the age of fifteen but caught the acting bug and made his professional debut on the London stage in 1911. During World War I, Carroll served in the infantry and fought in France, Greece and Palestine, where he was put out of action by a bullet and hospitalized for two years.



17th: Chuck Berry's "My Ding-a-Ling," is #1. (Don't get caught!)

22nd: In Saigon, Henry Kissinger and South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu meet to discuss a proposed cease-fire which had been worked out between Americans and North Vietnamese in Paris. Thieu rejects the proposal and accused the United States of conspiring to undermine his regime.

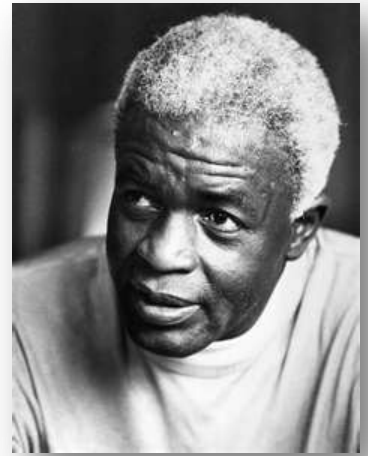
22nd: Operation Linebacker I ends. U.S. warplanes flew 40,000 sorties and dropped over 125,000 tons of bombs during the bombing campaign which effectively disrupted North Vietnam's Easter Offensive.

23rd: Nixon impeachment begins.

24th: President Thieu publicly denounces Kissinger's peace proposal.

24th: **Jackie Robinson**, 1st professional black baseball player in the big leagues (Brooklyn Dodgers), dies at 53.

In 1942, Robinson was drafted and assigned to a segregated Army cavalry unit in Fort Riley, Kansas. Having the requisite qualifications, Robinson and several other black soldiers applied for admission to an Officer Candidate School (OCS) then located at Fort Riley.



Although the Army's initial July 1941 guidelines for OCS had been drafted as race-neutral, practically speaking few black applicants were admitted into OCS until after subsequent directives by Army leadership. As a result, the applications of Robinson and his colleagues were delayed for several months. After protests by heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis (then stationed at Fort Riley) and the help of Truman Gibson (then an assistant civilian aide to the Secretary of War), the men were accepted into OCS. This common military experience spawned a personal friendship between Robinson and Louis.

Upon finishing OCS, Robinson was commissioned as a second lieutenant in January 1943. Shortly afterward, Robinson and Isum were formally engaged. After receiving his commission, Robinson was reassigned to Fort Hood, Texas, where he joined the 761st "Black Panthers" Tank Battalion. While at Fort Hood, 2LT Robinson often used his weekend leave to visit the Rev. Karl Downs, President of Sam Houston College (now Huston-Tillotson University) in nearby Austin, Texas; Downs had been Robinson's pastor at Scott United Methodist Church while Robinson attended PJC.

An event on July 6, 1944 derailed Robinson's military career. While awaiting results of hospital tests on the ankle he had injured in junior college, Robinson boarded an Army bus with a fellow officer's wife; although the Army had commissioned its own unsegregated bus line, the bus driver ordered Robinson to move to the back of the bus. Robinson refused. The driver backed down, but after reaching the end of the line, summoned the military police, who took Robinson into custody. When Robinson later confronted the investigating duty officer about racist questioning by the officer and his assistant, the officer recommended Robinson be court-martialed. Robinson's commander in the 761st, Paul L. Bates, refused to authorize the legal action.

(continued...)



Robinson was summarily transferred to the 758th Battalion where the commander quickly consented to charge Robinson with multiple offenses, including, among other charges, public drunkenness—even though Robinson did not drink.

By the time of the court-martial in August 1944, the charges against Robinson had been reduced to two counts of insubordination during questioning. Robinson was acquitted by an all-white panel of nine officers. The experiences Robinson was subjected to during the court proceedings would be remembered when he later joined Major League Baseball and was subjected to racist attacks. Although his former unit, the 761st Tank Battalion, became the first black tank unit to see combat in World War II, Robinson's court-martial proceedings prohibited him from being deployed overseas, thus he never saw combat action.

After his acquittal, he was transferred to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, where he served as a coach for army athletics until receiving an honorable discharge in November 1944. While there, Robinson met an ex-player for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, who encouraged Robinson to write the Monarchs and ask for a tryout. Robinson took the ex-player's advice and wrote Monarchs' co-owner Thomas Baird.



LT Robinson receives a salute from his nephew Frank in 1943.

Robinson's major league debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers brought an end to approximately sixty years of segregation in professional baseball, known as the baseball color line. After World War II, several other forces were also leading the country toward increased equality for blacks, including their accelerated migration to the North, where their political clout grew, and President Harry Truman's desegregation of the military in 1948.

Robinson's breaking of the baseball color line and his professional success symbolized these broader changes and demonstrated that the fight for equality was more than simply a political matter. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that he was "*a legend and a symbol in his own time*", and that he "*challenged the dark skies of intolerance and frustration.*"

According to historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, Robinson's "*efforts were a monumental step in the civil-rights revolution in America ... [His] accomplishments allowed black and white Americans to be more respectful and open to one another and more appreciative of everyone's abilities.*"

Robinson was also known for his pursuits outside the baseball diamond. He was the first black television analyst in Major League Baseball, and the first black vice-president of a major American corporation. In the 1960s, he helped establish the Freedom National Bank, an African-American-owned financial institution based in Harlem, New York. In recognition of his achievements on and off the field, Robinson was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.



Rachel Robinson (third from left) accepts the posthumous Congressional Gold Medal for her husband from President George W. Bush in a March 2, 2005 ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda. Also pictured are Nancy Pelosi (left) and Dennis Hastert (right).

26th: Radio Hanoi reveals terms of the peace proposal and accuses the U.S. of attempting to sabotage the settlement. At the White House, now a week before the presidential election, Henry Kissinger holds a press briefing and declares "*We believe that peace is at hand. We believe that an agreement is in sight.*"

30th: President Richard Nixon approves legislation to increase Social Security spending by US\$5.3 billion.

~ October 1973 ~

6th: Yom Kippur War begins as Syria & Egypt attack Israel.

10th: Political scandal results in the resignation of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew who pleads guilty to tax evasion. He is replaced by Congressman Gerald R. Ford.



October 1973
(continued...)



16th: Kissinger & Le Duc Tho jointly awarded Nobel peace prize.

16th: Gene Krupa, US swing drummer (Sing Sing Sing), dies at 64.

17th: 5-month oil embargo by Arab states against US & Netherlands begins.

20th: President Nixon proclaims Jim Thorpe greatest athlete of 1st ½ century.

James Francis "Jim" Thorpe (Sac and Fox (Sauk): *Wa-Tho-Huk*, translated as "Bright Path"; May 28, 1888 – March 28, 1953) was an American athlete of mixed ancestry (Native American and Caucasian). Considered one of the most versatile athletes of modern sports, he won Olympic gold medals for the 1912 pentathlon and decathlon, played American football (collegiate and professional), and also played professional baseball and basketball.



He lost his Olympic titles after it was found he was paid for playing two seasons of semi-professional baseball before competing in the Olympics, thus violating the amateurism rules. In 1983, 30 years after his death, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) restored his Olympic medals.

Of Native American and European American ancestry, Thorpe grew up in the Sac and Fox nation in Oklahoma. He played as part of several All-American Indian teams throughout his career, and "barnstormed" as a professional basketball player with a team composed entirely of American Indians.

He played professional sports until age 41, the end of his sports career coinciding with the start of the Great Depression. Thorpe struggled to earn a living after that, working several odd jobs. Thorpe suffered from alcoholism, and lived his last years in failing health and poverty.

In a poll of sports fans conducted by ABC Sports, Thorpe was voted the Greatest Athlete of the Twentieth Century out of 15 other athletes including Muhammad Ali, Babe Ruth, Jesse Owens, Wayne Gretzky, Jack Nicklaus, and Michael Jordan.

20th: The Six Million Dollar Man premieres on ABC.

20th: US president Nixon fires Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox.

24th: Yom Kippur War ends, Israel 65 miles from Cairo, 26 from Damascus.

~ October 1974 ~

9th: Oskar Schindler, German businessman (b. 1908), dies.

13th: Ed Sullivan, TV host (Ed Sullivan Show, Toast of the Town), dies at 73.

14th: 8th Country Music Association Award: Charlie Rich.

15th: National Guard mobilizes to restore order in Boston school busing.

25th: U.S. Air Force fires 1st Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

29th: Law bans discrimination of sex or marital status in credit application.

30th: "The Rumble in the Jungle". Muhammad Ali KOs George Foreman in 8th round in Kinshasa, Zaire.



October 1974

~ October 1975 ~

6th: Henry Calvin, actor (Sgt Garcia-Zorro), dies at 57.



Henry Calvin



October 1975

11th: "Saturday Night Live" premieres with guest host George Carlin.

21st: Coast Guard Academy 1st allows women to enroll.

22nd: US Air Force Tech Sergeant Leonard Matlovich, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, is given a general discharge after appearing in his Air Force uniform on the cover of *Time* magazine with the headline (printed in all uppercase) "I Am A Homosexual."

####





SKY SOLDIERS KIA ~ OCTOBER



~ *Lest We Forget* ~

1965

A Note from The Virtual Wall

James Grayson Berry, SP4, Age 20, Barboursville, WV

How many times I wish you were here to guide me through the tough times and the happy times. You were always my rock, the brother who taught me how to ride a bicycle and always waited on Santa with me. There is not a day that I don't think about you and wonder what life would have in store for you if you were not taken from us at such a young age. Don and I miss you so very much. As we have grown up, I think Don has finally accepted his lil sister. I will always have respect for what you and countless others have given for our FREEDOM. Love Always from your Little Sister, Cammie Berry Martin

Michael G. Brancato, PFC, Age 21, Los Angeles, CA
Richard Burgans, PFC, Age 21, Newark, NJ
Wilbert Claude Davis, SGT, Age 25, Springfield, MO



Wilbert Davis

Ronnie M. Duncan, PFC, Age 23, Wake Forest, NC
James Walter Floyd, PFC, Age 19, Winston-Salem, NC
Lawrence A. Franklin, SGT, Age 23, Wenatchee, WA
Ronald Walter Gullely, SP4, Age 21, Franklin, IL
We love you and miss you. Uncle Ron

Adherene Louis Haines, SP4, Age 20, Sumter, SC
Russell M. Heath, PFC, Age 20, Philadelphia, PA
Harry E. Himmelreich, PFC, Age 19, Union Beach, NJ
Jesse Ray Hughes, Jr., SP4, Age 20, Bloomfield, MO
Kenneth Monroe Hyett, SP4, Age 21, Allegan, MI
Larry Vernon Lake, PFC, Age 19, Inglewood, CA
George Gregorio Luis, SP4, Age 20, Pahoa, HI
Leroy Franklin Minnix, PFC, Age 19, Luckey, OH
Abell Moses, PFC, Age 20, Natchitoches, LA
Duane Michael Nelson, PFC, Age 22, Sioux City, IA
**Milton Lee Olive, III, PFC,
Age 18, Chicago, IL**



Medal of Honor Recipient



Milton Olive



B Company, 2/503rd Infantry, lost two men on 22 Oct 1965, PFC Olive, and SP4 George G. Luis of Pahoa, Hawaii.

On 21 April 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Medal of Honor to Milton L. Olive, Jr., saying in part:

"The Medal of Honor is awarded for acts of heroism above and beyond the call of duty. It is bestowed for courage demonstrated not in blindly overlooking danger, but in meeting it with eyes clearly open.

That is what Private Olive did. When the enemy's grenade landed on that jungle trail, it was not merely duty which drove this young man to throw himself upon it, sacrificing his own life that his comrades might continue to live. He was compelled by something that is more than duty, by something greater than a blind reaction to forces that are beyond his control.

He was compelled, instead, by an instinct of loyalty which the brave always carry into conflict. In that incredibly brief moment of decision in which he decided to die, he put others first and himself last."

PFC Olive was the second of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's ten posthumous Medal of Honor recipients and the first of twenty African-Americans who earned the Medal in Vietnam - 16 of them posthumously. His fellow Chicagoans have further commemorated his life and courage by naming a junior college, a park, and a portion of the McCormick Place Convention Center after him. Milton L. Olive, III was born near Ebenezer, Holmes County, Mississippi, and is buried in the West Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Lexington, Mississippi.

Ernest President, SP4, Age 24, Fort Pierce, FL
Eugene Merlyn Rick, SFC, Age 32, Coon Rapids, MN
James Joseph Reilly, Jr., SFC, Age 39, Washington, PA



James Reilly

(continued....)

David L. Rizor, PVT, Age 21,
Washington, PA



David Rizor

Wilfred R. Robillard, PFC, Age 18, Manchester, NH
Thomas James Schindler, SGT, Age 25, Baltimore, MD
Ronald Keith Schukar, PFC, Age 21, Vandalia, IL

John Milton Starkes, Jr., PFC, Age 23, New York, NY
Edward Larry Stewart, SGT, Age 26, Bluefield, WV
Curtis Ray Tarkington, PFC, Age 19, Scottsdale, AZ

Curt...You are gone but not forgotten ... Our class of '64 was one of the best ... sadly that happy carefree era came to an end ... VietNam destroyed our world and took the best young men our country had to offer. My condolences to your family I also know what it is like to lose a son only I got to have 34 years before my son was taken from me. Thank you, Curt, for your guts and courage ... so very sad you were taken from this earth

Van Williams, PFC, Age 19, New York, NY

1966

George Belanger, PFC, Age 19, Waterville, ME
David Wesley Branch, PFC, Age 20, Daytona Beach, FL
Nathaniel Brown, SSG, Age 27, Charlotte, NC
Leonard Wesley Burns, SP5, Age 26, Jacksonville, FL
John Francis Dalola, III, PFC, Age 19, Pennel, PA
Michael James De Marsico, PFC, Age 21
John Green Dickerson, III, PVT, Age 19, Gary, IN
Randal Clyde Engram, 1LT, Age 23, Miami, FL
David Harold Freeman, SGT, Age 27, Gadsden, AL
James Edwards Gardner, 1LT, Age 25, Kalamazoo, MI
Terry Eugene Hemmitt, PFC, Age 19, Kansas City MO
Douglas Lee Jones, 1LT, Age 24, Erwin, TN
John Henry Jones, PFC, Age 21, Enterprise, AL
Edward M. McIlvain, III, SP4, Age 21, Wynnewood, PA
Emery George Mikula, 1LT, Age 24,
Jersey City, NJ



Emery Mikula

Josh Palm, Sr., PFC, Age 22, Alexandria, LA
Eleftherios Pantel Pappas, SP4, Age 23, New York, NY
Thomas Respress, PFC, Age 22, Toledo, OH
Willie Junius Roundtree, PFC, Age 19, Fayetteville, NC
Robert Smith, Sr., SGT, Age 34, Alexandria, LA
Frank Michael Sokolowski, PFC, Age 18, Chesea, MA
William Leroy Stubbe, PFC, Age 21, Central City, NE

George Allen Waldron, PFC, Age 20, San Jose, CA

1967

John Wayne Caver, SGT, Age 19, Longview, TX
Rodney Barrette Cline, PFC, Age 20, Garden City, MI

Rodney was a schoolmate of mine. He and I were artists. He was truly gifted as an artist; when we were given an assignment in class he was the first one done and he always got an A -- he was unbelievable. He loved making models of cars, any kind of art work, and girls. We liked school so much we went all year ... summer school wasn't so hot but we got to meet girls from other communities. Rodney was the first person I knew with a brand new motorcycle, a 250cc Honda Scrambler... he rides with me every time I fire up my Harley. We miss ya, brother. We could sure use your art work on our bikes. You are not forgotten.

Dyno Don Fraser

Larry Franklin Coggins, CPL, Age 22, Troy, NC
Walter Wayne Cunningham, SGT,
Age 23, Trenton, MI



Walter Cunningham

Frank B. Dunford, III, SSG, Age 19, Covington, KY

Frank was a good person, a good soldier and a great friend. There has always been a hole in the heart of anyone who knew Frank. When I was an FNG Frank extended his friendship, support, skill and knowledge to teach me how to function and survive. He had a great personality and a smile that I can still see 40 years after his death. If anyone knows where Frank is buried please contact me. From a friend, Lauren C.

Dates

Robert Lee Fleck, CPL, Age 19,
Costa, WV



Robert Fleck

Willie Franklin, SSG, Age 29, Detroit, MI
Nathaniel Harris, SP4, Age 20, Bessemer, AL
Terry Lee Martin, SP4, Age 19, Minneapolis, MN
Daniel R. Meador, SP4, Age 20, Vinton, VA

(continued....)



Jimmy Malone, SSG, Age 21, Norfolk, VA
Elec McCoy, SGT, Age 20, Oswego, SC
Lavern Leo Salzman, SGT, Age 21, Montclair, CA

1968

Donald Curtis Hamm, SGT, Age 20, Mobile, AL
Timothy Michael Porter, 1LT, Age 20, Pittsburgh, PA
Ronnie Len Russell, PFC, Age 18, Stone Park, IL
Gregory William Stewart, CPL, Age 23, Tucson, AZ
John Robin West, CPT, Age 28, Billings, MT
George A. Vanderhoff, Jr., CPL, Age 19, Oak Ridge, NJ

MY BROTHER GEORGE (BUTCH). You are in my heart always. Love, Georgia Colon

My brother Butch was the light of my life and always a hero to me. He was a very special guy to all who knew him and a friend to all. Butch is one of the reasons my son has served in the military for 16 years. I am proud of my brother and my son. I send out a special prayer to all our boys young and old who uphold our country's freedoms. Thank you.

From his sister, Susan Presciti

George,

You are still with us and will never be forgotten. From your brothers of the Headhunter Platoon C/1/503, 68-69. Until we meet again ... Airborne! A memorial from a fellow Squad/Team member in Vietnam, who wishes to be anonymous.

1969

Danny Elbert Appleton, SP4, Age 19, Sanger, CA
William Buel, II, SSG, Age 22, Knoxville, TN
Richard Bruce Canning, SSG, Age 24, Memphis, TN
Ronald Lamar Cannon, SP4, Age 18, Albany, GA
Henry Wayne Garrett, SSG, Age 21, Montvale, VA



Henry Garrett

Larry Ray Glover, SSG, Age 21, New Whiteland, IN
James Henry Graham, SGT, Age 21, Garden Grove, CA
Roger Joseph Kopke, SSG, Age 21, Green Bay, WI
Tony Lee O'Neal, CPL, Age 20, Gary, GA
Keith Mason Parr, SGT, Age 19, Mount Carmel, IL
Harvey Claude Reynolds, SSG, Age 37, Louisville, KY

***I do not fear an army of lions,
if they are led by a lamb.***

***I do fear an army of sheep,
if they are led by a lion.***

-- Alexander the Great --

***Staff Sergeant Harvey C. Reynolds was a lion.
John Yeager and Frank J. McCloskey***

Thomas Michael Shroba, SSG, Age 21, Chicago, IL
John Henry Taylor, CPL, Age 20, Jackson, TN
Stanley Richard Tokarski, SGT, Age 20, New York, NY
Edward Anthony Ulibarri, CPL, Age 19, Salinas, CA
Frank Norman Williams, CPL, Age 20, Dalzell, SC
Melvin M. Yamashita, SGT, Age 23, Honolulu, HI

1970

James Wheeler Dickey, SGT, Age 20, Alexandria, VA
Manuel De Leon Domine, SGT, Age 24, Fort Sill, OK
David Gaddie, Jr., SSG, Age 28, Hope Milles, NC
James Thomas German, 1LT, Age 26, St. James, NY
David Wayne Larson, PFC, Age 22, Funk, NE
Oscar Robert Layporte, CPL, Age 21, Canton, OH
Jimmy Eugene Marchesi, PFC, Age 23, Littleton, CO
Harold Clifton Marsh, SSG, Age 21, Laurinburg, NC



Harold Marsh

Ralph Peterson Miller, III, 1LT, Age 26, Detroit, MI



Ralph Miller

Dad, There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about you. I wish I had been old enough to remember but that was not the way it ended up. I love and miss you, Dad. Scott

Scott, I served with your dad at LZ Uplift in 1970, he was a fine man and someone you can be proud of. I was with B/3/503 and was in the field at the time the incident occurred so all my knowledge of it is second hand. I do know of one officer who was in the TOC at the time of the attack and if you can find him, he could possibly have some answers for you. I'm not sure of his first name but it was Lt. Lady, he was a good officer and respected by his men. I wish you only the best and offer my deepest condolences on the loss of your dad.

John J. O'Brien, B/3/503

Roberto Lerma Patino, SGT, Age 30, Corpus Christi, TX
Paul Edward Reed, SSG, Age 30, Franklin, PA
Brian Dale Upright, SP4, Age 18, Starrucca, PA
Larry I. Rougle, SSG, Age 25, West Jordan, UT

(continued...)



2003

David Bernstein, 1LT, Age 24, Phoenixville, PA
John Hart, PFC, Age 20, Bedford, MA

2005

Troy Ezernack, SSG, Age 37, Shreveport, LA
Joseph Cruz, 11B2, Age 22, Whittier, CA

2007

Joshua C. Brennan, SGT,
Age 22, Ontario, OR



Joshua Brennan

Hugo V. Mendoza, SP, Age 29,
Glendale, AZ



Hugo Mendoza

Larry I. Rougle, SSG, Age 25,
West Jordan, UT



Larry Rougle

#####

Sources:

173d KIA web site

Photos and testimonials from the Virtual Wall.

*O my brother, do not now tears for me weep
As fingers of death into me relentlessly seep
For I've done my best, my sacred duty to keep.*

*Now, by cruel war's blow laid low
It is a far better place to which I go
Freed from sweat, guns, hatreds enemies sow.*

(Excerpt from *A Soldier is Dying*, by Gary Jacobson)



Sky Soldier Continues His Good Work for Vets in Florida

Grant Will Help Needy Veterans in Brevard and State. Titusville-based NVHS awarded \$1M for cause.



Sky Soldier George Taylor of NVHS

In a recent *FloridaToday*, military issues journalist R. Norman Moody reported veterans in Brevard County and around the state could benefit thanks to a \$1 million state grant National Veterans Homeless Support was awarded earlier this year.

According to Moody's report, the non-profit now is ready to begin accepting applications for 20 matching grants of up to \$5000. to organizations around the state to hold "Stand Downs," one-day events where needy veterans receive medical and dental help, as well as clothing assistance and other services. NVHS also will assist the organizations helping veterans with instructions on how to plan and hold a Stand Down.

"We've created a model that we want to duplicate throughout Central Florida," said George Taylor, president and founder of the Titusville-based NVHS who served with the 1/503d in Vietnam. "We'll help them through the process. We want to do new Stand Downs in the State," Taylor added.

In his report Moody stated another \$500,000. of the grant money will go for the purchase and remodeling of four houses which will serve as transitional homes for homeless veterans.

"It's a blessing to take this grant and make a difference for our veterans," Sky Soldier Taylor said.



One of Our New Sailor Buddies



Here's another one of our new Sailor buddies who's reading about you Sky Soldiers. He was introduced as 'Windy', so we of course asked him how that moniker came to being. Here's the skinny. Ed

My real name is Alexander M. Winkowski, Jr., but here is the story of Windy.

My father was a part-time clown and used to clown for the parish picnics, carnival and when we went on vacation to Wisconsin where my mother was born. He would clown there as *Windy the Clown*. This was because we lived in Chicago, the 'windy city'.

I joined the Navy and when I reported aboard my first ship people either put in or took out letters from my last name, which is 3 syllables, win-kow-ski.



Windy & Ada

Being born in Chicago it was easier to be 'Windy' than anything else. Since no one else had that nickname I used it to keep from correcting people. Besides, a funny thing was, on the first ship there was a Marine liaison officer whose last name was Winowski. The reason for a Marine on board was because the ship was an Attack Transport. That was APA-45, USS Henrico.

Sorry for the chatter, but this type of messaging takes a little longer than verbal comm's.

The (above) pic is from 2002 when we had *The Moving Wall* in our town. I was in the Chapter Honor Guard, which has since then dissolved. That is my wife of 49 years, Ada. Don't know how she lasted this long.

Windy



APA-45 USS Henrico, Vietnam era 1960s. She earned three Battle Stars in WWII, and served in both Korea and Vietnam.

Welcome Home 503rd

I received the United News films of the Japanese surrender in 1945. At the start of the film the "United News" logo is shown. Behind the United News logo marching troops are shown.

The first troops are cadets. The second troops - the ones with summer flying helmets - are the 503rd. Somewhere I have the same photo (a still picture). I was in the front row somewhere.

We rode a train from Bragg to DC, paraded, got a few hours to roam Washington, then boarded the same train back to Carolina.

Thanks again for our Lexington reunion...

Jim Mullaney
503rd PIR, WWII



This is the patch from 503rd PIR WWII trooper Jim Mullaney's A-2 leather jacket. Jim writes...*"I was issued this jacket in June or July 1942 at Fort Bragg. Everyone didn't get one and there was some grumbling when yours truly - a lowly 2nd Lt - received his. Seems I had a close friend in supply who made these decisions. His name is Elden Campbell and he presently lives in Virginia. After arriving in Aussieland, Elden was in charge of the parachute packing and drying sheds in Gordonvale. After all these years I still remember him as if it were yesterday."*





VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA (VVA)

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1978, Vietnam Veterans of America is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA is organized as a not-for-profit corporation and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

VVA'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE

"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

GOALS

VVA's goals are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans, to create a new identity for this generation of veterans, and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

ORGANIZATION

Over 65,000 individual members
48 state councils
650 local chapters

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Aggressively advocate on issues important to veterans
Seek full access to quality health care for veterans
Identify the full range of disabling injuries and illnesses incurred during military service
Hold government agencies accountable for following laws mandating veteran's health care
Create a positive public perception of Vietnam veterans
Seek the fullest possible accounting of America's POW/MIAs
Support the next generation of America's war veterans
Serve our communities

NATIONAL OFFICE

Vietnam Veterans Of America
8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Phone: 301-585-4000
Fax: 301-585-0519
Toll Free: 1-800-882-1316
Web: www.vva.org

VA to Screen Vets for Lung Cancer in Early Stages; VVA Praises Decision: Will Save Many Lives

(Washington, D.C.) -- *"Any time a program can be initiated that can save millions of dollars, and far more importantly, save precious lives, it deserves serious consideration and positive action,"* said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). *"And that is precisely what the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs has done by agreeing to move forward on CT screening for veterans at high risk for lung cancer."*

Each year, some 8,000 veterans enter the VA healthcare system with advanced stage lung cancer. After five years, only about 15 percent of them survive. Said Rowan, *"If the cancer cells can be detected when they are small and localized and then removed, thousands of lives can be saved."* Rowan noted that in 2010 the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health terminated one of the largest trials in its history which proved that screening individuals at high risk for lung cancer with CT scans could dramatically reduce deaths from lung cancer.

Vietnam veterans--indeed all who have seen war up close and personal--are known to be at higher risk for lung cancer than their civilian counterparts because of exposure to a variety of toxic chemicals and carcinogenic substances during their time in the military as well as higher rates of smoking.

The Lung Cancer Alliance has long advocated for the institution of CT scanning for lung cancer in its earliest stages at VA medical facilities, and VVA has taken up the charge. *"Too many of our veterans are succumbing to this awful disease,"* Rowan said, *"and if this CT scanning can benefit even a few thousand of them, it will be more than worth it."* Rowan praised VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki for *"looking at the numbers and making the right decisions to save lives."*

Admiral T. Joseph Lopez (USN, Ret), a Vietnam veteran who is Chairman of the Board of the Lung Cancer Alliance, and Laurie Fenton Ambrose, its President and CEO, praised VVA for its consistent and strong support during the years of effort to bring about this breakthrough.

"VVA was the lead veterans service organization on this from day one," said Fenton Ambrose. *"We are grateful to VVA for all their help and look forward to continuing to work with them to make sure that CT screening, especially for Vietnam veterans, is implemented quickly. Lives are literally at stake."* [Source: www.vva.org]



~ Famous People Who Served in the Military ~

Lloyd Millard Bentsen, Jr.

(February 11, 1921 – May 23, 2006) was a four-term United States senator (1971–1993) from Texas and the Democratic Party nominee for Vice President in 1988 on the Michael Dukakis ticket. He also served in the House of Representatives from 1949 to 1955. Bentsen was born in Mission in Hidalgo County in south Texas.



He graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in 1942. Upon graduation, he served in the United States Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945. After brief service as a private in intelligence work in Brazil, he became a pilot and in early 1944 began flying World War II combat missions in B-24s from Foggia, Italy with the 449th Bomb Group. At the age of 23, he was promoted to the rank of major and given command of a squadron of 600 men, overseeing the operations of 15 bombers, their crews, and maintenance units. In fifteen months of combat, Bentsen flew thirty-five missions against many heavily defended targets including the Ploesti oil fields in Romania, which were critical to the Nazi war production. Major Bentsen's unit also flew against communications centers, aircraft factories and industrial targets in Germany, Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Bentsen participated in bombing raids in support of the Anzio campaign and flew bombers against hard targets in preparation for the landing in southern France. He was shot down twice. Bentsen was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, one of the Air Force's highest commendations for achievement or heroism in flight. In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bentsen was awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. Before completing his military service, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

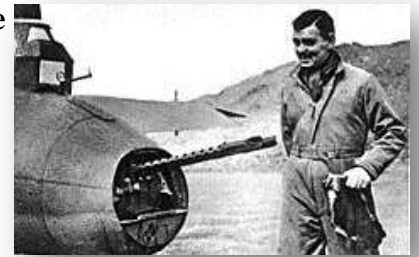
Morgan Freeman was born in Memphis, Tennessee. He has three older siblings. Freeman was sent as an infant to his paternal grandmother in Charleston, Mississippi. His family moved frequently during his childhood, living in Greenwood, Mississippi; Gary, Indiana; and finally Chicago, Illinois. Freeman made his acting debut at age 9, playing the lead role in a school play. He then attended Broad Street High School, later named Threadgill Elementary School, in Mississippi. At age 12, he won a statewide drama competition, and



while still at Broad Street High School, he performed in a radio show based in Nashville, Tennessee. Freeman loved to act, but flying—in particular the idea of being a fighter pilot—was in his heart of hearts. And so, upon graduating high school in 1955, Morgan turned down a partial drama scholarship at Jackson State University and joined the U.S. Air Force. The military, though, proved to be much different than what he'd expected. Instead of darting around the skies, Freeman was relegated to on-the-ground activity as a mechanic and radar technician. He also realized that he didn't want to be shooting down other people. *"I had this very clear epiphany,"* he told *AARP Magazine*. *"You are not in love with this; you are in love with the idea of this."* In 1959, Freeman left the Air Force and tried his fortunes out West, moving to Hollywood to see if he could make it as an actor, where he became a world famous actor, director and narrator.

William Clark Gable

(February 1, 1901 – November 16, 1960), known as Clark Gable, was an American film actor most famous for his role as Rhett Butler in the 1939 Civil War epic film *Gone with the Wind*, in which he starred



Gable with 8th AF, UK, 1943

with Vivien Leigh. His performance earned him his third nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actor. Later movies included *Run Silent, Run Deep*, a submarine war film, and his final film, *The Misfits* (1961), which paired Gable with Marilyn Monroe, also in her last screen appearance. In 1999, the American Film Institute named Gable seventh among the greatest male stars of all time. He was nicknamed 'The King of Hollywood.' Gable had earlier expressed an interest in officer candidate school (OCS), but he enlisted on August 12, 1942, with the intention of becoming an enlisted gunner on an air crew. Commanding General of the Army Air Forces Henry H. Arnold offered Gable a "special assignment" in aerial gunnery. Shortly after his enlistment, he was sent to Miami Beach, Florida, where he entered USAAF OCS Class 42-E on August 17, 1942. He completed training on October 28, 1942, commissioned as a second lieutenant. His class of 2,600 fellow students (of which he ranked 700th in class standing) selected Gable as their graduation speaker, at which Gen. Arnold presented them their commissions.

(continued...)



Gable reported to Biggs Army Air Base on January 27, 1943, to train with and accompany the 351st Bomb Group to England as head of a six-man motion picture unit. Gable was promoted to captain while with the 351st at Pueblo AAB, Colorado, for rank commensurate with his position as a unit commander. With James Stewart, Gable spent most of the war in the United Kingdom at RAF Polebrook with the 351st. Gable flew five combat missions, including one to Germany, as an observer-gunner in B-17 Flying Fortresses between May 4 and September 23, 1943, earning the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross for his efforts. During one of the missions, Gable's aircraft was damaged by flak and attacked by fighters, which knocked out one of the engines and shot up the stabilizer. In the raid on Germany, one crewman was killed and two others were wounded, and flak went through Gable's boot and narrowly missed his head. When word of this reached MGM, studio executives began to badger the U.S. Army Air Corps to reassign their most valuable screen property to non-combat duty. In November 1943, he returned to the United States to edit the film, only to find that the personnel shortage of aerial gunners had already been rectified. He was allowed to complete the film anyway, joining the 1st Motion Picture Unit in Hollywood. In May 1944, Gable was promoted to major. He hoped for another combat assignment but, when D-Day came and passed in June without further orders, he requested and was granted a discharge. His discharge papers were signed by Captain Ronald Reagan, Hollywood actor and eventual President of the United States. Gable completed editing of the film, *Combat America*, in September 1944, providing the narration himself and making use of numerous interviews with enlisted gunners as focus of the film. Adolf Hitler favored Gable above all other actors; during the Second World War, Hitler offered a sizable reward to anyone who could capture and bring Gable to him unscathed.



Stewart & Gable

Henry Benjamin "Hank"

Greenberg (January 1, 1911 – September 4, 1986), nicknamed "Hammerin' Hank" or "The Hebrew Hammer," was an American professional baseball player in the 1930s and 1940s. A first baseman primarily for the Detroit Tigers, Greenberg was one of the premier power hitters of his generation. He hit 58 home runs in 1938, equaling Jimmie Foxx's 1932 mark for the most home runs in one season by any



Taking the Oath

player between 1927 (when Babe Ruth set a record of 60) and 1961 (when Roger Maris surpassed it). Greenberg, a five-time All-Star, was twice named the American League's Most Valuable Player, and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1956. The Detroit draft board initially classified Greenberg as 4F for "flat feet". Rumors he had bribed the board and concern he would be likened to Jack Dempsey, who had received negative publicity for failure to serve in World War I, led Greenberg to be reexamined, and he was found fit to serve. Drafted in 1940, the first American League player to be drafted, his salary was cut from \$55,000 (\$912,000 today) a year to \$21 (\$300 today) a month. Greenberg was not bitter, however, stating, *"I made up my mind to go when I was called. My country comes first."* After most of the 1941 season, however, he was honorably discharged when the United States Congress released men aged 28 years and older from service, being released on December 5, 1941, two days before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Greenberg re-enlisted and volunteered for service in the United States Army Air Forces, again the first major league player to do so. He graduated from Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a first lieutenant in the USAAF. He eventually served overseas in the China-Burma-India Theater, scouting locations for B-29 bomber bases. Promoted to captain, Greenberg served 45 months, the longest of any major league player. Greenberg remained in uniform until the summer of 1945. In Greenberg's first game back after being discharged, on July 1, he homered.



1st Baseman Hammerin' Hank, 1937



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



~ 2012 ~



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

Contact:

Web: www.ripcordassociation.com



National Pathfinder Association Mini-Reunion and Business Meeting, October 19-22, 2012, The Holiday Inn Patriot, Williamsburg, VA.

Contact:

Dick Gillem

Eml: rucksack6@gmail.com



101st Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans 19th Annual Reunion, September 5-8, 2013. Reunion headquarters Best Western Ramokta Hotel, Rapid City, SD.

Contact:

Rodney Green

Reunion Coordinator

Eml: randhgreen@sio.midco.net

~ Other Reunions ~



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

Contact:

Web: <http://cibassoc.com>

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

~ 2013 ~



Special Forces Association National Convention 2013, June 26-30, 2013, Hyatt Regency Hotel, hosted by Chapter XV.

Contact:

Fred Solis, 201-491-2783

Pat Connolly, 210-826-8023



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, August 23-29, 2013, Las Vegas, NV. See Page 32 for details.

Contact:

Jim Bradley

Phn: 727-376-2576 (after 4:30 p.m. EST)

Eml: webmaster@173rdairborne.com

Web: www.2013Reunion.com



~ Correction ~

I received a phone call yesterday from Sam Raber. Of course you realize this is the paratrooper who sent the bulletin and pictures on Gordonvale to my father after the reunion in Lexington (see Issue 45, Pages 45-64). It appears that my Dad got his information wrong on Sam and his story. I had mailed the article that you had written for the newsletter to Sam and he called to correct the error about the story.

Sam wanted to inform us of the right information and thought for historical correctness you may want to note that at a future time.

Sam Raber was visiting Australia many years ago and decided to visit the Gordonvale area given his knowledge of the 503rd history there. While there he took pictures and learned more about the history. Sam was not a WWII 503rd Paratrooper. Sam was a Viet Nam era paratrooper with Bravo and Delta Co. 3/503rd, 173d Airborne Brigade and was in Viet Nam in '67-'68. He is retired from the U.S. Army.

Sam said that he really enjoyed talking with the WWII Vets at the reunion and just wanted to set the record straight. He thought the article was great.

We are sorry about the mix up but it is still a worthy story.

Thank you,

Lin Basham, SFC (Ret)

Daughter of Ray Basham, 503rd PIR WWII



3/503 Sky Soldier Sam Raber in Gordonvale, Australia

Paratrooper Dummy "Rupert" Used as Decoy on D-Day in Europe



From the Merville Bunker Museum in France. 2006. PAJ

Paratrooper dummy? Is that an oxymoron?

".....and then the fools jumped!"

How Paratroopers Respond

"All The Way!"

Paratrooper Response: *"Airborne!"*

"Airborne!"

Paratrooper Response: *"All The Way!"*

"Nice looking shoes."

Paratrooper Response: *"Airborne!"*

"Did you see the butt on her?"

Paratrooper Response: *"All The Way!!"*

"I'll buy the next round."

Paratrooper Response: *"ATFW!!"*

We're paratroopers, not English majors.



Facts about our mistress, *Miss Vietnam*

- ❖ Vietnam, formally the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia.
- ❖ With an estimated 91.5 million inhabitants as of 2012, it is the world's 13th most populous country, and the eight most populous Asian country.
- ❖ The name Vietnam translates as "South Viet", and was officially adopted in 1945.
- ❖ The country is bordered by China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest, and the South China Sea to the east.
- ❖ The Vietnamese became independent from Imperial China in 938 AD, following the Battle of Bach Dang River.
- ❖ Successive Vietnamese royal dynasties flourished as the nation expanded geographically and politically into Southeast Asia, until the Indochina Peninsula was colonized by the French in the mid-19th century.
- ❖ The First Indochina War eventually led to the expulsion of the French in 1954, leaving Vietnam divided politically into two states, North and South Vietnam.
- ❖ In 1986, the government initiated a series of economic and political reforms, which began Vietnam's path towards integration into the world economy.
- ❖ It was revived in the early 20th century by Phan Boi Chan's Viet Nam Vong Quoc Su (History of the Loss of Vietnam), and later by the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang.
- ❖ By about 1200 BC, the development of wet-rice cultivation and bronze casting in the Ma River and Red River floodplains led to the development of the Don Son culture, notable for its elaborate bronze drums.
- ❖ The bronze weapons, tools and drums of Don Son sites show a Southeast Asian influence which indicates an indigenous origin for the bronze-casting technology.
- ❖ By the early 10th century, Vietnam had gained autonomy, but not independence, under the Khuc family.
- ❖ During this time, the Nguyen expanded southern Vietnam into the Mekong Delta, annexing the central highlands of Tay Nguyen and the Khmer lands in the Mekong Delta.
- ❖ The Japanese occupation was a key cause of the Vietnamese Famine of 1945, which caused around two million deaths.
- ❖ A 300-day period of free movement was given, during which almost a million northerners, mainly Catholic, moved south, fearing persecution by the communists.

- ❖ In 1978, the Vietnamese military invaded Cambodia to remove from power the Khmer Rouge, who had been razing Vietnam border villages and massacring.
- ❖ Free-market reforms at the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in December 1986, reformist politicians upset by the country's lack of economic progress replaced the "old guard" government with new leadership.



Ho Chi Minh City, 2012

- ❖ Vietnam holds membership in 63 international organizations, including the United Nations, ASEAN, NAM, Francophonie and WTO.
- ❖ However, the Vietnam War destroyed much of the country's agrarian economy, leading the post-war government to implement a planned economy to revitalize agriculture and industrialize the nation.
- ❖ Thanks largely to these reforms, Vietnam achieved around 8% annual GDP growth between 1990 to 1997, and the economy continued to grow at an annual rate of around 7% from 2000 to 2005, making Vietnam one of the world's fastest growing economies.
- ❖ Vietnam operates 17 major civil airports, including three international gateways: Noi Bai serving Hanoi, Da Nang International Airport serving Da Nang, and Tan Son Nhat serving Ho Chi Minh City.
- ❖ The influences of immigrant cultures – such as the Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Hainan cultures, can also be seen, while the national religion of Buddhism is strongly entwined with popular culture.

Source:

www.thefreeresource.com/facts-about-vietnam-for-kids



Christopher Delano "Chris" Hall, Sr.

Chris, age 65, a lifelong resident of New Orleans, entered into eternal life to live with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Sunday August 26, 2012. Mr. Hall was a Vietnam Army Veteran who served with Bravo Company of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Son of Catherine Jackson Hall and the late Huebit Hall, Sr. Beloved husband of Shelia Charles Hall. Father of Christopher Delano Hall, Jr. Stepfather of Rodney Bernard Woods, Jr. (Demetrius). Brother of Sheila Francis (Karl) of Atlanta, GA, and the late Huebit Hall, Jr. and Ronald Hall. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Relatives and friend of the family, Pastor, Officer and members of First Street Peck Wesley United Methodist Church, employees of O'Brien House of Baton Rouge, LA, Bridge House and AT&T; The Faculty, Friends and Student Body of the Holy Cross Family, LSU Tiger Band, the Doctors and Nurses of Touro Infirmary, Stat Home Health and Touro at Home were invited to attend the Homegoing Service at First Street Peck Wesley Methodist Church. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the guestbook.



~Rest Easy Sky Soldier~

Hello everyone:

Please pass this to as many people as you can!!! The 4/319th FRG in Bamberg, Germany is having a fundraiser. They will be selling flags flown at FOB Airborne in Afghanistan. They will be flown on Sep 11, Nov 8th and Veteran's Day. If you want one or more please email the following address to get an order form - hbbfrg4319@yahoo.com



The more we get this around the more we can help the FRG!!! Luv Mommaski

Debora "Mommaski" Yashinski

Gold Star Chairperson
173d Airborne Brigade Association
Proud Gold Star Mother of
Sgt. Michael E. Yashinski
12/24/2003, Kirkuk, Iraq
173rd Airborne Brigade

Sgt. Michael E. Yashinski Served During Operation Iraqi Freedom

Michael, 24, of Monument, Colorado, was assigned to the 501st Forward Support Company, 173d Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy was killed Dec. 24, 2003, while running a communication wire in Kirkuk, Iraq.



It's safe to say that Michael Yashinski had the military in his blood — he was born at Camp Lejeune, N.C., where his father was a Marine. A high school wrestler and football player growing up in Monument, Colorado, Michael also had varied interests: an avid black-powder muzzle loading enthusiast, participant in tomahawk and knife-throwing events, and a re-enactor of events that involved mountain men and American Indians.

Sgt. Yashinski, was electrocuted Dec. 24 while running a communication wire in Kirkuk, Iraq. He was a paratrooper stationed in Vicenza, Italy. Survivors include his parents, James and Debora Yashinski of Irondale, Alabama.

"We are very proud of Michael's service to the nation and what he was accomplishing in his life," his father said.





OPERATION SIN CITY



26 - 29 August 2013

The 173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion

Hosted by:

Chicago and Florida Chapters

~ REGISTRATION FORM ~

Please print & copy form for additional names.

(Indicate shirt size for each individual. S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL)

Name: _____

Shirt Size: ___ Phn: _____ Eml: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Unit served with in the Brigade: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

~ Registration Fees ~

___ \$150. Per Member or Guest before 25 July 2013,

\$165. Per Member or Guest after 25 July 2013.

___ \$150. Gold Star Family Member

___ \$100. Per Vendor Table (173d Vendors only)*

___ \$75. Per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)

Free Active Duty Soldier (On Orders, i.e. Command, Color Guard)

Free Gold Star Luncheon (173d Gold Star Family Members)

___ \$25. Sky Soldier Adoption Program* "Have your meals on me".

___ Total of check enclosed in USD.

**Sky Soldier Adoption Program: We have active duty Sky Soldiers fly in from Italy who must pay airfare, hotel, meals and reunion fees costing them thousands of dollars. We try and offset their cost by giving them a break on the registration cost. You can help out by purchasing a meal voucher so our active duty Sky Soldiers traveling in from Europe will have reduced cost. Please contribute to our Sky Soldier Adoption Program and let him/her have their meals donated and sponsored by you!*

Please Make Checks Payable to:

173d ABA 2013 Reunion

and mail to:

2013 Reunion

5640 Wellfield Road

New Port Richey, FL 34655

Host Hotel

The Orleans

4500 W. Tropicana Ave.

Las Vegas, Nevada 89103

Phone: 702-365-7111 Toll Free: **800-675-3267**

ID Code **A3SSC08**

Room Rate: \$29. per night + Tax and fees.

Rate good for 25 to 29 August 2013. Or register on-line at www.orleanscasino.com/groups

Refunds if notified by 25 July 2013, no refunds after 25 July 2013.

Only authorized 173d vendors may hold a raffle, one per table in the vendors' area only.

173d Gold Star Family Members of our KIA's: Spouse, Parent, Sibling, Children)

Reunion Contact:

Jim Bradley

727-376-2576 after 4:30 pm EST (Please)

www.2013Reunion.com





Making A Difference

Throughout life we often encounter people who make a difference. Sometimes we envy their talents. Other times we opine that they should get a reward for going the extra mile. If you know someone who has made a difference regarding our Brigade and wish to recognize their contributions, YOU can nominate them to be designated as *Distinguished* or *Honorary Members* of the 503d Infantry Regiment.

Those designated as Distinguished Members of the Regiment must have served in one of the 503d Infantry Battalions. Those designated as Honorary Members of the Regiment can be soldiers, their spouses, or individuals who have made a contribution or provided a service to our Brigade or the Army but who have not served in any of the 503d Infantry Battalions.

The basic criteria for designation as a Distinguished or Honorary Member of the Regiment is service to the soldiers of the Brigade, or the Army, of an exceptional/continuing nature, including those that perpetuate the history and traditions of the 503d Infantry Regiment. AR 600-82, Chapter 5-3 sets the criteria for selection of these individuals.

In 2012, three individuals were appointed by the Office of the Secretary of the Army as Distinguished Members of the 503d Infantry Regiment, joining fifty living peers of all ranks from civilians through 4-star generals. They were Colonel Andrew Rohling, CSM Jeffrey Hartless and LTC (Ret) Hal Nobles.

All that is required to make a difference is to send a letter outlining the accomplishments of the individual you wish to nominate, and a brief biography, to Ken Smith at 1160 Lake Royale, Louisburg NC 27549. All nominations must be received by 15 January 2013.

Think about it. Step Forward. Nominate someone who has contributed significantly to our Brigade and our Army. Honor someone who has made a difference!

Ken Smith
A/D/2/503d

kvsmith173@gmail.com

The Last to Fall

Richard Van de Geer, in a letter to a friend before he was killed, May 15, 1975, officially the last American to die in the Vietnam War, *Time*, April 15, 1985.

"I can envision a small cottage somewhere, with a lot of writing paper, and a dog, and a fireplace and maybe enough money to give myself some Irish coffee now and then and entertain my two friends."

Who Dat?

One Strac Lookin' Trooper



Last month we asked who this strac lookin' trooper is outside his hooch at Camp Zinn? We also suggested it must have been the early years, as he's still wearing all those red, white & blue patches which say "aim here". We further stated he did multiple tours in Vietnam and went on to make the army a career, retiring a SFC, but he never *bragged* about it. Our friend is **Lee Roy Braggs** of Fayetteville, NC, former RTO in the 2/503d battalion command group in '65/'66. Lee distinguished himself with extraordinary bravery during the battle at LZ Zulu Zulu on 16 March 66 on Operation Silver City when his battalion was surrounded by a superior force of VC and NVA. *Welcome Home RTO, job well done.*

Martin (Brooklyn Boy) H. Scanlon A Geronimo Battalion Sky Soldier

Martin (Brooklyn Boy) H. Scanlon died June 16th, 2012. A celebration of his life was held in Brooklyn on Sunday, July 29th. He served with Bravo Company, 4/503d, November '67 – July '68. Martin's home was Plymouth, MA. Notice provided by Peter Klausner, A/4/503.

All the Way Brooklyn Boy. Rest Easy Brother.



U.S. Army Generals ~ Of the Sky Soldier Kind



BG Walter E. Adams
BG Frank Akers
BG Richard J. Allen
MG Herbert L. Altshuler
MG John W. Barnes
LTG Jared L. Bates
MG Kenneth P. Bergquist
MG Gerald H. Bethke
MG Lucien E. Bolduc
BG I.R.W. Brumfield
BG David Buckner
LTG James T. Callaghan
LTG Thomas P. Carney
LTG Carmen Cavezza
MG Richard Chegar
BG Paul Y. Chinen
MG John R.D. Cleland
MG Erle Cocke
MG Fletcher C. Coker
MG David E.K. Cooper
MG Hubert Cunningham
GEN John R. Deane, Jr.
GEN Wayne A. Downing (CINC)
MG Fred Elam
LTG Jack B. Farris
MG Michael T. Gaw
BG Wendell Gilbert
BG Robert Glacel
BG John H. Grubbs
MG James R. Hall
LTG Henry J. Hatch
MG Michael D. Healey
MG John A. Hemphill
MG Patrick J. Hessian
GEN Kenneth Joelmores
GEN Robert RisCassi
BG John Hooper
BG James M. Hutchesn

MG James H. Johnson
MG Robert M. Kimmitt
MG John Leide
BG Joseph J. Leszczynski
MG Kenneth Leuer
MG James M. Link
BG William L. Mayville
MG Thomas Neadham
MG Stephen M. Nichols
BG John D. Nicholson
MG Elmer Ray Ochs
LTG M. Collier Ross
LTG Edward A. Partain
BG Randolph Poore
BG Robert C. Shaw
GEN Henry H. Shelton (CJCS)
MG Stan R. Sheridan
BG John W. Smith
MG Paul F. Smith
MG Lee Surut
BG Wesley B. Taylor
LTG Richard Timmons
MG H.J. Von Kaenel
BG Huba Wass de Czege
LTG Alexander Weyand
MG John S. Wieringa
MG Ellis Williamson
GEN Jonnie E. Wilson
MG William P. Winkler
LTG David S. Weisman
BG Robert E. Wynn
BG James Yarbrough

Source: www.173rdairborne.com/generals.htm





John Leide, Major General USA (Ret)

MG John “Jack” Leide is a native of Auburn, New York. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Georgetown University, and a Juris Doctor degree from Syracuse University College of Law. Inducted into the Phi Alpha Delta legal honorary society, he served as fellow at the Harvard University John Fitzgerald Kennedy School of Government.



Jack completed the Infantry Basic Course in 1958, and after holding various infantry platoon-level assignments, he graduated from the Infantry Advanced Course in 1963 prior to being assigned to E Company, 325th Battle Group, 82nd Airborne Division.

After commanding an 82nd Airborne Division rifle company (B/3/325) both at Fort Bragg and the Dominican Republic, he was selected as aide-de-camp to the Commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division and 18th Airborne Corps. During 1966-1967, in Vietnam, he again commanded an airborne rifle company (C/2/503) with the 173d Airborne Brigade. In 1968, after transferring to the Military Intelligence Corps and joining the Army’s Foreign Area Officer Program, specializing in China, he served as Chief, China, Korea, and Japan Military Branch in the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence’s Special Research Detachment. In 1969-1970, he again served in Vietnam as Commander, 101st Military Intelligence Company then as Plans and Operations Officer, G-2, 101st Airborne Division.

On return to CONUS in 1970, Major General Leide studied Chinese Mandarin at the Defense Language Institute and graduated from the Armed Forces Staff College in 1972. In 1974, he was the first and only U.S. officer to attend and graduate from the Chinese Army Command and General Staff College.

Jack then served as Assistant Army Attaché in Hong Kong until 1978 when he returned to CONUS to command a Special Forces Battalion at Fort Bragg. He then was the G2 of the 82nd Airborne Division until 1981 when he attended the National War College.

In 1982 he was selected as Military Assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, with major responsibilities in the fields of counterterrorism, special operations, and international security assistance with particular emphasis on African affairs. Throughout *Operations Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*, he served as General Schwarzkopf’s chief of intelligence (J-2).

His military awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Defense Superior Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star for Valor with three oak leaf clusters, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the CIB, Special Forces Tab, OSD Service Badge, Army Staff Badge, and he is a Master Parachutist. Jack was awarded the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement for his duties in China and the Liberation Medal first class by the government of Kuwait for his duties during *Operations Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*. He was also awarded the highest Medal given to foreigners by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA), and was awarded the PLA parachutist certificate and badge after jumping with Chinese paratroopers.

MG Leide was inducted into the U.S. Defense Attaché Hall of Fame and has been awarded the Knowlton Medal by the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Corps Association. Additionally, he was inducted into the U.S. Military Intelligence Hall of Fame.



C/2/503 CO, circa 1966.
The “Cap” in the boonies.

Jack is married to the former Ann H. Searing of Auburn, NY. They have three children: John F., a LTC in the U.S. Army; Jeffrey; and Meridith. Today, he is Senior Consultant to intelligence and security companies and government agencies, and Senior Manager for national and international business ventures.



~ Some Celebrities Who Visited Troops in Vietnam ~



Ann Margret



Roy Rogers & Dale Evans



First Bob Hope Show in Vietnam



The "Duke", John Wayne



Nancy Sinatra



Wayne Newton

(continued....)





Sammy Davis, Jr.



Rocky Marciano visiting wounded at 3rd Field Hospital



Clint Eastwood



1st Lt. Jack Price, of the 2/503rd Infantry Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade's "Bravo Bulls," gets his unit's lifetime subscription to *Playboy* magazine from playmate Jo Collins, above right, and her Far East tour chaperone, Joyce Challecki, at the Army hospital at Bien Hoa, 1966.



Lou Rawls



"It's just too much," said Jo Collins of an impromptu machine gun demonstration by 173d Airborne Brigade troopers.



173d Support Battalion



The battalion was originally constituted March 26th, 1963 in the Regular Army as the 173d Support Battalion, and assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade. On June 25th, 1963, the Battalion was activated on Okinawa.

After service during the Vietnam War, it was relieved from assignment to the 173d Airborne Brigade on January 14th, 1972 and inactivated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky on October 21st, 1972.

For service during the Vietnam War, the battalion was awarded one Presidential Unit Citation, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, one Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and one Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal.

The unit was reactivated on March 16th, 2005 in Vincenza, Italy. The unit served at the Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Job Well Done Troopers!!

~ J.L. "Humper" Frazier, Sr. ~

J.L. Frazier, Sr., son of a sharecropper in Grenada, Mississippi, grew up on a farm. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1966, and insisted on becoming an Airborne Ranger.



After completion of his Basic and AIT training, and graduation from airborne training at Ft. Benning, GA and Ranger School, he was assigned to Company A, of the 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) in Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

Upon arrival in Bien Hoa on March 7, 1967, he began what would be a two-year stint with "The Herd." During his tours of duty in Vietnam, LT Frazier (aka "Humper"), was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, three Bronze Stars, two Overseas Bars, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, National Defense Service Medal and Purple Heart. He also earned his Parachutist Badge and two weapons medals (Sharpshooter M-14, and Expert M-16).

LT Frazier's most memorable moment during his time in Vietnam was in Dak To when four AK-47 rounds found their target, but thankfully, he pulled through. 'He tried harder'.

VA Announces Montana Community-Based Outpatient Clinic

WASHINGTON—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected the contractor to build a new community-based outpatient clinic in Billings, Montana. "This new facility will ensure that Montana's Veterans continue to have the world-class medical care that they've earned through their service to our Nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

One of Secretary Shinseki's top priorities is increasing access to VA care and services for Veterans wherever they live. VA is expanding access in a three-pronged effort that includes facilities, programs and technology.

The contract was awarded to Billings VA 2008 LLC on Aug. 31 and will create approximately 399 construction jobs. Once the facility is completed in spring 2014, VA will pay an annual rent of approximately \$1.8 million.

The contract calls for construction of a one-story building on Spring Creek Lane in Billings. The project includes 52,141 square feet of space for specialty services for Veterans, including primary care, mental health, specialty care, laboratory, pharmacy, outpatient surgery, dental, audiology, radiology, physical therapy, and vision. Space is also allocated for Veterans Benefits Administration offices. In addition, 230 parking spaces will be constructed.

The new facility will be located near the existing 26,000 square foot CBOC located on the west end of Billings at Spring Creek. The clinic will annually provide outpatient services for 11,000 Veterans in eastern Montana.

Last year, VA spent \$575 million providing health care, benefits and services to Montana's 102,000 Veterans. VA operates a medical center and ambulatory care clinic in Ft. Harrison, a dozen community-based outpatient clinics and four Vet Centers across the state, and a community living center in Miles City.

VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system. With a health care budget of about \$50 billion, VA expects to provide care to 6.1 million patients supporting 920,000 hospitalizations and nearly 80 million outpatient visits this year. VA's health care network includes 152 major medical centers and more than 800 community-based outpatient clinics.

This initiative is part of the department's program for infrastructure improvements for the Veterans health care system. It includes approximately \$11 billion in major construction projects and a similar amount of facility acquisitions through lease agreements. ###



Fighting the VA? Help is available.

DAV Charitable Service Trust Supports Expanded Court Representation

For many years, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) programs have provided disabled veterans with the best—and the most—representation at all levels of the VA claims process. The DAV pro bono program at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has just completed its most active year ever, providing representation to more than 700 veterans at the court. That number of cases represents a significant share of the court's docket. The expansion has been made possible by generous support from both the National Service Foundation and the Charitable Service Trust.

A small number of significant cases from the veterans court can receive further review at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Those cases, which involve only significant questions of law affecting large groups of veterans, have the potential to change the landscape of veterans benefits. Richard Marbes, Trust Board Chairman, said, *"The significance of these cases is too great for us to do anything but ensure that DAV leads the pack here, just as it does at all levels of the claims process."* The Trust Board of Directors backed up the Chairman's sentiments with dollars, allocating significant funds to ensure that DAV clients with significant cases have the opportunity for expert representation at the federal appeals court. *"Just like all DAV representation, this advocacy will be invaluable to the veteran and yet will cost him or her nothing,"* Marbes added. "We are proud to provide the fuel to make DAV's engine roar loudly at the court."

DAV General Counsel Christopher Clay said, *"The generosity of Charitable Service Trust will allow DAV to shape the significant issues in veterans law for decades to come."* **Clay added a reminder that DAV clients who have adverse outcomes at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) may be contacted by a representative of the DAV program if initial review suggests that further appeal is warranted.**

"The nature of court practice makes it impossible for DAV to provide representation in every case," said Clay. "Those selected for representation will be contacted in plenty of time. Nonetheless, veterans are completely within their rights to file appeals themselves or with some other advocacy organization," he said. "It is important to read the appeal rights notice included with the BVA decision and to make sure that key deadlines are not missed."

Under From Down

Good morning gentlemen (and ladies),

On Saturday September 8th 2012, the Vietnamese Veterans Association and Vietnamese Community in Victoria conducted a Service at The Shrine in Melbourne to mark the 50th Anniversary of Australians who fought with them and on their behalf in Vietnam during the years 1962-72.

Awards were handed out to representatives of ALL units who served and this included the Australians who formed the 1RAR Group to serve with the 173d Airborne Brigade during 1965-66 and 5RAR on Operation Hardihood.

I had been invited to attend the service to accept this award on your behalf but, unfortunately, was unable to do so due to illness and doctor's directions to rest at home. However it was received on my behalf by a mate who has since given it to me to hold.

I will be bringing it to the Chapter 27 meeting at East Malvern RSL on Sunday September 23 and, with your permission I intend to take it to Adelaide over the period of January 16-20, 2013 when 8 Platoon 'Body Snatchers' hold their reunion.

Naturally, photos of the award will be taken for publication in our next newsletter and the *Sitrep* magazine.

John Arnold
1RAR

Semper Fi Sir!

Marine Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?"

Army Paratrooper: "Sure, buddy."

Marine Officer: "That's no way to address a commissioned officer! Now let's try it again!"

Marine Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?"

Army Paratrooper: "NO, SIR!"



COME JOIN THE

WORLD WAR II AIRBORNE DEMONSTRATION TEAM

173rd Airborne Brigade

50th Anniversary Commemorative JUMP

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team and the 173rd Airborne Brigade are working together to plan a 173rd 50th Anniversary Commemorative JUMP at the WWIIADT headquarters in Frederick, Oklahoma, August 2013, just prior to the 173rd's 50th anniversary reunion in Las Vegas. Those prior airborne qualified jumpers wishing to jump from our C-47 must re-qualify by attending a 4 day refresher jump school at Frederick. The cost will be \$450, which covers room, training, aircraft time and two jumps. To learn more about the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team please visit www.wwiadt.org, and download an Application Form for this exciting opportunity.



For more information please contact recruiters www.wwiadt.org
Dan Cutting at 248-755-5766 or SGM Herrington at 931-801-3251.

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

This came across our desk in an email, and that's all we know about it. But, it sure sounds tempting. Ed



The 173d Airborne Brigade kicks off the new year in January 1966, with Operation Marauder in the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta.



“A U.S. paratrooper moves away after setting fire to house on bank of the Vaico Oriental River, 20 miles west of Saigon on Jan. 4, 1966, during a "scorched earth" operation against the Viet Cong in South Viet Nam. The 1st battalion of the 173rd airborne brigade was moving through the area, described as notorious Viet Cong territory.” (AP Photo/Peter Arnett)

Dak To, Hill 875

The upcoming November issue of our newsletter will be dedicated to telling the story of the men who fought and survived and in memory of those who died on Hill 875 at Dak To in November 1967. This report will be presented in a format similar to the coverage of *The Battle of the Slopes* in Issue 29, June 2011.

We're inviting all Sky Soldiers and others who were in or around the battle to send in by October 15th your stories, recollections, photos, news clippings, official records and all other material about the battle for inclusion in this historical record.

As long as a Sky Soldier walks this earth, they will not be forgotten.

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NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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~ RARE PHOTO OF 1940 TOUR DE FRANCE ~



“In light of the British success in the Tour de France recently, I thought you would like to see a rare photo of the 1940 one. Because it is black & white, it is difficult to spot the yellow jersey.” [Sent in by Bob Long, 1RAR/RAA]

3rd Battalion 503rd Infantry (ABN)

The Best Damn Fighting Unit in Viet Nam

I am working on a current email and address Roster of 3rd Batt Vets who served in Vietnam during the years 1967 - 1971. I was with the 3rd Batt '70-'71.

This is an effort to identify and locate fellow 3rd Batt Vets. If you served with 3rd Batt and want a copy of the current email and address Roster as I update it and will agree to share your address info with others, I'll be happy to send it to you. Your info will not be directly shared beyond our Sky Soldier Brotherhood and does not contain SSN's. Our Roster is currently 42 pages.

If you do Facebook, then check us out at our page [3rd Batt 503rd \(Abn\)](#). You can check me out at www.silvertonrealty.com and also on Facebook. Thanks for sharing this with your 3rd Batt buddies.

Mason Branstetter, LTC (Ret)
E/3/503d, '70-'71
mason@silvertonrealty.com

Note: O.K. Mason, we'll let pass that remark about the 3rd Battalion being *The Best Damn Fighting Unit in Viet Nam* this time, but only this time. You 2/503 guys; take a deep breath, relax, count to 10.

What's that you say? You were referring to the *173d Brigade*? Never mind. ☺

~ A Pic From The Past ~

Converted some more slides, and since Jack Owens, in your Newsletter 45, remembers so much detail about his time with the Herd, thought readers might like to see a shot of him as a 2nd Lieutenant and a newbie in Oct. 1966 timeframe. Helps add a visual aura to his verbal descriptions. He must have kept a journal! Thanks for the memories, Jack! In the pic, painting the chair (on left in photo) is Art Fumerton, I am in the center, and Jack is on the right. We were all platoon leaders in A/2nd Bn at the time. (Can't remember why we were painting the chair red).

Bob Guy
A & HHC, 2/503d
July '66-July '67



No Picasso's at Camp Zinn, but they are *Trying Harder*.
This photo reminds one of a light bulb.
Now, how many 2d Lieutenants does that take? ☺



Sixty Years After Integration, Opportunities for Minority Soldiers Abound

By Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor
2nd Brigade Combat Team
82nd Airborne Public Affairs



Unveiling Triple Nickle memorial.

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – By the time the Army was officially desegregated on July 26, 1948, Joe Murchison was already a proud member of the 82nd Airborne Division. A year earlier, his all-black Paratrooper unit, the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, had been absorbed into the 82nd at the personal request of the division's legendary commander, Maj. Gen. James Gavin. As a result, Murchison and his fellow "Triple Nickles" were some of the first black Soldiers to work and train side by side with white Soldiers.

At the time, the ugly racism of the Jim Crow-era South was inescapable, Murchison said. Off post, there were "white" and "colored" drinking fountains, blacks were forced to ride in the back of the bus, and restaurants wouldn't serve them. Even on Fort Bragg, white and black Soldiers had separate living quarters, and blacks were barred from the Officer's club. But in the field, at the range, or jumping out of an airplane, Murchison and the other black paratroopers felt they were the equal of anyone, he said. Their special airborne status earned them respect from troops of every color.

"Paratroopers were Paratroopers, whatever their color was," Murchison said.

In the 60 years since the Armed Services were desegregated by President Harry Truman's Executive Order 9811, opportunities for blacks and other minorities in the military have grown by leaps and bounds. In Murchison's day, blacks were often assigned to menial jobs supporting white Soldiers, and there were few black officers. Today, blacks account for 17 percent of all military personnel, and 11 percent of all Army officers. Black officers hold key positions at the most senior levels of command. Indeed, the man who now sits in Jim Gavin's chair as commander of the 82nd Airborne Division is a black man, Brig. Gen. Rodney Anderson. Yet military leaders acknowledge there is more work to be done. While opportunity has never been greater, black Soldiers serving today still face some of the same prejudices Murchison did 60 years ago. But they also share the same pride.



BG Rodney Anderson

Something to Prove

The end of segregation in 1948 did not mean the end of racist views. Murchison said black Soldiers during the period of integration knew all eyes were on them, with some hoping they would fail. "We knew we had something to prove and we had to be better than the best," he said.

Walter Morris, who was First Sergeant of the Army's first all-black paratrooper company, recounted the skepticism he and his troops faced in a 1990 issue of *Patriots Magazine*....

(continued....)



.... "The entire post was making bets that we wouldn't jump—we'd be too afraid. The thing that inspired us was that this was the only black combat outfit then, and it was an opportunity for black troops to enter something they could be proud of," Morris recalled sixty years later, some minorities still feel pressure to be better than their white peers, said Master Sgt. Major Bryant, the Equal Opportunity Advisor for the 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. "They feel like, 'I have to go out there and go above and beyond in order to get their attention and respect,'" Bryant said.



Troopers of the The Triple Nickle. (Photo from Joseph L. Murchison, 555th Parachute Infantry Association, Inc.)

Not all black Soldiers feel that pressure. Capt. Devin Henry, a staff officer with the 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., said he never felt he was held to a different set of expectations as a black officer than his white peers. "I'm just another guy in the 82nd," he said.

Common Bonds

A common saying around the Army is that the only color that matters is Green. It's another way of saying that the shared intensity of Army life tends to break down barriers between people of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. It was something Murchison noticed back in 1948, and black Soldiers serving today see the same thing. "It's that common bond that pushes differences away," Henry said. Growing up as a black kid in overwhelmingly white Newport, R.I., Henry learned a thing or two about overcoming differences, and he brought that attitude with him in his Army career. According to Henry, race isn't invisible in today's military; it is simply irrelevant. "You have to look past it, you have no choice," Henry said. "You have to work as a team and put aside your differences in order to get things done."

That process begins at Basic Training, said Henry. At Basic, whatever biases or prejudices new recruits have are shaved away, just like the hair on their heads that gets unceremoniously buzzed off on day one. "It's like a clean slate. From that moment on you have to start proving yourself," he said.

As Soldiers progress in their Army careers, they develop loyalty to their units. That kind of loyalty can be a more powerful source for bonding than racial or ethnic

associations, said Bryant "If I've got an 82nd patch on and you've got an 82nd patch on, I'm more apt to go and talk to you whether you're black, green, or yellow," Bryant said.

Perhaps the most important factor in overcoming racial stereotypes is the "foxhole phenomenon." Soldiers spend so much of their time in such close proximity to each other that they can't help but get to know one another as human beings.

Murchison saw it first hand during the early days of integration. "What happened was that the individual Soldiers – the dogfaces and the grunts – started interacting with each other, and going home on pass together, and meeting each others' families, and that led to acceptance," Murchison said. "The diversity you see now comes from that."

Different Perspectives

It is not only up to individual Soldiers to confront stereotypes. With the advent of the all-Volunteer military, the Army as an institution has also made a concerted effort to combat discrimination. Several ugly incidents in the 1970s and 80s made it clear that discrimination was undermining unit cohesion and overall readiness. The response was to create an Equal Opportunity program to end discriminatory practices and ensure all Soldiers were being treated fairly.

(continued...)



Today, every brigade has an equal opportunity advisor like Bryant, a former infantry platoon sergeant who now spends his days teaching Soldiers about the value of diversity. *"We all don't look the same or think the same, and that gives you different perspectives when you are looking at a problem,"* he tells the Paratroopers who attend his class.

Bryant, who is black, said he challenges Soldiers to confront all stereotypes, not just racial ones. He uses himself as an example. As an infantryman, he used to hold a low opinion of support specialty Soldiers. That all changed during a deployment to Iraq when his base was attacked and he saw two cooks and an admin clerk spring into action to secure the scene. *"I never thought those type of guys would be able to perform like that,"* he said.

Now he tries to teach others with similar opinions the error of their ways. Diversity is a philosophy that has backers in high places. In recent comments to the Associated Press, Lt. Gen Lloyd J. Austin, the No. 2 U.S. Commander in Iraq, said diversity is healthy for the military. *"We treasure diversity because it brings in a lot of different viewpoints and blends in a lot of cultures,"* he said. *"It makes us better."*



Havelock, N.C., native Army Staff Sgt. Charlie Wilson, a squad leader with the 82nd Airborne Division's Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, follows a trail likely used by bomb-planting insurgents while investigating a blast along a road in the Basateen section of Baghdad's Adhamiyah district, Sept. 12, 2007. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division)

Optimistic About the Future

After commanding an artillery battery of mixed black and white Soldiers in 1958, Murchison retired from the Army and began a long and successful career as a businessman. Today he lives in Tampa, Fla., where he is the president of the Triple Nickle Alumni Association. When a reporter reached him to comment on the 60th anniversary of Army desegregation, he was just sitting down to watch presidential hopeful Barack Obama give a speech on TV. Having grown up during a time when blacks and whites couldn't drink from the same water fountain, he was excited about the possibility that a black man might soon be living in the White House. *"There's a lot of opportunity out there. Much more so today,"* he said.



Trail blazers like Murchison deserve at least some of the credit for that. Murchison said the experiences he had as a Paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division profoundly changed the way he thought about race and color.

"I don't answer to African-American. I'm All-American," he said. #####



Three 'green' Sky Soldiers, L-R: Jack Ribera, Mike Sturges & Richard Ware, A/2/503d.

Mr. Ribera recently underwent serious surgery and is undergoing treatment as he recovers.

Good luck Jackattack!





2 August 1943

The Adjutant's Journal



What Jerry B. Riseley called an official journal is hardly that. 2nd Lieutenant Riseley was the 2nd Battalion S-1, at that time a position called 'Adjutant', during the period covering the Nadzab operation until after the death of Colonel Kenneth Kinsler. As a part of his duties, he kept a Journal, which was supposed to be an ordinary record of daily events an Adjutant was responsible for keeping. Riseley, a maverick of sorts who at times used the self-imposed honorific "adjutant *emeritus*," had other ideas. He completely rewrote it and greatly expanded it, partly reflecting the Army's penchant for trade in rumor and gossip. His perception and intelligence are astute, though he was not without personal bias. His understanding of the personnel is outstanding, though some of his more caustic comments, which identify personalities to little historical credit, are omitted.

Riseley was a member of the 158th Infantry Regiment [a National Guard unit called the "Bushmasters"] in Panama and then transferred to the 503d and took jump training there. He was a *Poelau Laut* immigrant to Australia, and fell in love quickly with the country and one of its lassies, marrying a local gal from the Gordonvale area. He jumped at Nadzab and thereafter commanded rear detachments as the 503d marched north. He was returned to Gordonvale to prepare for the arrival of the regiment from New Guinea. The 503d PIR never returned there but several hundred replacements allocated to replace Nadzab casualties came north out of Brisbane on the Royal Mail, arriving there in October 1943. He caught up with the 503d again at Noemfoor and, being a Panama original, was returned to the US when his points were up. After the war, he became an attorney and published author of at least one book, "*When Sex is Illegal...no Adult is Safe from Archaic Laws That Try to Govern Private Sex Habits*" and perhaps another about Henry Miller's obscenity trial. He survived his Australian-born wife, and died in 1998. His journal is an intimate part of the 2nd Battalion 503d PIR's Heritage.

On August 1-2 a tentative problem was received calling for movement of the 2nd Battalion Parachute reinforced from its base at Gordonvale, Queensland, Australia, to Mareeba. By reinforced was meant all of the facilities of a separate battalion such as parachute maint, motor section, kitchen, personnel section. The proposed problem was a move to Mareeba, logistics test, and jump involving 6 planes on Robert H. White field. Robert H. White was jump field near Green Hill. Green Hill is a hill near Gordonvale and Edmonton. It got its name when General Douglas MacArthur was watching a jump with Colonel Kinsler. "Look," said General MacArthur, "there is a man's whose chute did not open." "No," corrected Colonel Kinsler, "that is just a kit bag." At that moment parachute soldier Robert H. White* bounced ten feet and then he bounced five feet. General MacArthur awarded him a posthumous Purple Heart. Ordinarily an injury or death happening in a training jump does not merit a Purple Heart, but General MacArthur was not ever an ordinary soldier.

It is only natural that stories circulate involving the clash of personalities and characters in command positions of a Parachute Regiment, and in the case of Col. Kinsler, a number of them tend to reflect upon his apparent lack of concern for the safety of the men in the course of training.



503rd Camp at Gordonvale
(Wester collection, 503rd Heritage Battalion website)

Gordonvale was not a benign training area, and training was hard, the men had to be toughened up, and kept at their peak....

(continued....)



....But there were a number of fatal training incidents in Gordonvale, many of them the result of less than prudent planning and preparation. Pvc. Henry J. Blalock drowned on 23 December 1942; Priv. John Kobiska drowned while crossing the Little Mulgrave River, 21 February 1943 while outward bound on a march; Pfc . Bernard R. Petrie drowned while re-crossing the same river on the return leg, 24 February 1943; and S/Sgt Bernard drowned 12 April 1943. Pfc. Robert White was electrocuted when he hit a live power line on 5 or 6 May 1943. Priv. Donald Wilson was killed in a training jump on 25 June 1943.

To better come to grips with Col. Kinsler's character, his morning talks *"were not endearing."* Chet Nycum recalls: *"Kinsler didn't know the boundary between simply being unpleasant, obnoxious or offensive, on the one part, and being what the Australians scorned as 'a bastard'. Offensive, we could put up with. Obnoxious, we could learn to get used to. It was when Kinsler debased us, that it rankled. One morning talk he gave us, I recall, started with 'Did you sleep well last night? Did you get any mail? Did you tear it up like men or did you act like the bunch of babies you are and read it?'"*

This type of tongue-lashing meant very little to the troops, but as time went on, Kinsler's actions and demands on the Regiment seemed to become more counter-productive of any esprit. Thirty mile cross country marches (day or night) over mountains and rivers were common and on one occasion this involved crossing a very swift river by hand walking a rope that one of the Officers had succeeded in swimming to the opposite shore. One man lost his grip and was lost to the river.



The following day, Col. Kinsler posted a notice on the bulletin board stating that the drowned man would be held responsible for his lost equipment and the cost would be paid for from any monies he may have due him. Being the CO of a Parachute Regiment was not a popularity contest, and it appeared that Col. Kinsler was indeed giving the men a reason to unite - in a dislike for its CO.

Riseley's journal tells the story of the death of Pvt. White and some unfortunate comments ascribed to Col. Kinsler. We have, however, some alternative information which calls into question not the comments involving Col. Kinsler, but the identity of the Trooper involved.

Pvt. White was killed on 5 May 1943, when he was electrocuted by a live power line during a practice jump. The presence of the power line had been well known, and the troopers had been told that power to the line would be cut during the practice jump. Chet Nycum, who witnessed White's death, recalled:

"White Field, north of Cairns, was named after Bob White. Green Field was at Gordonvale; I was already safely on the ground and saw that Bob White was drifting towards the power line. I watched as he drifted closer, wanting to see how he would deal with slipping through the wires. I was stunned when I saw the flash as he contacted them, and saw him fall heavily without any recovery. The chute followed him down gracefully, settling gently to the right of his body. I ran towards him, finding his still, pallid body, already grey-blue with the burns he'd suffered, just seconds before. Nearby was a detached sole of a Corcoran boot, separated from the boot itself when its nails had literally melted their way out of the material which had once held them together."



White's blue-grey death, young and in a cane field under blue Australian skies, has never left me.

There was a lot of bitchin' going on afterwards as we had been told at briefing and on the flight in that the 55,000 volt power lines had been turned off for the jump. Apparently someone 'didn't get the word.' "

(continued....)



The death of another trooper in the presence of Col. Kinsler, Gen. MacArthur and Gen. Blamey, involved not Pvt. White, but Pvt. Donald Wilson. Based upon Wilson's recorded date of death, this incident occurred on 25 June, 1943. Chet Nycum also recalled:

"There are always rumors about everything in military camps, but we took with particular seriousness anything which dealt with the death of one of our own, particularly when it occurred in the course of doing something which was normal - for us, jumping out of an aircraft was entirely normal, and our entire training was designed to make it all the more normal, and habitual, like a second nature. Wilson had fallen directly to his death when his 'chute opened too late - that much we knew, and many of us had seen. It would not, could not have happened had his static line been hooked up. It was an article of faith amongst us that each man would check the static line of the man in front of us, and that the man behind us would see after our safety. Those who jumped behind Wilson were adamant that he had hooked up. Our only consolation became the rumor that Wilson had indicated to someone, prior to the jump, that he intended to do something, and for that purpose he may have palmed his static line after the 'Check Equipment!' reply had been given so that he could make a dramatic late opening in front of the VIP's."

In assessing Col. Kinsler, one surely cannot fault him for attempting to toughen his men, or to make them more hardy. However, to allow a slackness of safety planning and checking, and to place men in a position where a simple error (such as falling from a rope while crossing a flooded river) resulted in a drowning, shows recklessness. Then, to allow circumstances to be repeated (after already losing a man drowned), was certainly unlikely to engender confidence in his leadership and command abilities. It would be that lack of confidence in his leadership abilities, which would ultimately see officers from the Investigator General visit Gordonvale.

*The details of the incident are 'damaged in transit.' On 25 June 1943, we know from numerous historical sources that Gen. MacArthur visited Cairns to inspect, amongst other things, the state of readiness of Australian and US troops in the region. We also know from the records of his death, that Pvt. Donald Wilson died in a training incident on 25 June 1943. Ergo it was not Robert H. White but Donald Wilson whom MacArthur witnessed being killed in the training incident.



Dodge ambulance 4 X 4 awaits possible jump injuries near "The Pyramid" at Gordonvale, Australia. The 503d would spend nine months in Gordonvale, and practice jumps were a necessity to keep skill and proficiency - and to maintain the currency of parachute pay. Practice jumps were made into unimproved fallow sugar cane fields, and broken ankles would become the bane of an orthopedic surgeon posted at the local station hospital - Dr. Charles Bradford, enjoying the paratrooper camaraderie, would transfer into the Paratroopers, and despite being a big man, never broke any bones. He became invaluable, and saved the lives of many friends.

6 August 1943

The week of 2-6 was spent furiously preparing equipment and racking bundles for the problem. An inspection was held one afternoon. This



inspection was of all combat equipment, organizational, and personal. All members of the battalion stood the inspection, including approximately 112 men and 11 officers which were assigned to be borrowed from the 1st battalion for the problem. The advance party detail did not start on schedule. This was the first indication that the move had been postponed.

The Troopers

(continued....)



7 August 1943

In the a.m. the Bn Comdr (Lt. Col. George M. Jones) announced an intensive training schedule included the firing of all weapons, combat firing of all platoons, bivouac occupied and booby trapped with live grenades. These were Australian Grenades and they had a center metal core about a quarter of an inch in diameter which shot out when the pin was pulled and handle released. This program was slated to end 16 AUG 1943 and according to the Bn Comdr was required for each battalion to determine which would accompany the 42d Australian Division on a problem. Capt. Walsh, 1st Prcht Medical Officer, who had joined the 501st Prcht at Fort Benning, left out for HQ 6th Army.

Note: see appendix for the full transcript of the failed court martial of Capt. Walsh. (Not included here. Ed)

"The original 501st Parachute Battalion was picked up in Panama by the 503rd, and became the 2nd Battalion 503rd Parachute Infantry. It replaced what was called Raft's Battalion (Edison Raft) which had been dispatched from the 503rd forever when it was selected to make the jump in North Africa. 2nd Lt. Riseley was the first officer of the 2nd Battalion to marry in Australia (on 31 July 1943). The next one would be 2nd Lt. Schuder (not yet married).

8 August 1943

The much awaited football game with the Engineers at Cairns resulted in a 0 to 0 tie. The only winner was 1st Lt. B-C-D*, who was able to use an aggravation of a prior football injury to escape the move to New Guinea and to escape the combat jump. *Name omitted



9 August 1943

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10 August 1943

1st Lt. William W. Cobb, joined 1 October 1942, from S-4 to HQ CO, 2nd mortar platoon. Lt. Dick from former Battalion S-1 (Adjutant), up to the time this journal starts. In his last days as an adjutant he got a big idea. He quite seriously decided that it would be a innovation in parachute warfare if he were to jump an ass. This was a very friendly little donkey which Dick bought in

town for three or four Australian pounds. He made overtures toward the parachute maintenance people to make a jump harness for the donkey. And word got around it and the soldiers laughed about it a great deal. Some even laughed at J. Dick. As any adjutant will tell you, it is never a good idea to laugh at an Adjutant. He is certain to last laugh you, and you will never know what happened. Anyway, Dick had to go, and the safest place was to S-4 (Supply) in those days the S-1 was the Adjutant, S-2 was Intelligence, S-3 was Plans and Training, and S-4 was Supply. Lt. Riseley S-1½ to S-1.

11 August 1943

Intensified schedule continues. Co E sleeps out all night with booby traps.

12 August 1943

One more time. Orders came to pack initial drop bundles in preparation for moving into

13 August 1943

Movement order and loading plan published. Tentative schedule calls for movement with 2d Bn reinforced to Mareeba thence to unnamed advance base by air. Rest of regt to move by boat from unnamed port of embarkation. Equipment, individual and organizational, still has several small snarls, but on the whole is probably more complete than ever before. Morale. Always hard to judge. It is not at the low experienced before furloughs. Main question: Do they have confidence in their leadership? The era of Johnnie Eagerism (Major John M-N-O)* and the showmanship army has kept decisions as to even small matters. *Name omitted



A refreshing moment down under.

One of the duties of the Adjutant is to keep his eyes on morale and let the commander know about it. Major John's departure from the regt is not noted in the journals. I do recall that Major John sometime about here began to be quoted with some unusual quotations. He advised Lt. Cole that he would be soon Eagle John and Cole would be his number one man.

(continued....)



As I recall the last time I saw him was probably on landing in the cane from the Mareeba jump. Major John was there with two nurses. In the landing, I had what we called a "tit." This is not a very funny thing. It means one or more of the suspension lines is not where it is supposed to be, but is messing up the canopy. One can sometimes shake the chute real hard and get rid of it. At any rate, Major John, never one of my favorite people, was very cheerful to me. "You had a tit," he laughed, "I have seen an acre of tits this morning." The nurses led him away. But what he said was probably true. By this time, all of the chutes were being packed by Australian women employees, and some of them were really not up to Rigger standard. Rigger standard was protected by the Code of the Riggers which decreed that if someone did not like the parachute that was given to him, he could challenge the chute. Then the rigger would be allowed to jump it, to show that it was packed properly.

Major John's name was in the Army Register as retired after the war, so he did survive it.



The 503rd PIR in action.

14 August 1943

Regimental movement order received indicating that this Battalion will move out early Wednesday and go to Mareeba, hence, to forward base by air. The forward base seems to be 3 hours distant. Rest of regimental will go by boat later.

15 August 1943

Time drawing nearer, preparations increase.

THE COURTS-MARTIAL OF CAPTAIN JOHN K. WALSH AND CAPTAIN BENJAMIN A. BACHE

The Findings (Brief Excerpt)



As to Captain John K. Walsh:

CHARGE: Violation of the 96th Article of War.

Specification: In that Captain John K. Walsh, Medical Detachment, 503d Parachute Infantry, having received a lawful order from Colonel Kenneth H. Kinsler, Commanding Officer, 503d Parachute Infantry, not to speak to anyone concerning the information contained in Section III, Confidential Intelligence Summary, dated 1 April 1943, Headquarters United States Army Service of Supply, Base Section 2, Officer of the S-2, which information was made known to the said Captain Walsh by the said Colonel Kinsler on or about April 12, 1943, the said Colonel Kinsler being in the execution of his office, did, at Innisfail, Queensland, Australia, on or about May 16, 1934 fail to obey same.

PLEAS

To the Specification and Charge: Not Guilty

FINDINGS

Of the Specification and Charge: Not Guilty.

As to Captain Benjamin A. Bache:

CHARGE: Violation of the 96th Article of War.

Specification: In that Captain Benjamin A. Bache, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 503d Parachute Infantry, having received a lawful order from Colonel Kenneth H. Kinsler, Commanding Officer, 503d Parachute Infantry, not to speak to anyone concerning the information contained in Section III, Confidential Intelligence Summary, dated 1 April 1943, Headquarters United States Army Services of Supply, Base Section 2, Officer of the S-2, which information was made known to the said Captain Bache by the said Colonel Kinsler on or about April 12, 1943, the said Colonel Kinsler being in the execution of his office, did, at Innisfail, Queensland, Australia, on or about May 16, 1943 fail to obey the same.

PLEAS

To the Specification and Charge: Not Guilty.

FINDINGS

Of the Specification and Charge: Not Guilty.

16 August 1943

The first tentage will be struck today.

Final preparation planned. Time of initial entrucking will be 0430 18 August 1943. 207 officers and men of Hq. & Hq. Co. 2nd Battalion with reinforcement from HQ & Service Companies.

(continued....)





Young paratroopers, soon to war.

At 0700 hours the first plane carrying the first tactical load of parachute jumpers from Australia took off at Cairns airport. Weather, slightly cloudy, cool, some mist. Troop commander, 1st Lt. John M. Cole. (Capt. Padgett, Battalion S-2, Battalion S-1 also aboard. Morale: Attitudes: Eventually, why not now. Men seem to be doing some thinking regarding the possibility of dying.

0710 hrs. Present altitude 2000.

0712 hrs. Australian coast is vanishing

0723 hrs. It looks as though we were flying just above an endless snow field. (Flying just above cumulus clouds but below stratus clouds). At the edge of one horizon, just off the left of the tail can be seen a line which is probably the receding Australian shore. Behind somewhere are the other planes. From its early days in September 1940, the original 501st Prcht Bn at last moves to a forward base from whence she will move to find the enemy. There are no test platooners aboard this plane of 22. But S/Sgt Lee L. Thompson and other cooks (nonjumpers) who have helped cook the first meal the 501st ever ate here. (Remember, the 501st Prcht Bn became the 2nd Bn 503d)

0730 hrs. Beginning to see water underneath again. Capt. Padgett is in the tail of the ship. He has his maps out and is figuring on his slide rule. He seems to be enjoying himself.

Plans and Training People make a big thing about engaging in intellectual activity of a mysterious type. It is their stock in trade. Wilburn E. "Bitsy" Grant studied under Padgett and in time became his assistant. Bitsy did just fine until there came a time when he was pushed to the wall by Joe S. Lawrie. Lawrie was Regimental Executive Officer under Colonel Kinsler. Every man and officer in the regiment knew that even though Lt. Col. George M. Jones was commander of the 2nd Bn, and was not Regimental Officer, that Colonel Jones in fact did rank Joe S. Lawrie, who was also a Lt. Colonel. There came a time in the tour, when the regiment needed masking tape to tape up the jump

planes. Lawrie called Bitsy before him and demanded to know why Grant had not been able to obtain masking tape. "I've looked everywhere for masking tape," is the legendary Grant reply, "and I haven't been able to find any. I even drank a barrel of glue, ate a barrel of sawdust and tried to get some that way, but it didn't work."

Grant came back to join my club of Mess Officers, Ex mess Officers, and Assistant Platoon Leaders. In other-words Lawrie got him fired.

0735 hrs. I can recognize in the water what appears to be a swampy shore. At first islands. WE are edging along the shore of what appears to be a long peninsular off the port tail.

0737 hrs. Off the port wing on the horizon there is a thin line—might be mountains. Capt. Padgett is looking intently out the starboard tail. More long islands off starboard tail and wing.

0740 hrs. Just occurred to me that the "long islands" are undoubtedly the Great Barrier reef.

0945 hrs. Lt Cole stood up and counted the plane load to see if we were all there. A typical Coleism. His uncle was at one time the President of Czechoslovakia.

Benes?

1035 hrs. Landed at Ward Strip, Port Moresby, New Guinea. Set up camp 17 miles from Port Moresby. The Australians named this "17 Mile" which is a way the Australians have of not wasting anything. This plane, under Lt Cole, was the first of tactical parachutist to arrive in New Guinea.

1045 hrs. Co's D, E, and F arrived at Ward Strip, coming from Cairns, Queensland by air. Lt. J. Dick, now in the S-4 business, goes with 5 men forward by air to what I assume is a second forward base. Supplies which are flown by air are also being moved forward.

(This may have been a place called Tsilli-Tsilli—it is pronounced "Silly-silly" and it may have only been a military base, National Geographic Atlas of the World does not show it. Nadzab, on the other hand, is shown plain and clear).

20 Japs reported near Menoekwari, 1st Bn is investigating that.

Report & Photos Source: 503rd Heritage Battalion web site. #####

Note: This journal will be continued in the December edition of our newsletter. Ed





INCOMING!



Overhaul the VA...NOW!

Thanks for the email and the connection to a fellow "Herdsman." There is a bond between us that made us the best, and that bond will be manifested in the history of the 173d Abn Bde, each and every unit thereof, with each and every person that earned the right to wear the "Herd Patch." Air Borne!

I'm Eldson McGhee, Charlie Company, HHC/3/503, 173d Abn Bde 67/68. I currently serve with the pride and zeal of a "Herdsman" as President/VA Service Rep for Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 883, in Atlanta, GA, and we are leading the charge to get the U. S. Congress to Overhaul the VA! Yes, at a Community Rally for this Chapter on July 30, 2012,

U. S. Congressman John Lewis committed to starting hearings to support this request. As a former VA Employee, and VA Service Rep for over 35 years, I can show the Claim Process and Medical Treatment System at the VA are failing to meet their promise for and to Veterans, and they are in urgent need of overhauling.

The patch works of Congress over the past 25 years have not sufficed and a complete overhaul is the only remedy. VSOs and VA Service Reps are the real experts when it comes to compiling data to reduce the Claim Process, but hearings must do intake from Veterans and Dependents who have claims pending or have been wrongfully denied at the VA to give Congress and taxpayers an in depth look at the injuries this current system is causing and the intent that new laws must carry to prevent the reoccurrence of these problems for Veterans and this Nation's Commitment to care for those who have borne the burdens of military service, and their dependents.

I love the fact that the VA has made it more attractive for lawyers to assist Veterans and Dependents with the claims at the VA, but I still feel that Veterans Service Organizations are the best way for Veterans and Dependents to present their claims to the VA. The law provides that attorneys get their major profits from "back-pay," and to me that is "an incentive to drag the claim through time to increase the income." Of course, I am not saying that all attorneys would do this.

Case in point; during my advocacy I met a young lawyer and former local judge who was challenging Congressman John Lewis for the Democrats choice to meet the Republican November 2012 for the Georgia 5th District Congressional Seat, whose father is a Service-Connected Disable Vietnam Vet, that would not do that, and there are more!

Nevertheless, VSOs are created, established, funded, operated and managed by Veterans, with the commitments to help, support, assist, serve, and represent Veterans with the authority of non-profit laws of this Nation. That's huge; we raise billions of dollars every year where our donors get tax credits and we don't have to pay taxes on the money we get for our causes. This is outside of the billions the governments in our Nation provide to help, assist, serve, and care for Veterans and Dependents. So, looking at the big picture, we can do better with what we have but that's another discussion. Right now, it's about all Veterans and Dependents, as well as Active Duty Military, getting on the same page about the VA and what they want done there!

On Labor Day, this Chapter hosted another community rally, entitled Labor Day Rally & Voter Empowerment Forum at my church, Omega Holiness Church, Atlanta, GA. Check out the local media, Facebook and Utube...my message is getting out, and the community support is growing to Overhaul the VA, and this message is simply, if those in Washington, DC seeking re-election who don't move to Overhaul the VA by Tuesday, November 6th 2012, we will just cast our vote against them. I will write in Donald Duck before I vote for a Democrat or Republican seeking re-election if the VA is not being Overhauled when I go to vote this year, and I am asking all Veterans, Dependents and Active Duty Military to join and support this movement. Tell Washington DC that its about Veterans and Dependents now, and if they want us to vote as usual they better do the unusual and Overhaul the VA. Call your Congressperson and tell them where you stand on this.

Thanks, I needed to share this.

Eldson McGhee
HHC/C/3/503

"Our servicemen and women are serving throughout the world as guardians of peace -- many of them away from their homes, their friends and their families. They are visible evidence of our determination to meet any threat to the peace with measured strength and high resolve. They are also evidence of a harsh but inescapable truth -- that the survival of freedom requires great cost and commitment, and great personal sacrifice."

President John F. Kennedy



**You Sir, are
Veteran of
the Day!**



Thought you might like to know I just got back from Disneyworld the day before yesterday.

The first morning it was raining and of course we got soaked....but as we came into the Magic Kingdom Park a young lady who worked there started talking to me when she saw my 173d hat with the combat jump wings on it. She asked me what branch of service I was in, and I replied Army....she then proceeded to ask me if I would be interested in helping with the 5 p.m. ceremony of the lowering of the flag... I hummed and hawed, which for me is normal... then I decided well, I won't be the only one doing it so I'm okay with that and told her I would be honored to help. She took down my name, the rank I was in the service and where I was from, etc.



said, *"I don't want to ruin this for you, but I will tell you since they didn't; you have been chosen by Walt Disney World to be Veteran of the Day for September 9th, 2012."* Okay...like I wasn't nervous before ...now I'm in panic mode...holy*****! What did I get myself into? I told my wife and family about this surprise honor, and they were happy and excited for me.

Finally, around 10 minutes before the Ceremony, the Disney Honor Guard shows up. They start giving me directions on where to stand, walk, and all these other directions...by this time I'm feeling faint...my knees feel weak and I am shaking in my sneakers. All I can see is hundreds of people coming my way after they announce the Ceremony taking place.

Sky Soldier Steve Welch, center right, is honored veteran during flag lowering ceremony at Disneyworld.

The Honor Guard arrived 2 minutes before the Ceremony was to start....I can't remember where or what I am supposed to do. Oh this is Great!!! The head Honor Guard tells me not to worry, *"I'll be right beside you to give you commands."* I roll my eyes because with all of the people in the crowd watching I'm not sure I will hear him.

The Disney Honor Band starts playing and this calm comes over me because it's really not about me, but about all veterans who have served in the Armed Forces. The Ceremony starts – okay, the calm is now gone. I kept saying to myself don't screw this up.

She then told me to be around the entrance to the Magic Kingdom at the Flag pole 15 minutes before the Flag was to be lowered...she said don't worry if it rains we won't be doing it. I told my wife and family what was going on and they said it was cool. I decided to go ahead and be part of this Ceremony. Okay, now that I said yes I'm getting nervous....which of course is also par for the course. We continued our Disney visit in the rain and enjoyed the day riding the rides, etc. I don't know why, but I had this eerie feeling in my stomach as the time got closer to the flag lowering ceremony.

I got there 15 minutes early but no one was around the Flag Pole. I asked one of the Park employees where I was supposed to go as I was told to be there before the Ceremony of the Flag lowering but didn't see any other Veterans or Honor Guard...his eyes got big as did his smile. *"Oh, you don't know?"* he said. I said know what? Now I was even more nervous than ever. He

(continued....)



Love Was Once Abundant



Chargin' Charlie Steve, in dark blue, the main attraction on Main Street.

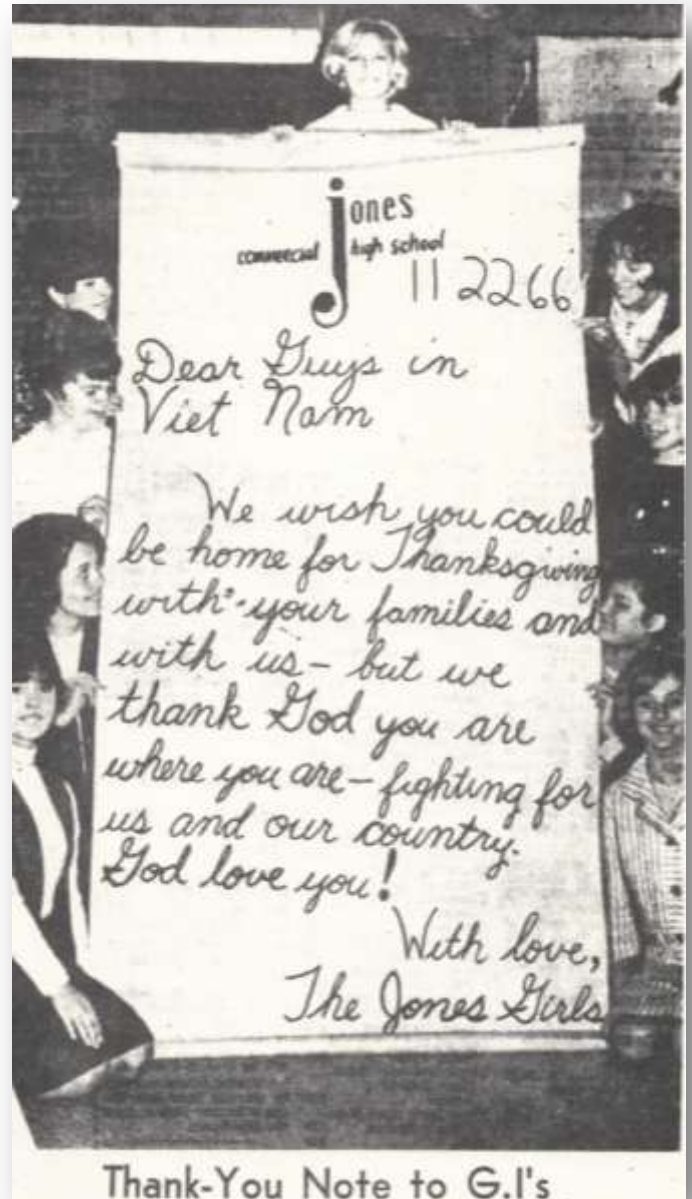
The Ceremony went off without a hitch.....walking down Main St. in a parade with my family and seeing all those people clapping and shouting was very cool. The whole Ceremony lasted about 15 minutes...for me it was more like an hour and a half.

Carrying the American Flag folded with the Stars showing made me feel proud to be an American. I wish every veteran could experience an honor such as this -- to represent our fighting men and women in the service of our country.

I stood there spent from worrying while they made the proclamation of it being 'my day'. They gave me a Certificate and a special Disney Pin for participating in the ceremony, and took lots of pictures. They also presented me with an 8x10 picture of me with my family; a nice memento from this special day. Believe me guys, this will never happen again, ever!

For one thing I am certain, Disney does honor its Veterans, big time!!

Steve Welch, C/2/503d



Steve and family.

“DMZ to DELTA” DANCE

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter 227, will be hosting a dance at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge, 1900 N. Ft. Myers Drive, Arlington, VA, at 8 p.m. to midnight on **November 10, 2012**. For details please call **703-255-0353**, or visit the VVA Chapter 227 website at www.vva.227.org



Know the true 173rd Airborne

STARS AND STRIPES

Letters to the Editor, August 30, 2012

I struggle to understand your continuing and overwhelmingly negative coverage of the 173rd Airborne Brigade despite our continued distinguished service.



Col. Rohling

Over the last year, Stars and Stripes has published 42 articles referencing the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Despite untold successes and accomplishments, only five of those stories were positive. The almost-exclusive focus on two former 173rd officers who failed to adhere to the Army's standards hardly reflects the integrity and successes of our remaining 3,600 paratroopers.

While I recognize that salacious scandals make for gripping headlines, tabloid-like reading and the potential for profit, your coverage over the last year is misrepresentative, unfair and disturbing to the troops who are currently serving honorably in Afghanistan, our families and the exceptional communities we call home. The best newspapers of our time are known for fair and unbiased reporting, traits that are missing in Stars and Stripes as of late.

As a U.S. Army Europe brigade on its fifth combat deployment in nine years, Sky Soldiers today continue to make significant sacrifices to support Operation Enduring Freedom in the Logar and Wardak provinces of eastern Afghanistan. Daily our paratroopers risk their lives in support of Afghan National Security Forces and the coalition partners with whom they patrol. The soldiers of the 173rd Airborne, like American servicemembers everywhere, epitomize selfless service through their professionalism, valor and service. Our paratroopers are men and women who instill the pride of our country on the battlefield and in our communities at home.

Our soldiers are proudly maintaining the 173rd Airborne Brigade's lineage as one of the most decorated brigades in the U.S. Army despite the far-too-publicized actions of a few.

Sky Soldier families understand the daily threat faced by their paratroopers and display equal selflessness and courage in their support from home. Like many military families, they have had to endure the loss and injury of loved ones currently in Afghanistan.

As a news publication that serves American military servicemembers and Families overseas, it would be beneficial to see some positive stories during these trying times. We will do our part to enforce the standards that make our Army and nation strong. It's time to do yours for the soldiers deployed and their families at home and give a little recognition for a job well done.

**Col. Andrew Rohling, Commander
173rd Airborne Brigade
Vicenza, Italy**

[Sent in by Ken Smith, A/D/2/503d]



A Sky Soldier during Operation Iraqi Freedom



173d Engineers Bridge Gap Pave The Way For Progress

The causeway is a dirt fill across the river that allows traffic to cross the river. Water passes through the causeway by means of three, 30 inch culverts. "The causeway will eventually wash out during the monsoon," said Clay, "that's why we are building a timber trestle." "She'll be able to hold a 20 ton crane when we're finished," stated Platoon Sgt Patrick Ransom, Clarksville, Tenn. "The size of the pilings is the limiting factor."



The bridge will be 100 feet long when completed. It will form a vital part of highway 3A, and will allow farmers to bring their produce to Bong Son for market, even when the river is swollen by heavy rains.

After the Americans are long gone, the bridge will be an important piece in the economic puzzle of northern Binh Dinh Province, allowing people north of the Tiger Mountains, and south of the Lai Giang River a way to bridge the gap between poverty and

ENGINEERS PLACE STRINGERS for the new timber trestle bridge spanning the Soui Dinh Biah River a mile and a half east of Bong Son. The stringers will be covered with decking so a crane can move onto the bridge and drive the center pillings. The bridge is part of highway 3A, which enables people east of Bong Son easy access to highway QL1. (U.S. Army Photo by Spec. 5 Kent R. Johnson)

prosperity.

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This is a neat article. But from the photo this looks like another bridge site that we did. I don't recall that one being burned.

Chris was one of my platoon leaders in the 173 Engineer Company. He now works as an ex-pat.

As I recall the leg engineers later came in and built another pile trestle bridge.

This is a neat article. But from the photo this looks like another bridge site that we did. I don't recall that one being burned.

I was in an OH-6 when the CG came up on the net and suggested I have a look at "my bridge." I flew down the river low-level; as we rounded a bend there was the bridge. It looked like a big "V" with the tractor-trailer still sitting on it. Tractor on one side and trailer rear wheels on the other. The dozer had broken loose and was sitting partially on the sunken railing of the bridge. Needless-to-say I took lots of kidding for that from then on! As I recall the leg engineers later came in and built another pile trestle bridge.

Tom Deputy
173d Engineers

LZ ENGLISH -- The Paratrooper Engineers of the 173d are "Bridging the Gap to the Future" in northern Binh Dinh Province. In conjunction with the Brigade support of pacification, the men of first Platoon, 173d Engineer Company, are bridging the gap made by the Soui Binh Dinh River as it flows out of the Tiger Mountains into the Lai Giang River about a mile and a half east of Bong Son.

The engineers put a prefabricated Bailey Bridge across the Soui Dinh Binh River in July 1969. It was only temporary, however. The end of the rainy season brought the engineers out in force to improve the road and to build a new, permanent timber trestle bridge across the river. "We planned to leave the Bailey up until the timber trestle was done," said Lt. Christopher Clay, Platoon Leader. "But when someone tried to drive a low-boy with a DSA bulldozer on it over the bridge, it collapsed. The driver pulled the dozer and lowboy out with no problem," continued the Nutley, N.J. native, "but we had to build a causeway to carry traffic until the bridge was built."



50th Anniversary Celebration of the 173d Airborne Brigade Activation

21 – 24 March 2013

**National Infantry Museum Campus
Columbus / Fort Benning, Georgia**

21 March Golf Tournament

**Bull Creek Golf Course, Midland, GA -- 0830
Tee Off -- Sponsored by the 173d Airborne
Brigade Association's Columbus/Fort Benning
Chapter.**

**Participate in Mini "Unit" Reunions with
Brothers in Arms.**

22 March Tours and Visits

**Tour the "New" Fort Benning. Return to the
Jump Towers. Experience the "Last 100 Yards"
and other exciting displays, activities and
exhibits in the National Infantry Museum.
Visit the Walk of Honor Adjacent to the Parade
Field on the National Infantry Museum Campus
and view numerous unit Memorials. The Walk
of Honor is anchored by the 173d Airborne
Brigade National Memorial.**

23 March Ceremonies

**Participate in the Memorial Cleaning (0930-
1100). View the Silver Wings Jump and
Participate in the "Reading of the Names"
Tribute to our Fallen Vietnam Warriors starting
at 1330 in the Parade Field Grandstands.
Return to the Memorial at 1930 for a Candle-
Light Service and Honors. The Names of
warriors who fell in Iraq and Afghanistan will be
read.**

24 March Ceremonies

Prayer service at 0900 at the Memorial.

Information on How to Participate

**For information regarding how to sign up for the
Golf Tournament and to Participate in the
Reading of the Names of Vietnam Fallen (30-40
more readers are needed), and for information
updates for tours and events, visit the 173d
Airborne Brigade National Memorial
Foundation website at
www.173dairbornememorial.org**



Statement from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki

Executive Order to Improve Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families Washington, DC

August 31, 2012

President Obama continues to demonstrate that his commitment to Veterans is genuine, it runs deep, and it is unwavering. I applaud the President's strong and decisive leadership in advocating for America's Veterans. The President's historic initiatives and budgetary support will have a positive impact on the lives of Veterans and their families for generations to come.



History shows that the costs of war will continue to grow for a decade or more after the wars have ended. The mental health and well-being of our brave men and women who have served the Nation is the highest priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs. VA will work closely with our federal partners to implement the executive order immediately, and continue to expand access to the high-quality mental health care services our Veterans have earned and deserve.

VA Expands Use of New Claims System

By Dave Autry

The Department of Veterans Affairs has begun to deploy its new operating model to improve benefits delivery to veterans, their families and their survivors. From now until Oct. 1, the new system will be put to use at 12 regional offices and at the remaining 40 regional offices by the end of 2013.

"DAV has been working in cooperation with the VA to improve and streamline the claims system, and what we've seen so far puts them on the road to getting it right the first time," said National Service Director Garry J. Augustine.

Through a combination of technology, innovation and quality assurance measures, the VA has developed "transformation initiatives" that have been evaluated, tested and measured and are being rolled out nationwide. Meanwhile, the VA will continue to track and measure the effects the transformation plan has on reducing the backlog of disability claims and providing more timely and accurate decisions.

"This continuous tracking and measuring of effectiveness will doubtless result in some refinements along the way," Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski said. *"But it's all part of the process, and DAV will remain actively engaged throughout."*

According to the VA, the major components of the transformation plan include:

- The Intake Processing Center, which adds a formalized triage process to associate claims documents and other mail with veterans' files;
- Segmented Processing Lanes will allow claims that can be more easily rated to move quickly through the system. More complex claims will be processed by more experienced and skilled employees;
- Cross-Functional Teams will support a case-management approach to claims processing that minimizes rework and reduces processing time; and
- The Veterans Benefits Management System is a new electronic claims processing system that employs rules-based technologies to improve decision speed and quality.

The VA already has implemented Quality Review Teams to evaluate station and individual employee performance and conduct in-process reviews to eliminate errors at the earliest possible stage.

Simplified and Standardized Rating Notification Letters also give veterans one letter that provides notice of the VA's decision, including a summary of the evidence considered and the reason for the decision.

The 12 regional offices to begin the deployment of the transformation initiatives.

Source: dav.org





Presidential Candidates



In the September/October issue of *DAV Magazine*, the DAV invited President Obama and Governor Romney to answer questions relating to veterans. This is the initial question by DAV: ***“What are your top priorities for addressing the many challenges facing veterans, particularly disabled veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs?”*** Their unedited replies follow:



President Barack Obama: As President, there is no higher honor or greater responsibility than serving as Commander-in-Chief. When necessary, I have not hesitated to use the full power of the United States military in defense of our nation and its interests. I have the utmost

respect for the honor, bravery, and skill of our men and women in uniform. As your Commander-in-Chief, I also promise you that I will only send our servicemen and women into harm’s way when it is absolutely essential. From the letters I write to the loved ones of our fallen heroes, to the visits I make to Walter Reed, I have seen the costs of war – on the faces of children who have lost a father or mother, or in the eyes of parents who have to bury a child too young.

As a candidate for this office, I said I would responsibly end the war in Iraq, and I have kept that promise. In Afghanistan, we have put al-Qaeda on the path to its defeat, and, together with our allies, we are on track to transfer all security responsibility to the Afghans in 2014. As these conflicts come to a close, our commitment to our veterans will endure. We will uphold our sacred trust with America’s veterans, wounded warriors, and their families.

From the day I took office, I have made addressing the needs of all veterans and military families a top priority, and I am committed to ensuring they receive the job security, health care, and education they have earned.

I firmly believe that no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job when they come home. Last November, I signed two new tax credits into law. Both the Returning Heroes Tax Credit and the Wounded Warriors Tax Credit are helping put veterans and our wounded warriors back to work. My administration is strengthening transition programs to ensure that servicemembers leave the military prepared for civilian careers. We have forged unprecedented new partnerships between the military and the private sector to make it easier for companies to hire returning servicemembers, which mean great access to jobs in manufacturing, in health care, in technology, in logistics, and for first responders. I have launched an initiative designed to transform the federal government into the model employer of America’s veterans, and have proposed \$1 billion to develop a Veterans Job Corps program that would put up to 20,000 veterans back to work over the next five years protecting and rebuilding America – as police officers and firefighters and on projects that protect our public lands and resources.

(continued....)



As president, one of my top responsibilities is to ensure that our veterans and their families receive high-quality health care. That's why I signed legislation that ensure funding for veterans' medical care is allocated a full year in advance, so the VA can count on predictable and sufficient resources for treating our veterans. That's why my administration is restoring VA health care coverage for 500,000 "Priority 8" veterans. That's why we have hired more than 3,500 mental health professionals since 2009. That's why we hired new claims processors, improved training, and invested in technology to get veterans their benefits more quickly and accurately.

And that's why my administration is using technology and new approaches to help veterans get their benefits, including for the first time accepting online applications for initial disability benefits.

I am committed to ensuring that our veterans continue to have access to higher education. As a Senator, I pushed for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and I have ensured its successful implementation as President. As of March of this year, the VA has issued approximately \$17.5 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments for more than 710,000 veterans or eligible family members pursuing higher education, and the VA has received spring 2012 enrollments from more than 420,000 individuals. These VA benefits can now also be used for vocational programs. Furthermore, to ensure our veterans and military families are able to make the most of their hard-earned education benefits, this year I issued an Executive Order establishing principles of excellence for educational institutions serving servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and other family members. This Executive Order ensures our servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and other family members have the information they need to make informed decisions concerning their well-earned federal military and veteran's educational benefits. This new policy required that colleges provide more transparent information about their outcomes and financial aid options for students, which will help ensure that students are aware of the true cost and likelihood of completion prior to enrolling. This Executive Order will also keep bad actors off of military installations, crack down on improper online recruiting practices, provide veterans with a complaint system to ensure they have a voice, give students with better data on educational institutions, and strengthen enforcement of student protections.



Governor Mitt Romney: We still have men and women in harm's way. My first priority is to ensure the Defense Department and Veterans Affairs Department is working for returning combat veterans. Second, we have tens of thousands with visible and invisible wounds of war from

Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade. We have to give them the absolute best care possible through a VA system that is centered on their needs, and not on the needs of a vast bureaucracy. Third, veterans everywhere want the dignity of work but are struggling to find it in this economy. Whether they are young or old, we absolutely must put America's veterans back to work. Finally, it has grown harder and harder for qualified veterans to receive their disability benefits. The number of disability claims that are overdue or pending had doubled in just a few short years. We must do better. I'll hold senior VA leaders accountable for performance. It's time to try a new approach to finally solving this problem, because what we've been doing hasn't worked.

Note: We recommend everyone see the *DAV Magazine* September October 2012 edition, for the complete interview. Visit their website:

<http://www.dav.org/news/magazineGallery.html>

"Throughout the history of the United States, voting rights have been expanded repeatedly by Constitutional Amendments and legislation. When the Constitution was written, most of the Framers did not believe in universal suffrage. However, as we have progressed as a society, traditionally disenfranchised groups, including women and racial minorities, have received voting rights through Constitutional Amendments. Of the 17 Amendments ratified since the Bill of Rights in 1791, more than one-third (seven) have been to expand voter eligibility or increase democratic participation."

Also, it's what we fought and sacrificed for and continue to fight and sacrifice to protect.

