

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



February 2013, Issue 50
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See all issues to date at the 503rd Heritage Battalion website:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 503d Photos of the Month ~
A couple 503d jumps made in the month of February



Operation No. 48 (Corregidor, Philippines), 1945



Operation Junction City (Katum, Vietnam), 1967



Chaplain's Corner

A Time To Stand - The Battle of Thermopylae (1)

King David was "a man after God's own heart", yet he was a warrior from the git go. The Bible tells us that the Lord was with him. He killed lions with his bare hands, and then there was the Goliath thing....and...that's a very big deal. He is mentioned more than any other man in the Bible except Jesus. Also he's the only man in the Word of God who is called: "a man after God's own heart." Now let me share with you a moment about his "mighty men". First check out 2 Samuel 23:8-39 for a look at who is included on this list. Next consider that whenever God raises up a man to do a work, I believe, He will also raise up "mighty men" to help do that work. Who were they and why might they be listed? One reason that I believe that the roster of David's soldiers is recorded is that it authenticates the history of the Bible record and the story of David. They were real people who lived and are part of history. It seems to me that as God kept a record of the names of these "mighty men", it's important to see that He keeps a list of our personal services too.

Others might not know what you have done in His service, but He sees and knows you as one of His warriors...and will honor and reward you for that service. So a question that you and I need to ask is this: "are our names recorded on God's list as those that were willing to serve Him?"

Here's the story and the lesson learned: We need men today who understand the times and know what to do. Looking back in history we find many who can fit this model...but one for sure was Leonidas. He was one of the two kings of Sparta during the invasion of Xerxes, and is one of Sparta's most well-known heroes because of his sacrifice at the battle of Thermopylae. For him it was a place and a moment, and...A Time to Stand.

Let's go back to 480 BC. The Persian King Xerxes decides to get revenge for the defeat of his father at Marathon 10 years earlier. He sets out with 80,000 men on horseback or chariots surrounded by foot soldiers and archers beyond counting. It's estimated at as an army of perhaps a quarter of a million soldiers and was opposed by a hastily assembled, ragtag force of seven thousand Greeks from five city-states which were divided and not prepared. Their mission...they had to hold in order to enable their army and navy to be mobilized and ready for the fight. But at their core were three hundred Spartans, trained to stand or die. ("Come back with your shield or on it," a Spartan mother told her son). They were led by Leonidas, and they took their stand in a narrow pass, twenty yards wide, bounded by the sea on one side and the five thousand-foot cliffs of Mt. Kallidromos on the other.



For the Persians the whole encounter looked easy, but for two days the unstoppable were stopped. Late on the second day, Xerxes, fearing his troops would panic, sent in his crack division, "the Immortals" who were repulsed too at tremendous cost. For two long days the Persian horde had attacked and the heroic handful of Greeks had held firm. Then disaster, the Greeks were betrayed. By night a traitor led the Persians over the cliffs so that at daybreak Leonidas and his men were surrounded. Death was coming. Dismissing most of his army, Leonidas led his own three hundred Spartans and a few others to a little mound from which they could make their last desperate stand and hold back the oncoming avalanche. There the little band fought to the last man and died. When their swords were gone, according to Herodotus, they fought on with their hands and teeth. But before they died, they sent home the stirring message that has become their epitaph: "**Stranger, tell the Spartans that we behaved as they would wish us to, and are buried here.**" The sacrifice at Thermopylae ended up galvanizing the Greeks instead of disheartening them, leading to Xerxes' ultimate defeat.

Os Guinness offers the following question as the key to our reading this devotion. Will it be said of the followers of Jesus Christ across the world, "**Passerby, tell our Lord that we have behaved as He would wish us to behave, and are buried here**"? For at the threshold of the third millennium of its existence, the church of Jesus Christ confronts the greatest challenge it has ever faced. This challenge touches on behavior every bit as much as belief, yet it requires belief to inspire and stiffen that behavior.

Finally, "*What you accomplish in life is not as important as what you put in motion. What you put in motion will become greater than what you accomplish*" (2)

Will you and I be like David's mighty men and be recorded on His list? If so, where and when will we take our stand? Jesus said, "*all of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the One who sent Me, for there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end.*" (John 9:4 LB.) That's the question for us.....

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

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

(1) Note: for the most part this devotion relies heavily on Os Guinness's *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life; Chapter 7—A Time to Stand*. I would encourage you to read it, and for me it's one of the most motivating accounts of history I've read. I apologize for using so much of his work, but am pleased to have found this account of a story that has been one of my favorites.

(2) Pastor Bill Wilson, Metro Ministries, New York, NY



Combat Over Corregidor

(Extract)

by Charles Bradford, M.D.



When a man goes through a stirring experience, it is the little things that he remembers. At 5:30 A.M. on Thursday morning a flashlight, searching through the tent woke me; and I heard an exasperated voice say in the chill darkness, *"Where is that damned cigarette lighter?"* A little drowsily I asked, *"What is it?"* which provoked another stifled outburst, *"I'm so damn sick of living in tents and getting up before dawn, and groping around in the darkness for everything I own! -- that cigarette lighter's gone now -- no -- here it is."*

And that was the way the day began.

It was still dark when we ate breakfast by light of a gasoline torch, flickering violently in the wind. All we had was a spoonful of dehydrated eggs, scrambled, and not-bad coffee. Capt. Eppleman [Capt. Herbert Eppleman, Regimental Dentist - Ed.] had joined us. *"Bozo,"* he said to me, *"have some more blasted coffee. It'll wake you damn well up."* Being a Captain Rambo, [Captain Charles R. Rambo, Regimental Staff. Ed]

came in lightheartedly singing, *"It's a hap-hap-happy day."* *"What in the blasted blazes are YOU so happy about?"* Capt Eppleman asked, to which the non-committal answer, *"I dunno."*

And that's the way breakfast went off.

Off to the Jump.

While the blackness was still complete, we scrambled onto the trucks, crowding in with all our equipment. The thunder of their motors cracked the pre-dawn stillness. Our slow convoy pulled forward with glaring headlights which split the darkness betwixt deep, indistinguishable shadows, banked on both sides of the road. By the sound of rattling, reverberating planks, we knew we had crossed the bridge over the Bugsanga; by the black silhouettes of palms, we realized we were passing our old campsite in town; the entire 3rd Battalion of the 503 Parachute Infantry, as well as C Company of the 161 Parachute Engineers, and, of course, the Regimental Headquarters and Service Company units -- 1300 men in all. This completed the force which formed the first wave of the parachute attack on Corregidor.

Still in darkness, we reached the dispersal lanes and found the black forms of C-47 transport planes looming around us. There was a brief wait while the staff officers checked their units; then just as daylight began graying the east, a Lt. Col., riding by in a jeep, gave the orders to enplane. [Probably Lt. Colonel John W. Britten, Regimental Executive Officer, did not emplane. The 2nd Battalion Medical Section, including Doctors Bradford and Donus are jumping with the first flight. - Ed.]



(continued...)





In a very few minutes we had tossed on our parachutes, after donning our life preservers, or "Mae Wests". We were wearing the latter for the first time to protect us against the dangers of landing inadvertently in the ocean; and just how to manipulate them in case of such a catastrophe puzzled some of us. *"The hell with it,"* one of my neighbors remarked expertly, as he jerked a crotch strap under his leg. *"Might as well drown as wear this thing."*

Nevertheless, we were soon arrayed and, lined in single file, we waddled (it is the only correct description of a paratrooper's gait, when fully equipped) -- up the four steps into our plane. Dawn was swiftly brightening to daylight as the motors grumbled and roared in a thundering chorus. At last we jerked and bounced from our position and taxied to the starting point.

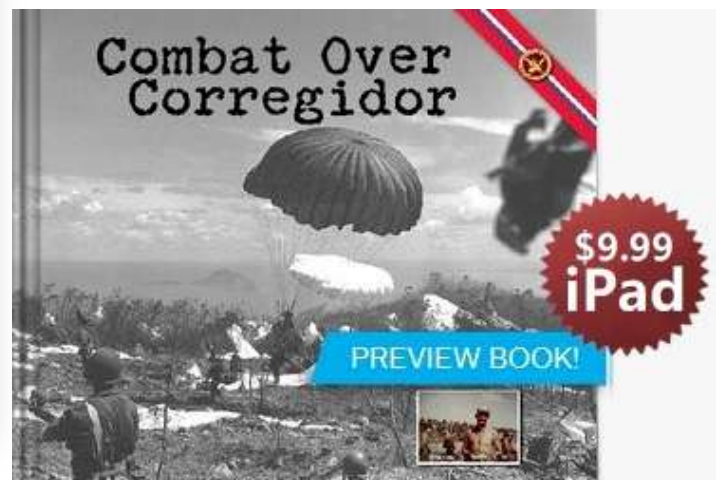


After pausing some little time while the lead planes thundered down the strip, our turn finally came, and off we raced, lifting easily into the clear air. We circled once while the planes gathered in their combat formations, and then all headed north: to Corregidor.

Many people have asked me how it feels to be riding on such a mission. There is no answer, each man's feeling being personal and different from all others. On the surface, as is so often the case when critical or dramatic moments pass, there was absolutely no sign of unusual tension, and certainly no nervous exhilaration. Even beneath the surface it is fair to say that much greater calm existed than the reader would imagine. Several of the men slept for the first hour, and I myself dozed through much of it, this being a convenient way of passing time, especially after rising so early in the morning. There was almost no conversation, which in itself was a sign of the lack of nervousness, since men under too great a stress usually cultivate an abnormal cheeriness or bravado. In the half-tone light within the cabin I glanced from face to face and thought absent-mindedly how well this scene would have suited Rembrandt's portraiture. Shadows from the men's helmet's, and the dark cheek straps which reached with leather cups under their chins masked their expressions; but this did not altogether hide their strong features, their eager eyes, the whiteness of their teeth, or the lines of quiet and reserved determination about their lips.

For an hour we hitched back and forth on our seats, trying to alter the discomfort of the cramped positions. Frequently, men stretched their legs out into the aisle; and occasionally I noticed that some of them carried trench knives strapped above the ankles on their heavy, tightly laced, jump boots. From head to foot these men were certainly soldiers, every inch; and even while crowded together here, I sensed a spirit of fitness and readiness about them, a sense of complete dependability which would not wear away even under the strongest and sternest tests. ###

Corregidor jump photos courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion website.



Available at: <http://corregidor.org/publications.htm>



Combat Over Vietnam

BEGINNER'S LUCK AT OPERATION JUNCTION CITY 1

Wednesday, February 22, 1967 -
Friday (TGIF), March 17, 1967

By: Bill Nicholls, A/2/503d

the audio part of the training. To hone my skills, we did this each morning and afternoon. After three days it was time to put on the blindfold to see (pun intended) how I would do. The logic is that during the majority of daytime fire missions, one could not see where the mortar rounds landed due to vegetation. At night you would not see where they landed when adjusting them into ambush position.

Before I knew it, we were at Bien Hoa Airbase loading up in C-130's for the combat jump. After hitting the silk, the rest of the day was spent with the majority of effort recovering 105 ammo crates scattered after the heavy drop.



Junction City DZ (Photo by Jerry Hassler)

The morale at Camp Zinn was high with troops returning from the last operation, looking forward to getting their gear in order and some R&R. I had just arrived to the 2/503d and was assigned to A Company. This was about eight days before the combat jump, but no one there seemed to have a sense of what was about to occur.

Soldiers were confident and relaxed about future missions knowing they had Captain Ed Carns at the helm. I later referred to him as *"The Skipper."*

During this time, I was approached by an E-5, although I cannot remember his name. I do remember his face. He was the Company FO, about to DEROS. I have no idea why he chose me, but he convinced me I would make a good FO. Since I was an 11C with weapons training, I said yes. Besides, I'm sure no one else wanted the job!

Every day we climbed the watchtower of the berm and called in 81MM white phosphorus rounds. This round of choice is to allow visual impact to complement

During that day, we were harassed by sniper fire. Col. Sigholtz ordered a bubble chopper and borrowed a soldier's M79 to *"deal with the snipers."* About a half-hour later, the chopper returned with 2-3 bullet holes in the canopy. Seems the Col. found the snipers! As he was getting out of the chopper, he mentioned he wanted to stay out there longer but felt *"The pilot needed to come back to change his underwear."*



"A" Company CO, Capt. Ed Carns, briefing his No Deros Alpha troops for Junction City II in 1967.

(Photo by Bill Nicholls)

(continued...)





Battalion Commander Col. Bob Sigholtz briefs his men.

As dusk set in, I was called to a part of the perimeter to coordinate a fire mission. Seems Charley had located some of the 105 ammo outside the perimeter and was helping himself. On the way, I heard a loud crack over my head and gunfire in the distance. I looked around and I was the only target, so I assumed he was shooting at me. Seems the sniper was still out there and this was the first time of many that I would be shot at.

I approached the perimeter with the Starlight scope and saw two Viet Cong about 300 meters out. I went over to the mortar and did something unconventional; I held the compass over the barrel and shot an azimuth to a reference on the tree line in the distance. Conferring with the expertise of the fire direction controller, Bobby Gerber, we were set. The challenging part for me was accurately estimating the distance to minimize adjusting fire until hitting the target. I got back up to the perimeter, took the Starlight and radioed to fire one round. In the light of the explosion I saw two Viet Cong cartwheel in the air.

After watching for 10 minutes and seeing no other enemy activity, I called the mission complete. Beginner's luck?

Absolutely! I would go on 17 ambushes during Junction City 1, and was honored to be awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

A greater honor was to have contributed with my fellow Sky Soldiers to another phase of Airborne History.

Bill Nicholls
A/2/503d
Combat Parachute Jumper



Anticipation



Bill



Prisoners of War are remembered

POW/MIA Recognition Day is Friday, retired Col. Thomas Faley will be the keynote speaker at the program.

By Travis Kellar
THE SENTINEL



“Retired Colonel Thomas Faley, U.S. Army, gives the keynote address Friday morning at the Capitol building in Harrisburg during the POW-MIA Recognition Day program.

Local POW/MIA Recognition Day programs will be held across the area Friday on a day to remember prisoners of war or those who went missing in action.

At 10 a.m. Friday, the Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars Lady Auxiliary and Veterans of Foreign Wars District 18 will host a program at the Soldiers & Sailors Grove at the Capitol Complex in Harrisburg. Retired Col. Thomas Faley, a South Middleton Township Supervisor, will be a keynote speaker for the event.

Nancy Kreiner, the Americanism chairwoman of the Department of Pennsylvania VFW Ladies Auxiliary said that the event should serve as a way to raise public awareness.

“We still have people missing and unaccounted for,” Kreiner said. “It’s a wonderful thing that these things go on each year to have people remembered.”

Faley, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, will have a personal message in his keynote speech at the event, calling the invitation to speak “gratifying.”

Faley’s best friend and West Point roommate, Maj. Steve Kott, was shot down near Hanoi on Oct. 31, 1967. Soon after, a picture of Kott was published in Hanoi publications, either unconscious or deceased, labeled as an “air pirate.”

Although listed as missing in action at the signing of the cease fire on Jan. 27, 1973, Kott did not receive his burial at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors until Aug. 13, 1984. “Dying in combat, then having remains not located or not being given by another nation, it just doubles the tragedy in terms of tragedy,” Faley said.

Faley said that POW/MIA Recognition Day is a way to recognize men like Kott and “bring them back for a day.” He also said that soldiers that are still lost are a real concern.

“This means so much to me, and the fact that we have a national day for POW and MIA recognition is so appropriate based on these situations,” Faley said.

The Naval Sport Activity base in Hampden Township will hold a program today at 10:15 a.m. The event will be held in the Special Events Forum in Building 14, but it is not open to the public. Col. Patrick D. Reardon of the U.S. Army will be guest speaker.

The Vietnam Veterans of Mechanicsburg will hold a POW/MIA candlelight vigil Friday at 7 p.m. in front of the PNC Bank on the Square in Mechanicsburg.

[Originally published in *The Sentinel* on September 20, 2012]



Company Commander, (then Captain) Col. Tom Faley (C) of Charlie Company 2/503d, shown here in 1966 with his RTOs L-R Wilson and Conley in Vietnam.



Look Before You Leap G.I.

During our tours in Vietnam, many of us have had experiences that when, today, we look back at them we tend to smile and see some humor in them. Though at the times, there was little cause for smiling.

It was a time in our lives when we witnessed the death of many American soldiers. However, it is the first combat death that we never forget. With time, names and faces tend to be blurred. However, you do remember little things about that individual -- as you recall those few solitary times you spent together in which you exchanged little personal tidbits about home, family, aspirations, as you shared C-rations, drink, and cigarettes.

It was April 1967, I was a member of 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, Recon Platoon. By this time there had been about a 90% turnover in personnel. We had a new platoon leader, First Lieutenant David Milton, later to be company commander of Alpha Company 2/503rd, and a new platoon sergeant.

We assembled near the LZ boundary, and after a short briefing, in a two-file column we began to move through the jungle towards our objective, "Search and Destroy".

As was always the case, the jungle terrain was very thick vegetation, making visibility very difficult -- the middle could not see the front nor the rear of the column. At around noon, approximately two hours into our march, the point section of our platoon started to receive fire from a position directly in front of them. Immediately the point began to return fire, as we in the middle and the rear sections waited with pounding hearts for directions. None came. As a means to give some fire support to the point, myself (I had an M16/M79 combo rifle), and the other M79 in our squad began to carefully lob M79 grenade rounds in the direction the enemy fire was coming from.

After firing a handful of rounds, my weapon failed to fire. Each time I pulled the trigger, nothing happened. What do I do?

I had two shoulder strap bags full of M79 ammo, the other M79 was almost out of ammo, so I started to give him my ammo to shoot. As this scene continued for a while, I happened to mention that maybe we should find some cover. All the time, as the bullets screamed by and above us, we were basically exposed.

As we looked for protective cover, a few meters to our left rear, laying on the ground was the partial remains of a big tree trunk. The tree trunk was as tall as the height of an average man, and could accommodate all of us. There were five of us and one by one we jumped and crawled over the top of the trunk to the other side for the

protection the trunk would afford us. At last, my turn came. I ran quickly towards the tree trunk (at that time I could move very fast with the agility of a gymnast).

I hoisted myself to the top of the tree trunk and did a "Geronimo" to the ground. No sooner had I hit the ground I instantly stood up, head and shoulders extending just beyond the top of the tree trunk.



All over my body I felt unbearable pain. It felt like thousands of little needles being stuck into my body, one after the other, non-stop. In a panic, I dropped my weapon and began to deal with the pain by taking my gear off as quickly as humanly possible. I had jumped onto a huge nest of black killer ants. They were as big as a nail on a man's index finger.

As soon as I got all my gear off, I next took my fatigue jacket off, held it with my right hand using the free hand to unbutton my fatigue pants, which quickly dropped down to my ankles. I frantically used my fatigue jacket as an "ant squatter". The whole episode must have lasted a minute or two. I had been so absorbed with fighting off those little black creatures, who were making me suffer so much, that for those few moments I was not aware, nor cared for the fact, that there I was, in midday in the jungle of Vietnam, standing straight up, stark naked, except for a pair of boots on my feet, and bunched up fatigue pants around my ankles with bullets being fired in my direction by someone who is trying to kill me. Can you visualize this picture postcard of an American paratrooper in action?

When the shooting stopped, a nineteen year old trooper from Anchorage, Alaska (we had arrived in country at about the time in January) who had married his high school sweetheart before reporting to Vietnam, was dead, and Lieutenant Milton was wounded.

That evening, as I opened the breach of my M79 I realized why my weapon had failed to fire. The round in the chamber had a big glob of sticky residue covering the blasting cap. This residue had prevented the firing pin from striking the blasting cap. Lesson learned; before you go into action, make sure that your weapon and ammo is thoroughly clean. And before you jump, look, so you know what you are jumping into.

Augie Scarino
Recon/C/2/503d



More on the CO's at Dak To in November '67

In Issue 47, Pages 78-92 of our newsletter, the special edition covering Operation MacArthur including the battles which occurred on Hill 875, a Military Studies Program Paper questioned the battalion COs' decisions to remain in command and control choppers above the conflict rather than be with their men on the ground and in the thick of battle. Col. George Dexter, 2/503 Bn CO '65/'66 RVN, addresses the subject here. Ed

I know it is late to do so, but I want to congratulate you on the November issue and the coverage of the Hill 875 fight. I got way behind writing Christmas letters during November and didn't get back to reading that issue until mid-December. When I



The Old Man, on the ground

official after action reports on the battle I dug out a 1/250,000 map that I had in my files on the area and tried to follow the action on the map, which was rather slow going. Anyway I was impressed with your thorough report on the action, presenting it from not only the official after action reports but from a variety of other reports, articles, etc. That was one tough battle, and the battalion sure caught hell.

The comments you quoted about the battalion commanders of 2/503 and 4/503 not being on the ground with the troops during the battle caught my attention. The advantages of a commander being in a helicopter during an operation were supposedly two-fold: he had a better view of the area of operations from the air and his communications were more dependable. Concerning the first of these, it is mostly true if the terrain is broken with roads, rivers, towns, patches of jungle, clearings, hills, etc. When it is solid flat jungle with occasional clearings, there is no observation advantage at all to being in a chopper. For one thing you really don't know where the troops are under that canopy in such terrain. On the ground a battalion commander has a sense of where he is and where his three rifle companies are in relation to him. When a fire fight breaks out he can hear it and knows who is involved and who is in a position to help if needed. If necessary he is in a position to move to the

scene and decide what should be done. From the air he cannot move to the scene. However, in more broken terrain he may be able to land and get involved on the ground.

As to the second advantage of the chopper--communications--when we first arrived in Vietnam we were still using Korean war radios--SCR 300's I believe--and they did give us problems. But once we got the PRC 25's we had quite good communications within the battalion, though at times we had some trouble communicating with brigade, and that is when it is good to have the brigade commander up in a command and control chopper.

From mid-Fall of '65 on I was often offered a C&C chopper by brigade during operations. I always had a little bit of a conscience about going up in the choppers and not being on the ground with the troops. Basically I decided that when the battalion was operating independently I would use the chopper, but when we were operating as part of the brigade I would stay on the ground. Most of the operations where we were on our own were in the broken kind of terrain I mentioned before, so I could land relatively easily and join the troops on the ground. The day I was wounded was such a day. I often turned the chopper over to the XO or S-3 and stayed on the ground anyway.

Thinking about Hill 875, I think the battalion commander should have been on the ground. Once the troops started up the hill they were in deep jungle. There was no way he could join them when contact was made. During the battle it was extremely hard to get ammunition and water in to the troops and the wounded out because of the difficulty of clearing an LZ in the jungle. Air and artillery were not doing the job against the enemy, which meant that in the end the infantry would have to do it. I can't help thinking that a battalion commander on the ground knowing what the situation is would do a better job of planning and directing how to do that than one flying around in a nearby chopper or sitting back in a CP tent in Dak To. Besides, with his whole battalion suffering so many casualties, he should be with them. Frankly, I think doctrine should be that battalion commanders not use command and control choppers in an operation when there is a high probability of enemy contact. On the other hand, brigade commanders should use them.

George Dexter, COL (Ret)

Battalion Commander, 2/503d RVN, '65/'66



Life is Like a Box of "C" Rations

12 September 2009

Speech by Major General Robert Scales USA (Ret)
at Truman Library

Mr. Skelton, Mr. Cleaver, distinguished guests and, most importantly, fellow veterans. What a great thrill it is see my comrades in arms assembled here so many years after we shared our experiences in war.



MG Scales

Let me give you the bottom line up front: I'm proud I served in Vietnam. Like you I didn't kill innocents, I killed the enemy; I didn't fight for big oil or for some lame conspiracy. I fought for a country I believed in and for the buddies who kept me alive. Like you I was troubled that, unlike my father, I didn't come back to a grateful nation. It took a generation and another war, Desert Storm, for the nation to come back to me.

Also like you I remember the war being 99 percent boredom and one percent pure abject terror. But not all my memories of Vietnam are terrible. There were times when I enjoyed my service in combat. Such sentiment must seem strange to a society today that has, thanks to our superb volunteer military, been completely insulated from war. If they thought about Vietnam at all our fellow citizens would imagine that fifty years would have been sufficient to erase this unpleasant war from our conscientiousness. Looking over this assembly it's obvious that the memory lingers, and those of us who fought in that war remember.

The question is why? If this war was so terrible why are we here? It's my privilege today to try to answer that question not only for you, brother veterans, but maybe for a wider audience for whom, fifty years on Vietnam is as strangely distant as World War One was to our generation.

Vietnam is seared in our memory for the same reason that wars have lingered in the minds of soldiers for as long as wars have been fought. From Marathon to Mosul young men and now women have marched off to war to learn that the cold fear of violent death and the prospects of killing another human being heighten the senses and sear these experiences deeply and irrevocably into our souls and linger in the back recesses of our minds.

After Vietnam we may have gone on to thrilling lives or dull; we might have found love or loneliness, success or failure. But our experiences have stayed with us in brilliant Technicolor and with a clarity undiminished by time. For whatever primal reason, war heightens the senses. When in combat we see sharper, hear more clearly and develop a sixth sense about everything around us.

Remember the sights? I recall sitting in the jungle one bright moonlit night marveling on the beauty of Vietnam. How lush and green it was; how attractive and gentle the people, how stoic and unmoved they were amid the chaos that surrounded them.

Do you remember the sounds? Where else could you stand outside a bunker and listen to the cacophonous mix of Jimmy Hendrix, Merle Haggard and Jefferson Airplane? Or how about the sounds of incoming? Remember it wasn't a boom like in the movies but a horrifying noise like a passing train followed by a crack and the whistle of flying fragments.

Remember the smells? The sharpness of cordite, the choking stench of rotting jungle and the tragic sweet smell of enemy dead.

I remember the touch, the wet, sticky sensation when I touched one of my wounded soldiers one last time before the MEDEVAC rushed him forever from our presence but not from my memory, and the guilt I felt realizing that his pain was caused by my inattention and my lack of experience. Even taste is a sense that brings back memories. Remember the end of the day after the log bird flew away leaving mail, C rations and warm beer? Only the first sergeant had sufficient gravitas to be allowed to turn the C ration cases over so that all of us could reach in and pull out a box on the unlabeled side hoping that it wasn't going to be ham and lima beans again.

(continued....)





Look, forty years on I can forgive the guy who put powder in our ammunition so foul that it caused our M-16s to jam. I'm OK with helicopters that arrived late. I'm over artillery landing too close and the occasional canceled air strike. But I will never forgive the Pentagon bureaucrat who in an incredibly lame moment thought that a soldier would open a can of that green, greasy, gelatinous goo called ham and lima beans and actually eat it.

But to paraphrase that iconic war hero of our generation, Forrest Gump, life is like a case of C Rations, you never know what you're going to get because for every box of ham and lima beans there was that rapturous moment when you would turn over the box and discover the bacchanalian joy of peaches and pound cake. It's all a metaphor for the surreal nature of that war and its small pleasures...Those who have never known war cannot believe that anyone can find joy in hot beer and cold pound cake. But we can.



Another reason why Vietnam remains in our consciousness is that the experience has made us better. Don't get me wrong, I'm not arguing for war as a self-improvement course. And I realize that war's trauma has damaged many of our fellow veterans physically, psychologically and morally. But recent research on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by behavioral scientists has unearthed a phenomenon familiar to most veterans: that the trauma of war strengthens rather than weakens us (They call it Post Traumatic Growth). We know that a near death

experience makes us better leaders by increasing our self-reliance, resilience, self-image, confidence and ability to deal with adversity. Combat veterans tend to approach the future wiser, more spiritual and content with an amplified appreciation for life. We know this is true. It's nice to see that the human scientists now agree. I'm proud that our service left a legacy that has made today's military better. Sadly Americans too often prefer to fight wars with technology.

Our experience in Vietnam taught the nation the lesson that war is inherently a human not a technological endeavor. Our experience is a distant whisper in the ear of today's technology wizards that firepower is not sufficient to win, that the enemy has a vote, that the object of war should not be to kill the enemy but to win the trust and allegiance of the people and that the ultimate weapon in this kind of war is a superbly trained, motivated, and equipped soldier who is tightly bonded to his buddies and who trusts his leaders. I've visited our young men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan several times. On each visit I've seen firsthand the strong connection between our war and theirs. These are worthy warriors who operate in a manner remarkably reminiscent of the way we fought so many years ago. The similarities are surreal.

Close your eyes for a moment and it all comes rushing back. In Afghanistan I watched soldiers from my old unit, the 101st Airborne Division, as they conducted daily patrols from firebases constructed and manned in a manner virtually the same as those we occupied and fought from so many years ago. Every day these sky soldiers trudge outside the wire and climb across impossible terrain with the purpose as one sergeant put it - *to kill the bad guys, protect the good guys and bring home as many of my soldiers as I can.* Your legacy is alive and well. You should be proud.

The timeless connection between our generation and theirs can be seen in the unity and fighting spirit of our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Again and again, I get asked the same old question from folks who watch soldiers in action on television: why is their morale so high? Don't they know the American people are getting fed up with these wars? Don't they know Afghanistan is going badly? Often they come to me incredulous about what they perceive as a misspent sense of patriotism and loyalty.

(continued....)



I tell them time and again what every one of you sitting here today, those of you who have seen the face of war, understand: it's not really about loyalty. It's not about a belief in some abstract notion concerning war aims or national strategy. It's not even about winning or losing. On those lonely firebases as we dug through C ration boxes and drank hot beer we didn't argue the righteousness of our cause or ponder the latest pronouncements from McNamara or Nixon or Ho Chi Minh for that matter. Some of us might have trusted our leaders or maybe not. We might have been well informed and passionate about the protests at home or maybe not. We might have groused about the rich and privileged, who found a way to avoid service but we probably didn't. We might have volunteered for the war to stop the spread of global communism or maybe we just had a failing semester and got swept up in the draft.

In war young soldiers think about their buddies. They talk about families, wives and girlfriends and relate to each other through very personal confessions. For the most part the military we served with in Vietnam did not come from the social elite. We didn't have Harvard degrees or the pedigree of political bluebloods. We were in large measure volunteers and draftees from middle and lower class America. Just as in Iraq today we came from every corner of our country to meet in a beautiful yet harsh and forbidding place, a place that we've seen and experienced but can never explain adequately to those who were never there.

Soldiers suffer, fight and occasionally die for each other. It's as simple as that. What brought us to fight in the jungle was no different than the motive force that compels young soldiers today to kick open a door in Ramadi with the expectation that what lies on the other side is either an innocent huddling with a child in her arms or a fanatic insurgent yearning to buy his ticket to eternity by killing the infidel. No difference. Patriotism and a paycheck may get a soldier into the military but fear of letting his buddies down gets a soldier to do something that might just as well get him killed.

What makes a person successful in America today is a far cry from what would have made him a success in the minds of those assembled here today. Big bucks gained in law or real estate, or big deals closed on the stock market made some of our countrymen rich. But as they have grown older they now realize that they have no buddies. There is no one who they are willing to die for or who is willing to die for them. William Manchester served as a Marine in the Pacific during World War II and put the sentiment precisely right when he wrote:

"Any man in combat who lacks comrades who will die for him, or for whom he is willing to die is not a man at all. He is truly damned."

The Anglo Saxon heritage of buddy loyalty is long and frightfully won. Almost six hundred years ago the English king, Henry V, waited on a cold and muddy battlefield to face a French army many times his size. Shakespeare captured the ethos of that moment in his play Henry V. To be sure Shakespeare wasn't there but he was there in spirit because he understood the emotions that gripped and the bonds that brought together both king and soldier. Henry didn't talk about national strategy. He didn't try to justify faulty intelligence or ill formed command decisions that put his soldiers at such a terrible disadvantage. Instead, he talked about what made English soldiers fight and what in all probably would allow them to prevail the next day against terrible odds. Remember this is a monarch talking to his men:

"This story shall the good man teach his son; And Crispin, Crispin shall ne'er go by, From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered - We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he today that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, This day shall gentle his condition; And gentlemen in England now-a-bed Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here, And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

You all here assembled inherit the spirit of St Crispin's day. You know and understand the strength of comfort that those whom you protect, those in America now abed, will never know. You have lived a life of self-awareness and personal satisfaction that those who watched you from afar in this country who hold their manhood cheap can only envy.

I don't care whether America honors or even remembers the good service we performed in Vietnam. It doesn't bother me that war is an image that America would rather ignore. It's enough for me to have the privilege to be among you. It's sufficient to talk to each of you about things we have seen and kinships we have shared in the tough and heartless crucible of war.

(continued....)



Some day we will all join those who are serving so gallantly now and have preceded us on battlefields from Gettysburg to Wanat. We will gather inside a firebase to open a case of C rations with every box peaches and pound cake. We will join with a band of brothers to recount the experience of serving something greater than ourselves. I believe in my very soul that the almighty reserves a corner of heaven, probably around a perpetual campfire where some day we can meet and embrace all of the band of brothers throughout the ages to tell our stories while envious standers-by watch and wonder how horrific and incendiary the crucible of violence must have been to bring such a disparate assemblage so close to the hand of God.

[Sent in by Jerry Sopko, D/4/503]

Retired Major General (Dr.) Robert Scales is one of America's best known and most respected authorities on land warfare. He is currently President of Colgen, LP, a consulting firm specializing in issues relating to landpower, wargaming and strategic leadership. Prior to joining the private sector, Dr. Scales served over thirty years in the Army, retiring as a Major General. He commanded two units in Vietnam, earning the Silver Star for action during the battles around Dong Ap Bia (Hamburger Hill) during the summer of 1969. Subsequently, he served in command and staff positions in the United States, Germany, and Korea and ended his military career as Commandant of the United States Army War College. In 1995 he created the Army After Next program which was the Army's first attempt to build a strategic game and operational concept for future land warfare. He has written and lectured on warfare to academic, government, military, and business groups in the United States, Australia, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and South America. He is the author of two books on military history: *Certain Victory*, the official account of the Army in the Gulf War and *Firepower in Limited War*, a history of the evolution of firepower doctrine since the end of the Korean War. In addition he is an authority on contemporary and future warfare. Concepts and ideas contained in his writings and studies have significantly influenced the course of contemporary modernization and reform within the military. He has written two books on the theory of warfare: *Future Warfare*, a strategic anthology on America's wars to come and *Yellow Smoke: the Future of Land Warfare for America's Military*. He was the only serving officer to have written books subsequently selected for inclusion in the official reading lists of three Services; *Certain Victory* for the Army, *Firepower* for the Marine Corps and *Yellow Smoke* for the Navy. Congressman Ike Skelton has included *Yellow*



Smoke in his National Security Book List sponsored by National Defense University. His latest work, *The Iraq War: a Military History*, written with Williamson Murray has been reviewed very favorably by the New York Times, Atlantic and Foreign Affairs. He is a frequent consultant with the senior leadership of every service in the Department of Defense as well as many allied militaries. He is senior military analyst for The BBC, National Public Radio and Fox News Network. He has appeared as a commentator on The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, PBS, TLC and Star Television. His commentary is carried frequently on all major television outlets in the Peoples Republic of China. He has written for and been frequently quoted in *The New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Times*, *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Roll Call* and virtually every service defense periodical and media network on issues relating to military history and defense policy. He is a graduate of West Point and earned his PhD in history from Duke University. [He is a paratrooper and Vietnam Vet brother. Ed]



Robert (Bob) Dickson A Sky Soldier

To all our COMRADES in arms,

This is just a short note to let you know that another one of our 173d Sky Soldier Warriors has been called to the great Battlefield in the Sky, Robert (Bob) Dickson.



Bob had suffered for a long 6 years in a nursing home, his family is coping well as best they can under the circumstances. Bob was actually from Scotland and had served with the 173d Airborne Brigade for a few tours of duty as a Sky Soldier (not with the Australian Army). After his service he migrated to Australia and married his beautiful wife Irena and had 2 wonderful children, giving him beautiful grandchildren.

The family has asked and gave me the honour of conducting the service for a mate and comrade for them. His Funeral Service was held Thursday, 10th January 2013 at Mount Gravatt Crematorium in Macgregor, Queensland.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Ray Chapman. J.P. (Qual)
RAA



~ 2/503d Combat Service Citation ~

(Vietnam Era)

Several years ago four of our former 2/503 battalion commanders, Cols. Dexter, Carmichael, Walsh and Sigholtz, created and signed the *2/503d Combat Service Citation (CSC)*, for all men who served in our battalion during *any years* of the war in Vietnam. While not an official army award, it has particular importance as it honors the men who served from the men who led us in battle. To date, the troopers listed here have received their CSC. If you served with the 2/503d in Vietnam and have not yet received your award, please send your name and company as you wish it to appear on the certificate to rto173d@cfl.rr.com and it will be emailed to you. *ATW!*

Recipients of the 2/503d CSC To Date

Steve Abdalla
Felix Almestica
Ron Amyot
Andy Anderson
Mike Anderson
Ed Anthony
Rogelio Ancheta
Kevin Austin
Tom Ayers
Jim Bailey
Jim Baker
Don Ball
Dennis Barbato
Gary Baura
Jim Bednarski
Bob Beemer
Dennis Begley
George Bembischew
Bill Berry
Jim Bethea
Jerry Bethke
George Bingham
Bill Birdsong
Tom Blankenship
Phil Bodine
Charles Boss
John Bowers
Wayne Bowers
Lee Braggs
Tom Branham
Doc Brawley
Walt Brinker
George Brnilovich
Jim Brockmiller
Greg Bronsberg
Les Brownlee
Al Buckholz

Dominic Cacciatore
Patrick Callaghan
Ray Camarena
Dave Canady
Abel Candia
Steve Carey
Larry Carothers
Rodger Carroll
Jaime Castillo
Carmen Cavezza
Jim Chappell
Lew Chappell
Butch Clark
Harry Cleland
Wayne Cleveland
Chuck Coleman
Tim Cloonan
Sidney Clouston
Brent Clover
Dave Colbert
Tom Collier
Scotty Colson
Tom Conley
Walt Cook
Virgil Cooley
Mike Cosmos
Alan Cote
Wako Cotney
Buzz Cox
Larry Cox
Don Cruce
Les Daughtridge
Victor Davidson
Charles Davis
Woody Davis
Bob De Young
Mike Deeb
Jeff Deckard
Wayne DeGeere
Bruce Demboski
Bruce Deville
Roger Dick
Rock Dickerson

Dave Doebele
Jim Dresser
Frank Dukes
Mark Dunlap
Tannor Dupard
Troy Duran
Alvin Ealey
Ray Edwards
Russ Ellenwood
Mike Ellis
Moe Elmore
Chuck Engle
Ray English
Tony Esposito
Ken Eastman
Hassan Fardan
Pat Feely
John Foley
Bill Folk
Joseph Fourbears
Art Frey
Dan Fritzman
Pat Fruchtenicht
Terry Fugate
Les Fuller
A.B. Garcia
Rosendo Garcia
Pat Garvin
Bob Gerber
Jim Gettel
Bob Getz
Kenneth Gilbert
Paul Gillenwater
Dave Glick
Larry Goff
Ismael Gonzales
Tom Goodwin
Bob Gore
Jim Gore
Earle Graham
Johnny Graham
Rick Grantham
Mike Graves



Joe Gray
Jim Green
Bernie Griffard
Dave Griffin
John Griffin
Jim Grimshaw
Mike Guthrie
Bob Guy
Chuck Guy
Steve Haber
Mike Hargadon
Mike Harris
Barry Hart
Jerry Hartman
Jerry Hassler
Jim Healy
Fred Henschell
Chris Henshoher
Doug Hetler
Bill Hill
Robert Hill
Eric Hitchcock
Guy Hodges
Bobby Hood
Wayne Hoitt
Dick Holt
Dan Honore'
Don Horger
John Hosier
Olaf Hurd
Thomas Hurd

(continued....)



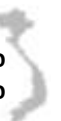
CSC Recipients (Con't)

Danny Hyatt
Jake Jakovenko
Ed Jackson
Fred Jackson
Jim Jackson
Joe Jellison
Wesley Johnson
Johnny Jones
Ray Jones
Dave Kaiser
Glenn Kapetanacos
Ken Kaplan
Jack Kelley
Alvin Kemper
Dave Kies
John Kirk
Bill Knapp
Harvey Knapp
Charlie Knecht
Steve Kubiszewski
Gary Kuitert
Stu Kumasaka
John Kyne
Lynn Laid
Joe Lamb
Virgil Lamb
Doug Larabel
Jack Leide
Ron Leonard
John Leppelman
Dave Linkenhoker
Paul Littig
Richard Lock
Ray Lockman
Joe Logan
Roy Lombardo
Ken Lorring
Bob Lucas
Joe Lucero
Alfredo Lujan,
Bill MacKenzie
Bob Madden
John Mallon
Tokie Mandakas
Arthur Marquess
Michael Marsh
Wayne Martin
Art Martinez
Richard Martinez
Jim Matchin
Bob Mathews
Bruce Matthews
Bud Mattingly
Dave Maxey
Larry McCorkle
Bob McDonnell

Tommy McMahon
Mike McMillan
Jerry Mellinger
Billy Dean Miles
Johnny Miller
Dave Milton
Jim Miskel
Lonnie Mitchell
Mark Mitchell
Ted Mobley
Jim Montague
Tom Morgan
Jim Morton
Phil Moulaison
Richard Mozingo
Jack Munroe
Herbert Murhammer
Craig Murphy
Fred Murphy
Rick Navarrete
Leslie Newland
Bill Nicholls
Jim Niles
Jerry Nissley
Dave Norman
Ben Oakley
Bart O'Leary
Dale Olson
Jack Owens
Larry Paladino
Preston Parrott
Tom Parrott
Jerry Patterson
Pat Patterson
Rick Patterson
Alfred Paul
Dennis Paul
Leo Pellerin
Enrique Perez
Ed Perkins
Mike Picklesimer
Lou Pincock
Norm Pineau
William Pinney
Lou Pizzone
Bruce Porter
Jack Porterfield
Marcus Powell
Jack Price
Gary Prisk
Ed Privette
Dick Prosser
Jim Quick
Ed Ramirez
Paul Ramirez
Richard Rardin
John Ratliff
Ken Redding

Dan Reed
Ron Reitz
Tom Remington
Robert Rychlec
Bill Reynolds
Jack Ribera
Don Rice
Paul Richards
Clark Rickie
Efren Rivera
George Rivera
Gordon Roberts
Dan Robinson
Jim Robinson
Lee Robinson
Don Rockholt
Luis Rodriguez
Graham Rollings
Charlie Rolon
Gary Ross
Tome Roubideaux
Andy Russell
Terry Sabree
Barry Salant
Joashua Salazar
Dan Sampson
Jerry Sanders
Robert Saylor
Augie Scarino
Jack Schimpf
John Searcy
Roy Seiders
Steve Senseney
Hubert Sheffield
Jim Simpson
Lee Simpson
Jackie Singer
Jim Skidmore
Dave Smith
John Smith
Ken Smith
Lew Smith
Ron Smith
Russ Smothers
Bud Sourjohn
Ralph Southard
Chuck Spagnola
Mike Sparr
Jimmy Spence
Jim Stanford
Jim Starrett
Dave Steffen
Paul Stike
Rex Stickler
John Sullivan
Steve Steets
Micky Stephens

John Stepisnik
Kaiser Sterbinsky
John Stevens
Sam Stewart
Mike Sturges
Ed Swauger
Ray Tanner
Jerry Taylor
Mike Taylor
Randy Tenney
Mike Thibault
Bill Thomas
Jim Thomas
John Thompson
Ted Thompson
Bob Toporek
Joel Trenkle
Bill Tuma
Billy Joe Turpin
Alton Turner
Billy Joe Turpin
Marc Thurston
Wayne Tuttle
Steve Vargo
Jim Velky
Gus Vendetti
Stan Verketis
Mike Vick
Bill Voll
Dave von Reyn
Bill Vose
Bill Wade
Connie Walker
Mike Walker
Russell Walter
Bob Warfield
Ferrell Weatherman
Russ Webb
Steve Welch
Rich Whipple
Bill White
Jo Jo White
Ed Wilby
Jerry Wiles
Bill Wilkinson
Emmitt Wilson
Jim Wilson
Rex Wiseman
Roger Wittenbrook
Ron Woodley
Pat Wright
Bill Wyatt
Reggie Yates
Ray Zaccone
Concepcion Zarazua
Louie Zucco



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~

~ 2013 ~



3rd Annual Airborne Reunion, Kentucky Airborne Chapter, 82nd Abn Div., February 8-10, 2013, Lexington, KY.

Contact:
Joe Steen

Phn: 502-937-8234

Eml: kyairbornechapter@yahoo.com



Winter Weekend Getaway, February 21-24, 2013, Hilton Head Marriott Resort, Hilton Head Island, SC.

Contact:
Bill E. Bekle

Eml: airborneben@hargray.com



50th Anniversary Celebration of the 173d Airborne Activation, March 21-24, 2013, National Infantry Museum Campus, Columbus / Fort Benning, Georgia. See Page 19 for additional information.

Contact:

Web: www.173dairbornememorial.org



4/503d 2nd Year '67/'68 Reunion Dinner, March 22, 2013, Ft. Benning, GA. For details and to register:

Contact:

Peyton Ligon

B/4/503d, '67- '68

Phn: 205-746-5586

Eml: pligon3392@aol.com



36th Annual Airborne Awards Festival, hosted by the Donald D. Lassen Atlanta All Airborne Chapter & 82nd Abn Div Assoc., April 3-6, 2013, Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel, Atlanta, GA.

Contact:

Tommy Tillman

Phn: 404-255-1674

Web: www.82nd-atl.com



2013 All American Week, May 22-25, 2013, Holiday Inn, Fayetteville, NC.

Contact

Phn: 910-223-1182

Web: www.82ndairborneassociation.com



Annual Southwest Memorial Day Reunion, hosted by The Acadiana Chapter, June 7-9, 2013, Holiday Inn US 167, Lafayette, LA.

Contact:

Randy Vidrine

Phn: 337-684-6175



The Edmonton Airborne Social Club

Airborne Regiment Reunion at the Edmonton Aviation Museum June 7-9, 2013. The Theme Chosen by the Reunion Committee is "REMEMBER THE FALLEN".

Contact:

Bill Tremain

Committee Chairperson

Eml: tremain.bill@gmail.com



335th Assault Helicopter Company, 11th Reunion, June 20-23, 2013, at the Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV.

Contact:

Andy Hooker

Special Projects Coordinator

Cell (941) 320-2463

Eml: Andyhooker1@aol.com



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

Contact:

Fred Solis, 201-491-2783

Pat Connolly, 210-826-8023

Florida's 26th Annual Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion, hosted by Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc., April 25-28, 2013, Wickham Park, Melbourne, FL.

Contact:

Web: www.floridaveteransreunion.com

(continued...)





B-2/501st, 101st Airborne Div., Reunion 2013, July 10-14, 2013, Ramada Plaza Suites, Fargo, ND.

Contact: **Chuck & Sue German**

Phn: **701-783-4386**, Eml: chucks@drtel.net



67th National Convention, "Crossroads of America", Tillman E. Beikes-Indianapolis All Airborne Chapter, August 14-17, 2013, Marriott East Hotel, Indianapolis, IN.

Contact: **Larry Marcum**

5266 Hickory Lake Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46235



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, August 23-29, 2013, Las Vegas, NV. See Page 18 for details.

Contact: **Jim Bradley**

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

Eml: webmaster@173rdairborne.com

Web: www.2013Reunion.com



101st Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans 19th Annual Reunion,

September 5-8, 2013. Reunion HQ Best Western Ramokta Hotel, Rapid City, SD.

Contact:

Rodney Green, Reunion Coordinator

Eml: randhgreen@sio.midco.net



11th Airborne Division Association Reunion, September 22-26, 2013, Fayetteville, NC.

Contact: **Bert Kurland, President**

Eml: berwan@embarqmail.com



The Florida All Airborne Days, October 3-5, 2013, Ft. Lauderdale Airport Hilton, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Contact: **Bob Buffington**

Phn: **954-435-9174**

Eml: abnbuff@gmail.com

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



The late Bob Stokes, Sky Soldier & cook extraordinaire.



Rochester, MN 2000, 173d Reunion, *No DEROS Alpha* troopers. Back row L-R: Frenchy Pellerin & Mike Thibault. Center row L-R: Mike Sturges, Jack Ribera, Jim Gettel, Larey McCorkle & Dominic Cacciatore. Front row L-R: Chuck Engle & Richard Hair.



Rochester 2000, HHC Recon troopers, L-R: The late Jim "Skid" Skidmore, Dave Kies & Marcus Powell.



2/503 Bn CO, Col. Bob Sigholtz addressing his troops in Rochester, MN, 2000. "We Try Harder"





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



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

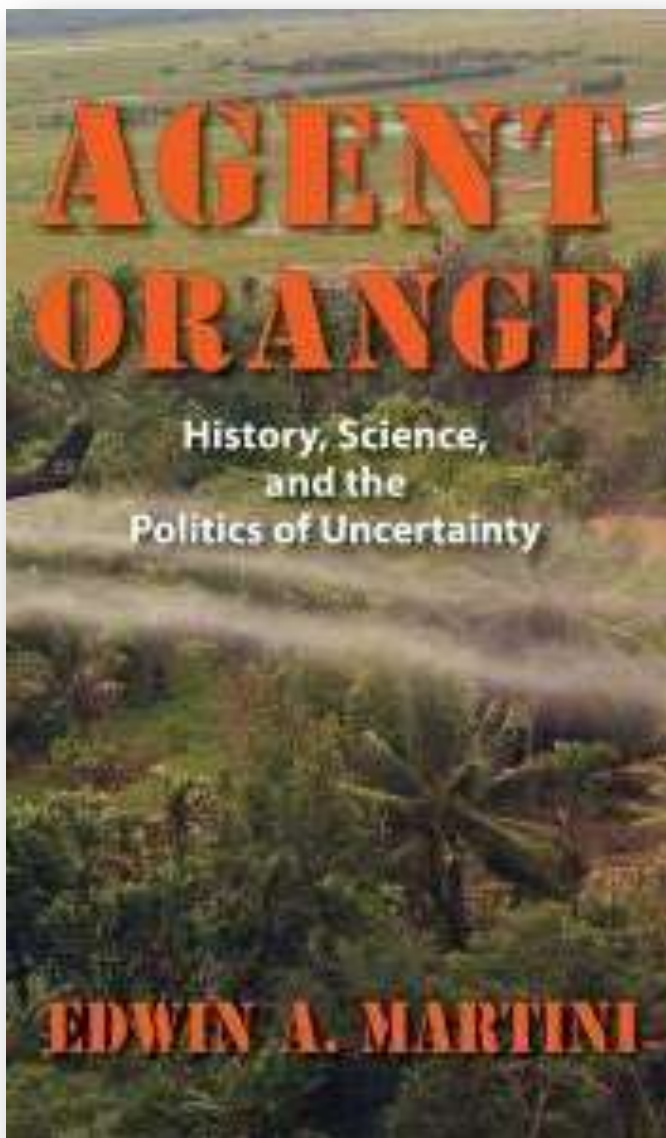
**For information regarding how to sign up for the
Golf Tournament and to Participate in the
Reading of the Names of Vietnam Fallen (30-40
more readers are needed), and for information
updates for tours and events, visit the 173d
Airborne Brigade National Memorial
Foundation website at
www.173dairbornememorial.org**



New Book on Agent Orange

A new book chronicles the history of using Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. Western Michigan University history professor Ed Martini also deals with the aftermath of the herbicide in his book *Agent Orange: History, Science and the Politics of Uncertainty*. Martini says American scientists started paying closer attention to the effects of dioxin as the war escalated. He says the Nixon administration eventually ended the use of Agent Orange over the objections of military commanders. Martini says despite extensive research, much remains unknown about Agent Orange. For more information on the book, visit the University of Massachusetts Press website:

<http://www.umass.edu/umpress/title/agent-orange>



To All Veterans Who Served In Southeast Asia

I am writing to inform you of potential health risk that you may have been exposed to while serving in Vietnam. In addition to Agent Orange there is a little known danger from parasites.

My husband who was otherwise healthy passed away January 20, 2006 from **Cholangiocarcinoma**, cancer of the bile duct of the liver. At this time it is very rare in the United States but very prevalent in Vietnam and surrounding countries. There are two known causes of this type of cancer. One cause is to contract Hepatitis C and the other is to have ingested a parasite from the water supply in Vietnam. My husband did not have Hepatitis C and therefore it was determined that his cancer was derived from a parasite.

I have received official notification from the VA that his death was service related, which is not something the VA determines without an overwhelming amount of evidence. According to the research, this cancer does not manifest itself until later in life, when you are between 60 and 70 years old but once the symptoms occur, usually jaundice, it is very difficult to treat or beat. My husband was 58 years old when he passed away and many of his fellow veterans are approaching the age where this may be an issue. If he had been informed that there was a possibility that he could have ingested a parasite while serving in Vietnam, he would have taken every precaution to have his bile ducts examined, possibly extending his life. Of course the parasite is long gone but it left behind damaged cells, which developed into cancerous tumors in the bile ducts.

You can access volumes of information on the internet by entering "cholangiocarcinoma" as a search engine word. If you spent time in Southeast Asia and are having gastrointestinal issues, with no apparent reason, please suggest to your physician to check for damage within the bile ducts. It may save your life.

Mrs. Edward S. (Pete) Harrison
Horseheads, New York

~ One Backward Glance ~

The pages which follow present tributes and photos, where available, and lists of our fellow Sky Soldiers who fell, by month, during the Vietnam War. We will continue these monthly tributes until all our fallen have been honored. *Lest we forget.* Ed

Sources: 173d Abn Bde KIA List / Virtual Wall Website





SKY SOLDIERS KIA / VIETNAM



~ FEBRUARY ~

"One Backward Glance"

~ 1966 ~

Simmie Bellamy, Jr., A/2/503

"This is in remembrance of someone I never had the opportunity to meet but heard wonderful things about. My nephew was named after you, because my oldest brother loved and admired you. Your memory and sacrifice will always be a cherished memory in my life."

Lawren Bellamy-Boykin



Elmer Eugene Berry, A/2/503

"Every day I think of my dad and how proud I am to be his son and how he paid the ultimate price for our freedom. I have 2 sons now, every time I look in their faces it reminds me of you and why you did what you did. I love and miss you every day, till we are together again I love you dad. Your son,"

Curt



Thomas Coleman Brewer, Jr., A/2/503



Ronald C. Cavinee, A/2/503

"Ronald Cavinee was killed in action just west of Ben Hoa air base. That morning I (John E. Cavinee), my company 82nd Aviation Bn (Cowboys, attached to 173d Abn Bde) flew Ronald's A Company into an LZ and dropped them off. Later that morning we were scrambled to support A Co. They were ambushed by hardcore Viet Cong and had many wounded. My helicopter went to evacuate the wounded. When we landed the first time and as we were taking out wounded I asked one of the men if he knew if Ronald was ok. He told me that he was wounded. We made several trips in for evacuation but I could not get any more information about Ronald.

The next day I went to the Hospital on our base where we had taken some of the wounded. They could not find any records for Ronald being there. I went back to my Company and later my company commander called me into his office. He asked me if I knew a Ronald C. Cavinee. I said yes, he is my first cousin. He then informed me Ronald took a direct hit with a .50 cal. round in the chest and died instantly. When I left his office I went back to my platoon and told my platoon Sergeant; we talked.

I did not know right away but he went back to the company commander and asked if I could escort Ronald back home. Later I was called back into the company commander's office and he informed me that the Brigade Cmdr. told him he (me) should already have his bags packed. I met up with Ronald's body in San Francisco. It took 4 days there before we flew to Columbus, OH; from there we went to his hometown.

Following funeral services and after taps we folded the flag and I presented it to Ronald's mother, with these words: THIS FLAG REPRESENTS A GRATEFUL NATION FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE PERFORMED BY YOUR LOVED ONE. I returned to Viet Nam to finish my tour. I go to Ronald's grave on Memorial Day -- I have only missed a few. God bless to all the veterans that gave some and some gave all."

John E Cavinee, Cowboys

(continued....)





Charles E. Daniels, A/2/503

A true friend

Kindness Never Forgotten

"I have never forgotten your kindness to our team after the horrible accident that killed our CO and critically hurt other members of our team, in 1964. You helped us all get through that difficult time with your kindness and gentleness. Your family must have been very proud of you - I was proud to have gotten to meet you. You will always be missed Danny."

Sue Mostert Townsend



Johnson Francis Frank, A/2/503

"I remember how tall and handsome he was. I remember how daring he was to go to war and parachute from planes. I made up my mind I had to experience why he would jump out of an airplane. More than 20 years later I took the leap, touched my Uncle and learned the answer."

Karen

Lamar Donald Frederick, A/2/503

*"To live in the hearts we leave behind,
is never to have died."*

(Thomas Campbell, circa 1888)

A memorial initiated by his brother,
Douglas Frederick

"Lamar, it has been 37 years since you left us. Eight of us from 2/503rd, mostly A Company, went back to Vietnam in Feb of 2001. I took a Bareroot Rose bush in my suitcase and planted it in your honor. Originally, my plan was to honor you where you fell. However, that was not possible. It now grows outside a High School Dormitory outside Saigon. Many of your old friends contributed to this dormitory. This Rose is now being cared for by the young high school girls that are living in the Dorm. It is fully grown now and beautiful. To those of us that knew you, this will always be a tribute to you.

On July 10, 2004, your mom, Justine Snowden, is to be honored by the 173rd Airborne as a Gold Star Mom. This has been far too long coming. I look forward to it with great anticipation and eagerness.

We will always remember you.

Always"

Dale Olson, A/2/503d

Note: Our good friend Dale passed away on October 22, 2011. I had the good fortune to be with him and our 1/503 and 2/503 buddies when Dale presented the rose to the kids at the Dorm in Saigon in 2001. We also visited the battle site where Lamar and other Alpha troopers were killed in action and, unbeknownst to Dale, while using his camera I took video of him standing along the tree line where Lamar died, while Dale wept and spoke to his friend. Some months after returning to the U.S. following our visit to Vietnam, Dale received this photo of the rose he gave the kids of that school. Like Dale, it continues to blossom. Ed



Dale's roses honoring his buddy, Lamar

Edward Stephen Graves, A/2/503

Jack Landen Himes, A/2/503

"It is said a man hasn't died as long as he is remembered. This prayer is a way for families, friends and fellow veterans to remember our fallen brothers and sisters."

Chris Spencer, USMC

***Do not stand at my grave and weep I am not there,
I do not sleep.***

I am a thousand winds that blow,

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning hush,

I am the swift, uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight,

I am the stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,

I am not there,

I did not die.



(continued....)





Robert Lee Hoskins, Jr., A/2/503

"Bobby was proud to be a part of the Screaming Eagles division. He wore his uniform with honor and pride. He was in Viet Nam when I got married and didn't get to see my wedding. I sent him the pictures right before he was killed, so he was part of it. He was a very special brother and a son, he didn't have much of a chance to be a father. His only son was only 3 when he was killed, but he felt he was doing the right thing and was proud to be in the U S Army."

Ruth H. Trower, his sister

Clarence Mitchell, A/2/503



Joseph John Reilly, A/2/503

"I love and miss you more than words can say. I lived with your Mother Jessie Thomas, my grandmother and her husband whom over the years was known to my family as Papa Charlie. They took me in when my life was amiss and loved me (as I did "know" you LOVED me) and at that time you put up with me as a pestie little sister. I loved it when pretty girls walked by and you would whistle thru the screen at them and I would tease you. I left your world as it was your world, too hurt forever. I will always carry the radio you took to war with you and hold it close to my heart until we meet again. Love Ella Marie."

Ella M. Dunphy, Niece



William M. Tarbell, A/2/503

"William and I spent 2 years together at LaSalle school in Albany NY. He taught me never to give up on your dream. Don't let anyone or anything stop you. He was very proud of his Mohegan ancestry and he would tell me about it with great pride. He was a tough competitor in sports and always played to win. We had planned to get together when we got out of school but I now know that Viet Nam got in the way. The plans of two 16 year olds were put on hold and we never did get together. Willie, I will never forget the short time we had together, you made the world a better place to live in. You are a great American. From a schoolmate,"

Fred Tester

~ 1967 ~



Everett Armstrong, E/17th Cav.

"The lower left longeron failed at the battery shelf, at approximately station 243.8 while on short final. The tail section separated from the fuselage. The main fuselage continued on spinning and throwing men from the aircraft. The main rotor blade cut through the cockpit. The aircraft struck the ground and rolled several times. The crash took the lives of two crewmen, WO1 William J. Robbins and PFC Thomas M. Nowack. Four passengers also perished in the accident, SGT Everett Armstrong, PFC Fred A. Johnson, PFC Chester P. Simpson, and SP4 George J. Carrillo Jr. Analysis revealed the structural failure due to wear caused by the battery shelf."

Harvey Brewington, Jr., B/1/503





Keith Allen Campbell, HHC/1/503, B/1/503*

"My son is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. He died saving the lives of others. We never stop missing him."

***You ran before you walked.
You sang before you talked.
You laughed before you cried.
Others live because you died.***

Esther B. Campbell Gates

My Dear Keith,

"For over 30 years I have grieved your loss. The past two years I have searched for answers and in doing so have found your brothers. The brothers you saved and served with. My how I understand more than ever why you sacrificed as you did. We love them so much and they love you. We feel strongly that you are looking down with your Medic skills at the healing that is continuing. Yes, after all these years! Doc, job well done, but the fight isn't over. There is so much awareness we need to bring to the public about their sacrifices and yours. I will fight the good fight until justice is done for you and for them. You used your body as a shield to save your brother ... no greater love doth a man have than to lay down his life.

I love you, Your kid sister,"

Judy



Collage created by Tom Murtha for "Mom" Campbell, derived from a number of sources

See Keith's award citation on Page 51.



George J. Carrillo, Jr., A/1/503, E/17th Cav*

"He was the only son of an only son. I had just turned 6 when the 2 men in uniform brought the news to my grandmother & mother, their screams waking me. I knew him a short while but he will always live in my heart and in the stories that are passed to my sons, his great nephews. Uncle Butch, you have been missed but I know that I have felt you close and that heaven has had a very special warrior."

Patricia Hernandez

August Chiasera, Jr., C/2/503

"Junior, I was only 8 years old when you were taken away from us. I remember very clearly how Gramma weeped at your casket. I do have some memories of you in your army uniform and I can even remember playing catch with (you) in the driveway. I am the son of Aunt Thresa and Uncle Butch. Your brother John and his family are still incredibly close with us. Our entire family has always been very proud of you.

God Bless You"

Patrick Kenney



Gilmore Wilson Christy, 173d Eng.

"Gilmore was a small but mighty force in the Universe. Quiet, but with a hint of mischief behind that ever-present smile. His heart was bigger than his body, and nothing was off-limits for him to try. He was the player with the most grit on his high school football team. And he was adored by his classmates. Gilmore is missed by all; we will never forget."

Class of 1963, Stigler High School, Stigler, OK

(continued....)





George Eugene Coles, Jr., C/1/503

“Five Philadelphia area servicemen were killed in combat in Vietnam last week the Defense Department said Monday. Army Pfc. George Coles Jr., 18, of 202 N. Rhode Island Ave, Atlantic City. Pfc. Coles was killed on a patrol last Thursday after spending one and a half months in Vietnam. He was a member of the track team at Atlantic City High School. In basic training he received the highest score in a unit combat proficiency test.”

The Philadelphia Inquirer on February 28, 1967



Bradley Timothy Daigle, B/1/503

“He was a trooper in the company I commanded. He died in a VC claymore attack on our position in War Zone ‘D’. I remember him as quiet, hardworking and dependable. We lost four killed that day.”

John H. Wilson
B/1/503



Raymond Maurice Darrigan, A/1/503

“Only picture of my Dad.”

“Hello dad. My god I just realized something. I am 36 years old and this is the first time I ever was given an opportunity to say hi dad. I was too young to remember anything about you dad, only the pictures I've been shown or the stories I've been told. But there is one thing you can rest assured of, I think of you almost every day of my life. I have for some reason held a fascination for anything related to the Vietnam experience. I guess

it's because of you dad. I have the utmost respect for you for the sacrifice that you gave. I can't begin to imagine the reality of what you experienced while you were there. I've been to the Wall and I've seen your name. As I said, I'm 36 years old now. I've been paralyzed from the neck down for 6 of those years. A lot has changed in my life in these 6 years except one thing, and that is my respect for the men who did what they had to do. It had to be a nightmare. This is as close to you my father that I have ever felt. I know somehow you will get this message and I know you are with me in spirit. Carry on Troop, Your loving son,”

Jimmy Darrigan



Robert Raymond Ecker, A/1/503

“Bob was my best friend in 'nam. We met while on R&R in Taipei. I was at his side when he was killed in a firefight in a bunker complex in D-Zone on 5 Feb 67. He had nothing but friends but for me he was my best. His photo and a rubbing from the Wall are inside my front door over my work area - so he's with me every day. A few from A-Co, 1/503rd, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep) who were involved in that fight have been in touch. Two have visited here - in fact Ken "DOC" Rypka just left. Luigi Muzzin, RTO 2nd Plt will be here in two weeks and Ken will return then also. We speak of this event EVERY time we get together.

You're a part of us forever Buddy.”

John McPherson
A/1/503

William C. Fore, A/1/503





Bobby Lee Hayes, B/1/503

"Sergeant Hayes died during an attack on my company's position in War Zone "D". In the late afternoon the VC attacked with a claymore mine and small arms fire. I went to the perimeter and took cover in Sergeant Hayes' foxhole moments before he died. He was a solid professional soldier and well regarded by all who knew him. I believe he was a single father of a small daughter."

John H. Wilson
B/1/503

James D. Henderson, A/1/503

"Young PFC Henderson, you are not forgotten. Thank you for sacrificing your all. I feel that I owe you the time of sitting down, and telling people that you have been on my mind lately, even though I never knew you.

Our hometown is a lesser place because of your absence. I hope somehow God allows you to know that you are remembered. From a friend that cares,"
Yvonne Edwards McCord

"James. Even though I was only three years old when I last saw you, I remember your smile and laughter that last Christmas we were all together in California at Aunt Willie's. You have never been forgotten! The entire family appreciates your sacrifice for our freedom.

*Thinking of you often.
From a cousin,"*

Penny Youngkin Ozgunduz



Edward Jackson, Jr., HHC/4/503, D/4/503*

*"My Father will never be forgotten.
Over the years it has gotten a little better.
One of his grandsons looks just like him.
We see a little of him in all his grandkids.*

*My father would be proud.
His third grandson is following in his footsteps.
My son knows that his grandfather
is watching over him.
We are so proud of him too. His daughter,"*
Beatrix R. Jackson Owens



Fred Arthur Johnson, E/17th Cav

"I was a crew chief in the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On 6 February 1967 my unit was picking up some grunts (infantry) out in the boonies and bringing them to an air strip. My ship was number 3 in a flight of 10 aircraft. As we neared touchdown I was looking to the rear of my aircraft to watch and see if the stinger touched the ground as we landed. This was done just as a method of ribbing the aircraft commander. As I looked to the rear, to my horror I saw a helicopter at the rear of the flight come all to pieces. I keyed my mike and said, "My God, we have a mid-air behind us", thinking two ships had collided. I immediately told my pilot we were OK, it was at the back. What had happened was that the number 9 aircraft lost its tailboom as it flared to land. When this occurs the body of the aircraft will immediately start to spin, trying to catch up with the rotor blade spin. Bodies are flung out both doors as a result. Two aircraft near the crash were detailed to carry the dead and injured back to Long Binh. The rest of the flight made another lift, as the mission had to continue. When we came back in, my ship was ordered to take one more body back to Graves Registration in Long Binh. They brought this body over to my ship and placed it inside. We took off with me up in the cargo area with this body. He was a young, nice looking black guy who just looked like he was asleep.

His right arm was broken below the elbow and he appeared to have a pencil sized puncture above his right eye. Other than that I did not see any other injuries. I felt for a pulse, such was my disbelief at having just seen this GI die. I thought how awful that his mother has no idea that he is gone forever. Things like this are burned into your brain forever. May he rest in Peace."

Ron Seabolt, 71st Assault Helicopter Company

(continued....)



A Note from The Virtual Wall

UH-1D tail number 64-13563 of the 71st AHC broke up due to a structural failure as the pilot flared for landing.

Six men died in the crash - two crewmen and four passengers:

71st AHC aircrew:

WO William J. Robbins, Absarokee, MT, pilot
PFC Thomas M. Nowack, Florissant, MO, gunner

E Trp, 17th Cav Rgt, passengers:

SGT Everett Armstrong, Nashville, TN
SP4 George J. Carrillo, San Jose, CA
PFC Fred A. Johnson, Hallandale, FL
PFC Chester P. Simpson, Jamestown, KY



Timothy Michael Kranshan, HHC/2/503

"How do you put what's been in your heart for years about the one person (a first cousin) in your life that was the Big brother you never had? We were related by more than blood. We played together as kids, ran around together as teens. He was older, wiser, the most caring cousin I've had. His courage has always been an inspiration to me. His humor and his love for what he believed will be in my heart forever. I still think, cry, remember him. He WAS my Big Brother!!!

All my love"

Jim Kane

Millard Franklin Meadows, B/1/503

"What I remember most about "Bobby" (we never knew his name was Millard Franklin) was his smile. He had a smile that would light up the whole room, and also his easy-going way. High school days seem so far behind us now yet at times the memories are crystal clear. Now after all this time I've been married for 32 years and have 2 grandchildren. It makes me cry to think you never even had a chance at life and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for making the ultimate sacrifice.

I will never forget you."

Vickie (Smith) Heisler
High School Classmate



Joseph Steven Meisburger, B/1/503, B/2/503*

"I submit this photo in order that he not be forgotten by future generations. He was a son, a brother and uncle. His older brother,"

Bill

John Ronald Mickna, A/2/503

"John, my husband Ken and I were Classmates at North High School. He was so proud to serve our country. He is fondly remembered and missed by us."

Marion Turner

Thomas Frank Phillips, E/17th Cav

William D. Schaddelee, C/2/503

"Bill, I remember the times we had at Ft Campbell, KY in the 101st Abn Div, those were younger days for both of us. I can't remember the rest of our friends or your girlfriends name, but when I go to the Wall every year in May, I always stop and speak. May God take care of you. Your Friend Forever, 'Wild Bill'".

Bill Matthews

Chester Paul Simpson, A/1/503, E/17th Cav*

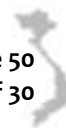


Charles Leroy Slack, Jr., A/1/503

"I am enclosing a photo of my brother, Charles L. Slack Jr. He was KIA in Tay Ninh Province on February 15, 1967. During Operation Big Spring, there were 9 men from my brother's unit and a dog handler and his dog.

Eight of those men made it out of the bunker, to a nearby creek. The dog handler that my brother was running point for, was shot in the face. My brother tended to his wounds...

(continued...)



...The men from his unit said they would begin firing, and when they did, my brother and the handler were to try to make it to them. As soon as they got out of the bunker, my brother yelled "grenade", and he jumped on it, saving the handler and his patrol dog. We do not have many pictures of my brother, so I hope this one will do. I chose it because he has the Airborne patch on. I love that you are going to do a wall of pictures. I would love to see that. It just seems so fitting to do so, and I thank you for that. My name is Peggy Slack Stull. I was 14 when my brother was killed, but there is not a day that goes by, that he is not in my heart."

Peggy Slack Stull to the 173rd Airborne Association

Note: See story about Charles on Page 47. Ed

Gary Kenneth Smith, HHC/1/503, 39th IPSD*

"In remembrance of this United States Army Scot Dog Handler whose name shall live forevermore. Specialist Fourth Class Gary Kenneth Smith served with the 39th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog Platoon, 173rd Airborne Brigade. You are not forgotten nor shall you ever be."

Clay Marston



Rodger Clayborn Snyder, B/1/503

"They shall not grow old. As we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."

John H. Wilson
B/1/503



Ira James Spittler, III, A/1/503

"My daughter sent me a link to this website today. It is comforting to read the messages and know that Jimmy was not alone at the time of his death. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being with my brother."

Tommy Spittler
(In a note to a buddy of Jimmy's)

Luis Vigo-Negrin, E/17th Cav
Franklin Rossevelt Watkins, C/1/503

~ 1968 ~

Eugene Michael Campion, A/1/503
James Lee Coker, A/1/503

"It has been many years since you left us, we love you now as we did them, Mom and Dad."

Billy Hale

Joseph D. Daughton, Jr., E/17th Cav

"I think of you often, Joe. I was one of the lucky ones that came back in one piece. I wish you could have, too."

A childhood friend,"

John Schembra



Elvester Hester, Jr., A/1/503

"You gave your life for your country, for this we Salute You."

Jim and Tom Reece

(See report Page 50)



William Thomas Jarvis, HHC/4/503, D/4/503*

(Incident date January 30, 1968)

"Tommy was the husband of my childhood friend, Ann. They had been high school sweethearts in Savannah. It took Ann a long time to get over Tommy's death. I was to share her grief three years later when my little brother was KIA in Vietnam."

Leah Smith Angers

(continued....)



Raymond O. Kennedy, C/1/503

Geovel Lopez-Garcia, A/1/503

Robert E. Mino, B/1/503

Benjamin Allen Mondragon, A/1/503

"We grew up together and the memories that you left in my mind shall live forever. I know you're in heaven because you have already spent your time in hell."

David Shuker

Frederick J. O'Connor, Jr., B/1/503

"I wish I had a chance to get to know the father of my husband. I have been told by many that he was a very good man, very smart, and loved by all. I wish that my husband had had a chance to get to know his father, the loss will forever effect his life. He would be so proud of all that his son has accomplished in life. I wish that my children had had a chance to get to know their grandfather, I think he would've loved the fact that his only grandson has his eyes. I wish that things could've been different, twenty-one is much too young to die."

Lisa O'Connor



John Michael Olszewski, A/4/503

"I served with John in the 2nd platoon of A Co. 4th Bn. 503rd Inf. 173rd Abn. Bde. He was a good soldier."

Melvin Ray Thomas
4/503d

Jeffrey Antone Pinheiro, B/1/503

"Jeff and I were childhood friends. I have thought that somehow some of the life I have lived is for him. I didn't get to say goodbye to him but I have never forgotten him."

Bill Harrington



Gary Craig Port, A/1/503

"Dear Gary, I remember you so well. You taught me about the war and despite the sadness of your

early departure you will always be remembered as a wonderful human being from a fine family. I married a Marine...one who not only went to Vietnam, but the Forgotten War as well, Korea. Thank you. Your memory will remain a part of my life forever."

Catherine Carpenter-Bartley
High School Classmate

John William Pyle, HHC/1/503

"It wasn't until the last 173rd Reunion in Fort Worth that I learned Sergeant Pyle's name. He was only with the 4.2" mortar platoon a couple of days when he was killed. We'd set up in what used to be a 175 or 8 inch artillery fire support base and felt fairly secure. The NVA hit us hard with mortars and sappers broke into the perimeter. The 4.2" mortars couldn't fire close enough and the 105's couldn't use their beehives. I manned the 81mm mortar and when the smoke cleared came back into the platoon area. It was then that I found the bunker had received a direct hit to its exit. Sgt. Pyle must have been in the doorway when the round hit. He was in bad shape. I gave him first aid, clearing his airway, covering the chest wound with plastic, and staunching the bleeding but he went into convulsions and died. I never knew his name until this summer but he's been a part of me for over thirty years."

Sergeant John Pyle came to the 4.2" Mortar Platoon from Charlie Company as did our Platoon Leader 1LT Ed Kelly. Ed knew him prior to his coming to my platoon. I plan on getting to the Wall this year to take a rubbing of his name to take home with me."

John William Schulte

Johnny

*"I remember you -
You used to come to my house
And while the rest of us were out playing
You would sit in my room
And read all my comic books
I remember you -
You used to go to my school
And while the rest of us were dating
You would sit quietly in the back of the room
And read everyone else's comic books
I remember you -
You went into the army
And while the rest of us were killing
You quietly set about saving lives
And had no time for comic books
I remember you..."*

(continued....)



*You were the first to not make it back
 And while I cried the day I heard
 You quietly became a hero
 And had no time for comic books
 I remember you -
 You were the one we called Hans
 And while the rest of us came home
 You quietly became a part of us
 And we aged too much for comic books
 I remember you -
 You were my friend and classmate
 And while it's been many years now
 You are quietly in our hearts
 Perhaps I'll read a comic book today.
 I remember you."
 - Randy Pruden -
 From John's twin brother,
 William J. Pyle*

*"My medic, my brother-in-arms, my true friend -
 I have missed you, Doc!"
 1LT Edward L. Kelley
 C/1/503, HHC/1/503
 67-68*

Aaron Henry Reigle, E/17th Cav

*"I am proud to say that I was named after this wonderful man who gave his life for our County. I am his Niece, and my name is Aaron Henrietta Reigle. Oddly enough I came across his drivers license the other day. It turns out we sign our name the same, Aaron H. Reigle. I feel honored to have his name for I carry part of him with me always. Sincerely, Aaron H. Reigle."
 Aaron Henrietta Reigle*



Frank Joseph Schap, C/1/503

"1st Lieutenant Frank Joseph Schap was a distinguished graduate of The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, in the Class of 1966, who was attached to MACV then next served with the 503rd Infantry Regiment "The Rock", 173rd Airborne Brigade "Sky Soldiers", when he met his untimely death at the age of 26 on 14 February 1968 during a sapper attack on a fire support base during the Tet Offensive as his platoon was part of the perimeter security on the night of the attack, and was posthumously awarded the

*Purple Heart Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Service Medal, and was entitled to wear the Combat Infantry Badge and Army Parachute Wings. Duty – Honor – Country.....The Long Gray Line. You are not forgotten nor shall you ever be."
 Clay Marston*

Victor P. Sherman, Jr., C/1/503, D/1/503*

*"Victor, you are still missed, I enjoyed our times together in North Bergen. I only wished you could be here today!!!!!!! Ricky"
 Rick Gimbel, II*



Samuel Kay Stewart, B/1/503
 SAMUEL KAY STEWART
 aka Reginald Stewart



"I'm the proud daughter of my HERO and I would like to dedicate this page in loving memory of my father. You are not forgotten. Unfortunately, I was only one when my father was killed so I didn't have the opportunity to know him like other kids knew their fathers. I'm a member of Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT), a National organization of kids who share a common bond – we all lost our fathers in Vietnam."

Bobby Collins Sutherland, A/1/503, B/1/503*
James Paul Vojir, A/1/503

(continued....)





Richard Edward Wagner, A/1/503

"Your Mom and Dad are with you now. Your family and friends think of you often."

His Brother



John Knute Weber, C/1/503

"For as long as I remember I have heard the stories of my uncle John. Whether they were about mashing his dogs, playing football, chasing one of his 5 sister's boyfriends away from the house, or Vietnam stories from one of his friends he served with, they all told of a strong, compassionate man who defined life and happiness by his own rules."

I wish I could have met him."

Josh Schoeller

John Davis Willingham, B/4/503

~ 1969 ~

Arthur Lee Andrews, A/4/503

"Arthur and I were roommates in NCO School, out of the three of us in our room, You, me and Autry, I was the only one to survive Viet Nam. May you rest in peace."

Airborne, John."

John B. Andres, Jr.

173d Abn

Marvin Donald Barnes, B/1/503

Arthur Wayne Bartlett, Sr., A/4/503

REMEMBERED

Arthur Wayne Bartlett, Sr.

Sergeant First Class, United States Army

rests in Texhoma Cemetery

surrounded by friends and family.

A Note from The Virtual Wall

Sergeant First Class Arthur W. Bartlett was one of six men from A Company, 4/503rd Infantry, who died in the 25 Feb 1969 fighting in Phu Yen Province:

SFC Arthur W. Bartlett, Dallas, TX

SSG Arthur L. Andrews, Sopchoppy, FL

SGT Martin T. Batchelor, Bethel, NC

Richard Palmer Gates, B/3/503

CPL Russell J. Holland, Clayton, NM

CPL David E. Thomas, Mableton, GA



Martin T. Batchelor, Jr., A/4/503



Linwood Ray Cumbo, D/3/503

Robert Malcum Davenport, D/3/503

"Robert, I was with you and held you as you died in my arms. You left behind a bunch of good troops in November Platoon D/3/503, 173rd Airborne Brg, (Sep)."

We all remember, "Doc"" David Kanters, 3/503

Richard Palmer Gates, B/3/503

"A good friend, roommate at college, best man at wedding; who knows what you may have accomplished." Peter A. Smith



Russell James Holland, A/4/503

(continued....)



Richard Louis Lanctot, A/4/503, E/4/503*

"Richard and I went through infantry school, jump school, and jungle school together. He had a real good friend (last name Burney) all the way through our training. I was in the 4th Battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, he was in the 2nd I believe. When we all got back together at the end of our tours in June of 69 we all looked around and said "well, who's left?" It was very obvious immediately that Lanctot's smiling face was not there. His buddy Burney got a field commission and became an officer. I will miss Richard."

Dan Pomeroy, 4/503

Ismael Laureano-Lopez, A/2/503

"To my uncle Ismael, my hero. We've never forgotten about you. My mom was your younger sister. I'm your nephew that never got to meet you. But I know you were a great man, and brother. I wish I would've grown up around you. There's not a day that goes by that my mother, your sister (Ana) doesn't think about you. You are sadly missed." Nephew

Geraldo Marquez, LRRP, N75*



Byron Dean McQuinn, A/1/503

"I never had the chance to meet you but I wanted to tell you that I am proud of you and I bet you would have been the best uncle. Mom always tells stories about you and Leonard. Thank you for fighting for our country!"

Christie



Joseph B. Oliphant, Jr., A/4/503

"Joe was friends with me as well as my brother when we were kids in school. I will never forget learning of his terrible death and have never forgotten him from our childhood days. Thank you Joe for the ultimate sacrifice..you have never been forgotten and never will. I know you are in heaven." Stony Librizzi



David Wayne Parker, E Co. (LRP)

"Wayne was a high school friend of mine. He was a bright outgoing wonderful person. He loved his family and his country very much. The world suffered a great loss when Wayne was lost in action. There were great things in store for him in the future."

Richard D. Hunt,
USN - 1970-1972

Joseph Howard Pierce, Jr., D/2/503

"My Uncle Joseph. I never had a chance to meet you but from what I understand from my mother and aunts and uncles you were a great person and you are missed very much and you will never be forgotten and we are very proud of you for being brave for your county, thank you."

Alishia

John Raymond Rebits, B/2/503

William Rivera-Garcia, C/2/503

Dewey Dolen Ruis, Jr., D/1/503, D/2/503*

James Robert Smith, D/3/319th

David Eugene Thomas, A/4/503



Elton Ray Venable, HHC/173d, C/75th*

"I served with Elton in the fourth platoon of E20 & C75 and remember him well and the story of how he died. We were working the Koreans out of their base south of Tuy Hoa, VN. He was a character -- lot of memories.

Rest in Peace Brother."

Bruce Kochy, C/75th

James Lee White, A/2/503

(continued....)



~ 1970 ~



(Photo does not identify troopers by name)

Charles Ray Berry, B/2/503

“Although you may be gone from earth, you are remembered by so many in their hearts and memories of the days you served your country.”

Karen L. Stevens

(Picture belongs to John Guilford)



Terry Adam Bryson, HHC/2/503, E/2/503*

“Uncle Terry. Although I never met you, I've heard a lot about you. How brave you were and how badly you wanted to do what you did. You knew that you may or may not come back alive. You wanted to be a hero. Papaw tells me all the time that you told him and Nana ‘If something happens don't cry... it's what I want to do.’ Daddy used to always tell me that you were the coolest person ever, that he wished we could have met. He said you were a nut. Well you, daddy, and Nana are finally together once again. Terry, you will never be forgotten ...your pictures and medals and boots and many other things are still around and they will be kept and passed down to generations to come. Your stories will also be told. Thanks for being so brave.” Brandy Bryson

John Moore Burnley, D/3/503



Gregory Mac Coons, B/2/503, D/1/503*

David Lee Harding, D/2/503



John William Sidney Kelly, B/2/503, N75th*

“In memory of a hero. John Kelly was a Canadian from Halifax, Nova Scotia, the grandson of a veteran of WW1 and WW2. He rests in peace in Halifax, N.S and is survived by his wife and daughter.”

James Armsworthy
Cousin

Edward Joseph Kulikowski, C/1/503

Joe Long, HHC/1/503

Ralph Martin, C/4/503

Carlton Brandard Millner, B/4/503

“Carlton, my friend. While doing a search of names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, I ran across an entry for you. I joined the Air Force the same day you gave your life for our country. I know that you are at peace all these 30+ years since your death. You never got the chance to live life to the fullest, and I regret that for you.

Take care, Pal. You are missed.”

A memorial initiated by a damn fine friend.



William Joseph Murphy, LRRP, C/75th*

“Willie’ was a fun loving character. He was well liked ~ even loved for his sense of humor and friendship.”

Rita Johanson
Just a Friend



(continued....)





Robert Gene O'Connell, B/2/503

"Bob, over the years we have missed you but you are in our hearts and prayers. God Bless you son and please save us a place and greet us when we pass over the threshold." Russell A. O'Connell, Father

William Smith, A/3/503

"Love Honor & service for the defense of freedom. A commitment, a way of life, our responsibility. It was all we knew. Dad had spent three tours in Viet Nam in the Special Forces, Mom she struggled to keep us in line. Our faith in God and our family unity kept us strong. Billy you will never be forgotten. Your death wasn't in vain or a waste as many had perceived. Freedom comes with a price and You have paid that ultimate price. In the defense of our freedom, something we so often take for granted. Your Name and spirit Lives on in our memories of you and people like you. MY hero My Brother."

Darrell George Wood, Jr., C/2/503

*"Darrell was an old school buddy of mine. We both came from military families and went to school together in Okinawa. Darrell was a fine young man. He was an outstanding football player and very competitive. These attributes apparently showed in his military career. We both served in Nam at the same time but different areas. Darrell should be located on 13W-line 34. I miss our good times together in Okinawa – and most of all
MISS HIM!
James W. Hobby, SSG, U S Army*

~ 1971 ~



Randolph Guy Hart, Jr., B/1/503

"My Brother My Friend. I never thought that you wouldn't be coming home to our family. Now, 34 years

*later, I still think of you often and miss you as much as ever. We are all proud of you and I'm so happy that YOU were my brother. I'll always love you."
Phyllis Hart Hobbs, Sister*

John Walter Kupkowski, B/1/503

Howard Sidney Lamb, B/1/503

Perry Metzler, HHC/173d Bde

James Albert Michael, D/1/503, E/1/503*

*"A Living Remembrance. Jimmy, my first born is named for you - he is James Hunnicutt. Miss you, buddy."
Joe Hunnicutt*

Larry Gene Mitchell, D/1/503

Charles Lamont Peace, E/17th Cav

*"You will never be forgotten by those who served in Vietnam. May God bless you and cradle you in his arms. Your Nam Brothers...forever in our hearts."
Bill Nelson, 2/503rd Inf., 101st Abn, Nam Vet '69-'70*

Luis A. Quinones-Rodriquez, C/2/503

Jose Marie Rocha, E/17th Cav

"I have never forgotten you. Jose was my friend. We went to jump school together & served together in the 173rd. He is a real hero among so many." Mike Harrell

William Stephen Woods, B/3/503

"The Spartans never asked what the enemy numbers (were), just which direction. We served together in 3rd Platoon, Bravo 3/503rd. Woody 'White Gloves' was a true Spartan, he always wore white gloves cutting point, it was his trademark. Forever will he remain a warrior brother. From a platoonmate," John J. O'Brien, B/3/503

***Records indicate service in these units.**

"You must never break faith with those who died."

**Maj. Eddie Prisk
Field Marshall Montgomery's U.S. liaison officer
WWII-Europe**

**My father's pledge from the beaches of Normandy.
Cpt. Gary Prisk
C/D/2/503d**



~ Corrections ~

A Very Young Sky Soldier

Happy New Year, by the way in this article (Olaf Hurd, 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2012, Issue 49) I found it funny that Mr Hurd (Ollie) made it to combat a year after being born (must be a type O). Thought you should know. Lou

Lou Rodriguez
B/2/503d

Reply: Lou, he was very young, but big for his age. Damn, never find the typos until the thing is mailed. Ollie was born in '45. Will run a correction. Thanks, Lou, and Happy New Year bro! Ed



Ollie, HHC/Recon/2/503, our 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year seen here on right with Roger Dick, C/2/503, was born in 1945 and not 1965 as we reported, altho he is a young looking chap. The birth year of Roger remains a mystery.

The Leapin' Decon Speaketh

Grace and Peace to you from River City, San Antonio, TX. Thank you for your most splendid January 2013 issue 49. I do, however, make a correction on Page 19. I am honored that you confuse me with CH Charlie Watters, whom I and SGM Arthurs served with in the 101 and 173 together, even in the same Chapel. Father Charlie and I do have some similar characteristics, hairdo and all. That picture is a field worship service with the 17th Cav., with yours truly leading in prayer. The second person in with head bowed is none other than our own Gary Granade. This picture is also the one used on the front of my book, "The Leapin' Deacon." Thought you would like this update. Hangeth in there, dear friend,

Chaplain Connie Walker
"The Leapin' Deacon"



"The Leapin' Decon" doing his thing in Vietnam, and we were glad for it.



Eric K. Shinseki on the Nomination of Sen. Chuck Hagel as Secretary of Defense

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki released the following statement in support of the nomination of Sen. Chuck Hagel as the next Secretary of Defense:



Sen. Hagel

"As a recipient of two Purple Hearts for courage in the line of duty in Vietnam; a Deputy Administrator of Veterans Affairs under President Reagan dedicated to ensuring Veterans receive the care and benefits owed them; and a distinguished member of the U.S. Senate, Chuck Hagel is a principled public servant who has shown unwavering commitment to our Nation's defense and the Servicemembers and Veterans of every generation who have sacrificed to safeguard our freedom. His lifetime of experience and leadership has prepared him to serve the Nation well as our next Secretary of Defense. I fully support his nomination and look forward to his partnership in meeting the needs of our transitioning Servicemembers, survivors, Veterans and their families."



The Sarge: Next Secretary of Defense?



"I didn't want to be in Germany when there was a war going on in Vietnam." Sergeant Hagel

Charles Timothy "Chuck" Hagel, born October 4, 1946, is an American politician who was a United States Senator from Nebraska from 1997 to 2009.

A recipient of two Purple Hearts while an infantry squad leader in the Vietnam War, Hagel returned home to start careers in business and politics. He co-founded Vanguard Cellular, the primary source of his personal wealth, and served as president of the McCarthy Group, an investment banking firm, and CEO of American Information Systems, Inc., a computerized voting machine manufacturer.

A member of the Republican Party, Hagel was first elected to the Senate in 1996. He was reelected in 2002, and retired in 2008. Hagel is currently a professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, the chairman of the Atlantic Council, and co-chairman of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board. He also serves on a number of boards of directors, including that of Chevron Corporation.

Hagel is a Vietnam War veteran, having served in the United States Army infantry from 1967 to 1968. Holding the rank of Sergeant (E-5), he served as an infantry squad leader in the 9th Infantry Division. Hagel served in the same infantry squad as his younger brother Tom, and they are believed to be the only American siblings to have done so during the Vietnam War. They also ended up saving each other's lives on separate occasions.

While serving during the war, he received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, two Purple Hearts, Army Commendation Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

On January 7, 2013, President Barack Obama nominated Hagel to serve as Secretary of Defense in his second term.

DAV Lauds Burn Pit Registry

WASHINGTON—DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is applauding the long-sought legislation that requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to compile a registry of service members and veterans exposed to emissions from burn pits used at military bases in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere overseas.

"Our efforts to gain congressional support for the registry led to passage of this legislation in the House and Senate late last year, and signed into law by President Obama last week," said DAV National Commander Larry A. Polzin. *"This law will help quantify the illnesses that likely stemmed from breathing hazardous fumes emanating from the pits. It is our hope that the information from this registry, which will be given to Congress, will help determine the number of veterans who may have been exposed to burn-pit smoke so the VA can track their medical histories and keep them apprised of new treatments for associated conditions."*

Burn pits were used in Iraq and Afghanistan to incinerate waste that included destroyed Humvees, batteries, unexploded ordnance, rocket pods, plastics, medical wastes and amputated body parts, along with jet fuel used to ignite the fires.

"Thousands of veterans have blamed breathing toxic fumes from the burn pits for cancer and other diseases," said DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. *"This registry will help private and government physicians in documenting health conditions potentially related to the burn pits and perhaps clearly identify the source of these illnesses that are now linked to the burn pits."*

"We will closely watch the development of this registry, and when completed, will call on our government to provide exposed veterans' health care and benefits for their illnesses and compensation for their families and survivors," said Jesinoski.

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with 1.2 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at www.dav.org.



Proud Member of the Elite... When Duty Calls

Not in Basic or AIT nor even at jump school did they warn us of a particularly dangerous mission we might be called on to perform in Vietnam on a moment's notice and without warning. Nor were we sufficiently trained to take on this potentially perilous operation. But, because we were 'Can Do' paratroopers of the 'We Try Harder' and 'Second to None' kind, we were not afraid. "Bring it on, you bastards!" we thought.

Huh? What's this stick for? To stir what?! And how come only Cherries are doing this? What's that you say? It's likely we'll only have to do this once as new FNG's will be afforded the honor? *Shit!*

So, sometime in late December '65, off we go, RTO Lee Braggs and I to earn our patch at the Officer's Latrine; which we thought a privileged assignment having been told by many of them 'ours doesn't stink'. To our surprise, we had been lied to. *Gentlemen my ass!*

Having completed this dangerous and slippery task, we were not awarded medals, which I thought a great oversight on someone's part, and not one person thanked us for our good work and bravery above and beyond the call of duty.

Now, I don't know about Lee as I haven't seen him in nearly 50 years, but some 30+ years later I was awarded my very own patch which, if enough rum is available, will proudly wear on my sports coat. It's good to be one of the elite, when duty calls.

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d
Shit Burner Extraordinaire



*If you haven't burned shit,
you don't know shit.*

One of Delta's Best

Wayne Bowers was born in January 1948 in the small upstate town of Travelers Rest, South Carolina. He was the first of four sons. When he was 10 years old, his dad moved the family to Sierra Vista (Fort Huachuca), Arizona, where he took a job in the base commissary. After graduating from Buena High School in Arizona, Wayne joined the Army on September 13, 1966 and was assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas for basic training.



Mr. Bowers

After basic training, he was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia for infantry training. He graduated in the middle of January and was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia for Jump School. After finishing jump school, he went back to Sierra Vista for 30 days leave before being assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate), Vietnam as a PFC.

Wayne arrived in Vietnam at 4 am on March 28, 1967 and was assigned to Charlie Company of the 2nd Battalion, where he served as a rifleman, RTO and machine gunner and was promoted to SP/4. In October, he was assigned to newly-formed Delta Company where he served as rifleman/point man. He was point man for Delta Company as they ascended Hill 875 in November 1967.

Wayne was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for actions on Hill 875. He spent some time in a hospital in Pleiku and returned to Delta Company in late December where he served his remaining time. He left Vietnam on March 27, 1968.

After returning to the United States, Wayne was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina as a Sgt. E5. He was sent to NCO Academy at Fort McClellan, Alabama in June 1968, then returned to Fort Bragg for approximately 5 months. He then went to Drill Sergeant School in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. After graduating 3rd in his class, he was assigned to the 3rd Army Training Center at Fort Bragg.

Wayne served as a Drill Sgt. and was promoted to SSG E6. After honorably serving his beloved country for 2 years, 11 months and 28 days, he was discharged from the Army on September 11, 1969 and went to Greenville, South Carolina, where his family had moved while he was in Vietnam. Wayne presently resides in Columbia, South Carolina with his wife, they have 1 daughter.

[Wayne is unaware we captured this info on him. Ed]





Part IV

See Parts I thru III of WWII 503d PIR trooper Jerry B. Riseley's 'official journal' in Issues 46, 48 & 49 respectively, of our newsletter. Ed

THE GREAT FIRE FIGHT OF 5-6 SEPTEMBER, 1943 (Excerpts)



Being a "B" Co. Soldier's version of The Great Fire Fight at the 2nd Bn. Command Post, during the night 5-6 September, 1943 - as

related to Jerry B. Riseley by Louis G. Aiken, Sr.

Dear Mr. Riseley:

Just read your account of the Big Shoot out or Fire Fight of 5-6 September 1943 at a place called "Gabsonkeck" or "Gabsohnkie." I never knew what the place was called. I figured all the street signs and signs denoting the name of the place were shot up and destroyed the night of 5-6 Sept 1943. My group moved out fairly early the next morning without too much looking around and were very thankful for having survived the ordeal and I didn't encounter too many people that were willing to explain or give me the name of the place or knew exactly what took place.

I will try to explain the events as best and truthfully as I can, if that is possible, as to how I came to be on the outer perimeter of the 2nd Bn C.P. on the night of 5 Sept and early morning of the 6th when all hell broke loose inside and around the perimeter that you have so rightly described as the "Great Fire Fight" of 5-6 Sept 1943 at "Gabsonkeck" or whatever.

For some unknown reason or rhyme, to me at least, a contingent of the 1st folks were designated to contact the 2nd Bn CP and then move through and out in front of the CP and establish an outpost, recon, or listening post. I guess for lack of a better explanation, 1st Lt Bill Bossert Co "B" 2nd Plt was the Officer in Charge of this particular group that had been handpicked, about 15 or 20 men, from the 2nd Bn Plt of "B" Co. I was not one of

these handpicked folks, however I did subsequently become a member of the elite group.



Native village in the Markham Valley. Portions of the village had not been lived in for some time. Bn HQ and Headquarters Company occupied the village 5 September 1943. (503rd Heritage Bn website)

My assignment was to spot and assemble on the door bundles, using the cargo chute as color code. I was about #8 or #9 back from the door of the aircraft before the jump and very alert because I knew the success of our part of the operation depended on me recovering the bundle. I didn't even know what the hell was in it. Anyway I moved very smartly to the door ducking to keep Kid Arris (Note: William Arris) from unloading on me as he appeared to be very puff about the jaws and I suspected the worst. I approached the door and out at about 300 feet and a couple of oscillations and a salute to Gen MacArthur as he circled overhead, way over head, in his B-17, and then swoosh into the Kunai Grass, up to and over my ass and I couldn't see nothing much less a door bundle. Hell I didn't even know where I was much less a door bundle and frankly by then I didn't much give a damn where the bundle was....

....I nearly suffocated in the tall grass and was hoping to hell the Japs, if there were any, or somebody else, didn't strike a match.

Our assembly point ('B Co') was to be designated by white smoke and with the use of my trusty "Water Proof Match Container Compass" [remember them: you almost had to strike a match to see the face of the thing in daylight]....

(continued....)



....Anyway I set an azimuth and struck out in what I considered to be the general direction of our assembly point. Shortly thereafter I heard a rustling in the tall grass headed in my direction from the left flank. I immediately prepared for hand to hand combat, if necessary, preferably a quick shot at whoever my opponent might be, if in fact he or it was a hostile. The grass parted as I lay in wait and face to face we peered at each other and burst out laughing and then a little cussing, because it was hot. My opponent turned out to be a member of a Machine Gun Crew from "A" or "C" Co, [45 years is a long time]. He had his portion of the gun and he wondered out loud what he was supposed to do if he encountered the enemy with only a .45 side arm and part of a light machine gun. I suggested he piss on it and throw it at the Japs if we encountered them. I actually think he thought it was a good idea.



We got our heads together and decided to join whatever unit we found first. Being keen of eye, very young, and always alert, I continued onward toward the tree line and suddenly realized I could see something white waving back and forth from one of the trees in the general direction of what I believed to be "B Co" Assembly Point. I asked my friend to verify my findings and we both agreed that someone or something was waving a white piece of cloth on a big stick and whatever or whoever it was was seated or situated in a very large tree. I will admit that I thought for a second that it was a large white cockatoo, but quickly dismissed that thought. The thought also occurred to me that maybe the Japs were trying desperately to surrender before we could assemble and totally destroy them (perhaps this is a bit too exaggerated too), however a thought that someone or something was trying to surrender did occur to me.

We continued on toward the direction of the white flag-waver and, lo and behold, it was the "B" Co assembly point. Some poor soul, I think it was a Lt., had been assigned the task of climbing the tree and waving the white because all of the white smoke grenades had been used up. Don't reckon there were more in that door bundle I couldn't find? I didn't ask Lt. Bossert (who) was there and only about six of (his) hand-picked men had arrived at the assembly point by time I got there. I reported and told him I didn't know where the hell the bundle was. He had jumped ahead of me and stated he didn't have any idea where it was either and anyway he had a new assignment for me.

I had become, by virtue of the fact that I found the assembly point, a member of the group who were to eventually witness and survive the Big Fire Fight of 5-6 Sept at a place called Gabsohnkie.

The Lt. kept looking at his watch and eventually realized that his troops were not going to find the assembly point in time for him to move out at the assigned time.

Actually I can remember he delayed departure for approximately one hour hoping that most of them would show up. Finally he counted heads and had about eight of those originally assigned and approximately four of us who had been assigned to other tasks, bundle humping etc. We departed, twelve good men and a determined young officer. I was younger, much younger, than him but thoroughly dedicated, moved out toward the great adventure, sweating profusely — our Jump Suits which were especially designed to

cause weight loss in the tropics, gear hanging and banging all over our bodies.

As we approached the general direction of the 2nd Bn CP we encountered a number of coconut trees that evidently put up quite a resistance. One actually had been blown down and a number of others had the marks of what appeared to be Primer Cord. We considered shooting the wounded trees in the lower trunk area to put them out of their misery but realized we might antagonize some of the healthy trees that appeared to be guarding their wounded comrades. We could see the evidence of them having lost a good many coconut fruit in their encounter with someone or something that had access to Primer Cord and small blocks of explosives. We paid our respects and moved on toward the CP.

When we arrived it was rather late in the day (5 Sept 1943) and everybody was dug in and had made preparations for whatever might occur on this our first night in a Combat Zone. We assumed that inasmuch as we were only going to be in the CP area overnight and then move on early the next morning, that we would be allowed to bed down inside the perimeter — not so stated the powers that be, thank goodness.

(continued....)



....We were instructed to move outside the perimeter, dig in staggered along both sides of a small road that approached the 2nd Bn CP from the general direction from which we had come; good thinking because this would give some rear coverage for the CP just in case they received a frontal attack at the same time the Japanese decided to flank and hit the rear defenses they would encounter US and we was ready!



Maurice St. Germaine, rifleman, 3d squad, 1st Platoon, "D" Co. on Negros, Phillipine Islands in June 1945. Each trooper carried a poncho which was waterproof, and could be connected to make a "shelter-half".

(John Reynolds, "D" Company collection)

Well we dug in staggered individual sitting type foxholes about five to ten feet between positions and prepared to defend to the last man. We knew we couldn't retreat for to do so would throw us in conflict with the CP perimeter and possibly shot as suspected hostiles. I got that word from watching John Wayne movies of the Old West, so Alamo here we stand, no quarter given or expected. "Hooray for George, Mac and Frank" was our battle cry. This was a saying immortalized by "B" Co's own "Snuffy" Garrett who was ejected, kindly but nevertheless ejected, from the cinema in Gordonvale, Australia when he got patriotically carried away as per usual: before each showing of a Film of Flicker, the Pictures of King George, General MacArthur and President Franklin D. Roosevelt were flashed across the screen. Snuffy was slightly inebriated and being very patriotic he arose and saluted and shouted so all could hear "Hurray for George, Mac, and Frank!" He never got to see the main feature. However on special occasions we used this immortal phrase as our Battle

Cry and of course we considered this, our first night in a Combat Zone situation, as a special occasion - little did we know how special it was to be.

This was the first and last time I ever dug in as an individual, without someone else to keep me company during the long nights of expected combat conditions. I dug in a bunch of times after that from New Guinea to Negros, three years and four days from date of

departure to return in October 1945, all in Co. "B" '503" PIR (RCT). I was so young I think folks thought I was born overseas and therefore desired to remain in my place of birth.

Nightfall and all is quiet and then sometime, to the best of my knowledge, between ten and twelve midnight all hell broke loose in the 2nd Bn C.P.

I figured we are in one hell of a fix and no place to go! I sat there in my foxhole and dug a little deeper trying to figure out what was going on. You know them birds that make funny noises at night, some sound like they are knocking pipes together and others sound like they are knocking

blocks of wood together? I figured they were Japs sending code signals to each other, telling each other where twelve men and their officer were located outside of the CP perimeter.

I began to study my immediate front and about twenty yards to my front in a small opening with just enough moonlight or light showing through I detected a movement and then another and another and I guess I counted about 20 Japs moving past the small clearing; however like a good soldier I held my fire and decided against trying to alert the position to my left. Oh yeah, I was the furthest out on that twelve man line defense with the next position approximately 6 feet to my left and to attempt alerting him might alert the Japanese and jeopardize mine and his position. I was playing it cool and scared shitless and things were getting crowded as the Fire Fight picked behind me in the 2nd Bn.

(continued....)



Man, I figured this was it. Japs were everywhere and the continuous firing and explosion of hand grenades convinced me I was absolutely right. Before daylight came I had about 20 clips of M-1 ammo stacked on the lip of my foxhole, a machete, a knuckle type trench knife for hand to hand combat, a bayonet and several hand grenades all in position in front of me and I was ready and scared as hell!

There was another incident that further convinced me that the Japs were all around us trying to infiltrate and this one was about 15 to 20 feet to my immediate left oblique. I guess it was about 2:00 or 3:00 AM 6 Sept 1943 when I heard a loud thud as if something or someone had (thrown) a heavy object to the ground and this was followed by some loud grunts and cussing. Man this is it! Japs done got into one of my buddies' fox holes. I waited and continued to count Japs as they crossed in front of me and sporadic fire continued from the direction of the 2nd Bn C.P.

It would have been nice if we had been assigned a newsman or cameraman to record this fireworks spectacle so we could at some later date show our children and grandchildren what it was like on our first night of combat at a place called "Gabsohnkie", British New Guinea 5-6 Sept 1943. Don't reckon this is where the word "Honkie" was eventually derived and later used in our ever increasing vocabulary.

Daylight comes, the loud thud turned out to be a coconut falling, voluntarily or perhaps shot and wounded during the night, or just gave up and fell. I don't think they all fired in the same direction at the same time but more at random or will, or at somebody other than Japanese. I could hear ball ammo whistling over my head during the night. Anyway this coconut fell in the foxhole of Briggs Dayton, an outstanding and subsequently good combat soldier. Briggs said he figured he stabbed that thing seven or eight times before it gave up and realized he had won. It was funny after daylight but damn serious that.

Early in the morning of 6 Sept 1943 we cautiously gave up our positions and moved cautiously into the inner sanctum of the 2nd Bn C.P. to receive orders for our assigned missions and of course we wanted to observe the damage inflicted by the Japanese and see who

suffered the most casualties, us or them. Again it was quite funny but damn serious. We were told about the water bag and how somebody or something shot holes in it and whoever it drained on figured someone had either been shot or was bleeding on him or someone had the piss scared out of him and couldn't hold it and the poor fellow in the hole caught the stream. We didn't believe such a report but it was funny and everyone laughed. We also received a report that some young Lt. was throwing hand grenades so fast and furiously that he mistakenly, not realizing he had run out of grenades, began pulling the keys on C ration cans and throwing the cans. Of course we didn't believe that but it was funny but serious business.



Infantrymen cautiously move toward an enemy machine gun position. (National Archives)

Well we received our marching orders from the powers that be in the CP and it seems we were to move out front of the CP some distance and establish an outpost near a road leading from Nadzab to Lae. We were to monitor movement on the road - whether it be friendly or hostile. However before leaving on our assigned task we were reinforced by approximately 10 folks from the 2nd Bn, people who were well versed in the use of explosives etc. One of these was a fella named Pete from Panama, perhaps you remember him, quite a character, but that's another story.

(continued....)



Lt. Bossert assembled his brave group of paratroopers and informed us that he had been informed by his superiors that his group of people would be and were expected to detain and disrupt the movement of 500 to 1,000 Japanese if they attempted to utilize any of the trails leading to the CP or like areas. It seemed we were to use explosives to discourage such movement in our area. I was somewhat skeptical of this assumption, as were others, and I thought to myself and may have even mentioned it to my comrades, that if we encountered that many Japanese Soldiers, sick or otherwise, daylight or night, about the only chance we had to escape or delay for a short while was to create such a commotion that they, Japs, would stop and hesitate a bit to cut bigger sticks with which to beat us to death, if they could catch us, before we got back to "Gabsohnkie" and the 2nd Bn.

So much for participations, observations, and survival or the Great Fire Fight of 5-6 Sept 1943 at some place called "Gabsonkeck" British New Guinea. At the beginning I stated that I would stick to the truth in describing various events that occurred prior to and during the Fire, and somehow I believe I may have exaggerated and strayed from the truth and perhaps even told a few lies, but what the hell, we helped save the world from warfare and pestilence - for a few days anyway.

Remember the Mosquito Bombs? Sure raised hell with mosquitoes for a while - except for the two mosquitoes who gave me malaria and dengue fever. So, looking back, we had fun where fun wasn't the everyday event and easily come by. We laughed at and with each other in good and bad times, so be it.

God Bless the Good Ole 503 PIR (RCT), and may he let those who didn't make it Rest in Peace.

By the way, you mentioned something about Scientific Methods not being taught at the Military Academy - that wasn't you who threw all his grenades and pulled the key on several C ration cans, was it?

Respectfully yours,

Louis G. Aiken, Sr.
Co "B" 503 PIR
June 42-Oct 45

6 September 1943



0700: Pvt. Girtman treated for shrapnel wound. Capt. Lamar later decided he'd just skinned himself.

Lt. Howard established that Cpl Westberry walked into his own gun. He had supervised the setting up of the gun after "suspicious" movements and sounds were observed ahead. Then he had gone forward. Pvt. Crabb, one of his gunners, saw him move and let him have it.

Rucker (Nearest Plat of Co D at AJ) to Padgett, S-3, I have no radio contact with anyone. No contact w/ company. I have patrolled and am continuing to patrol trails.

Est. enemy thirty w/auto weapons repted at "A" by CO Co F at "CD". Co F directed to cover trails "DC-AT" and "CD-AU". Capt. Grecco on rec. from "EX" to AL to AH to AJ 0700, a patrol of 12 men (1st Sgt. Hostinsky) AL to CD 0700 hr Lt. Bossard w/ 12 man AL to AM to AX to rept to Co E 0715. D Co Hqs movg. AB to Ac 0730 village NE of A___ signs of recent evac. Lt. Bossard msg to Co E "Take pos as directed" AX AW AVBF route of Bossard to Booby Trap.

CO 2nd to all Co's are any others missing. The adjutant's cry for a casu rept.

1740: F Co to CO 2nd BN. repeat infro in re to next pos we were to occupy to date what dispos of seven natives captured by us. Request resupply grenades, LMG ammo and one mortar comp. Are you sending any one for captured Jap equip? A patrol is investigating enemy vicin of XX AT.

0745: Pvt. Snipes, Pvt. Davis FRAL to Rucker AJ. Capt. Padgett's scouts and observers.

0758: S-1 Bn to CO's D, E, F send Co runners to AI rept to The Companies, in action as in practice, adhered to the idea that they were gaining a man by not sending one to the Bn Msg Cen. Sgt Creveling.

0800: Co 2nd Bn to CO F, evacuate natives to Heat (Bn CP) will get resupply LMG ammo and notify when we have done so. Fr Co F to CO 2nd Bn send disp of our Co.

This is an effect of the habitual control of small units by higher commanders. Lt. Parks, who has seen the ground, is asking someone who hasn't where to place his platoons. He knows that if he places them himself he will be ordered to move them later. So he is asking for a map placement.

(continued....)



Panel placed at Gabsonkek

The panel is a signal for aerial resupply

<u>Priority Unit</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Co</u>
1 LMG AM	1	Hall (Co F)
2 Batteries	1	Heat (Bn CP)
3 Defense	3	Halo (Co E)
4 SCR-284	1	Heat

0913: Natives say no Jap in Nadzab or Gabsonkek area. The Yalu natives tell them that there (are) Japs between Yalu and Ekkovka plantation "A lot" which may mean 10 or 1000. Most friendly-recommend they be evac through PW channels Lt. Snook will take them w/ him to where the rest are hiding in the bush. This reported to 2nd Engr. 2/6 Eng left 0930.

0930: CO 2nd Bn to Regt Collaff GSW tr at 0700, evac, Elvelth Co D, broken shoulder, evac, Synkowsky Co F left on jump field w/ broken tibia. Seal Co D, broken ankle not yet evacuated. Fisher Co D Left on jump field, exhaustion.

1035: CO 2nd Bn to regt Cpl. Westberry Hq 2nd GSW Evelth Co D broken shoulder, Colaff Co D GSW evac to Regt. Synkowsky Co F left on jump field w/ broken tibia. Seal Co D left on jump field, exhaust Pvt. Girtman Co D shrapnel wound not evac.

1120: 1st Sgt. Guy arrived from Co D - D Co is starting to salvage equipment-missing in action Sgt. Himmelburger, Carter, seen on grd, Berger not seen since jump Co D 1st platoon Co D near Mac's camp killed one native w/ booby trap during the night, and are going to bury at Mac's jump.

1525: Lt. Cole w/ Sgt. Shaw, reported in fr jump field. Pvt. Synkowsky w/ broken leg and Sgt. Himmelberger w/heat exhaustion were evac to point D.

The mission for today was to find the equipment which had been in the initial drop bundles. Very few initial drop bundles were even seen after the jump and only a very small part of the equipment therein moved toward the objective with the Bn. Lt. Cole's mission: Find Pvt. Parker whose chute did not open.

7 September 1943



0835: Lt. Bradbury, Lusomb, Rucker and Cole w/plats left for jump field to salvage chutes under Capt. Greco.

0935: Capt. Snavely S-2 Regt arrived w/ Capt. Loyd Aust Inf ATT to 7th Div Hq. Capt. Snavely reported Brownfield Co C, killed on jump.

1115: CO Regt to CO 2nd Send patrols two or 3 miles to east north send one patrol five mi west two thirds go to jump field to gather prchts. Group rept to cen of fields and CO will guide them in cub.



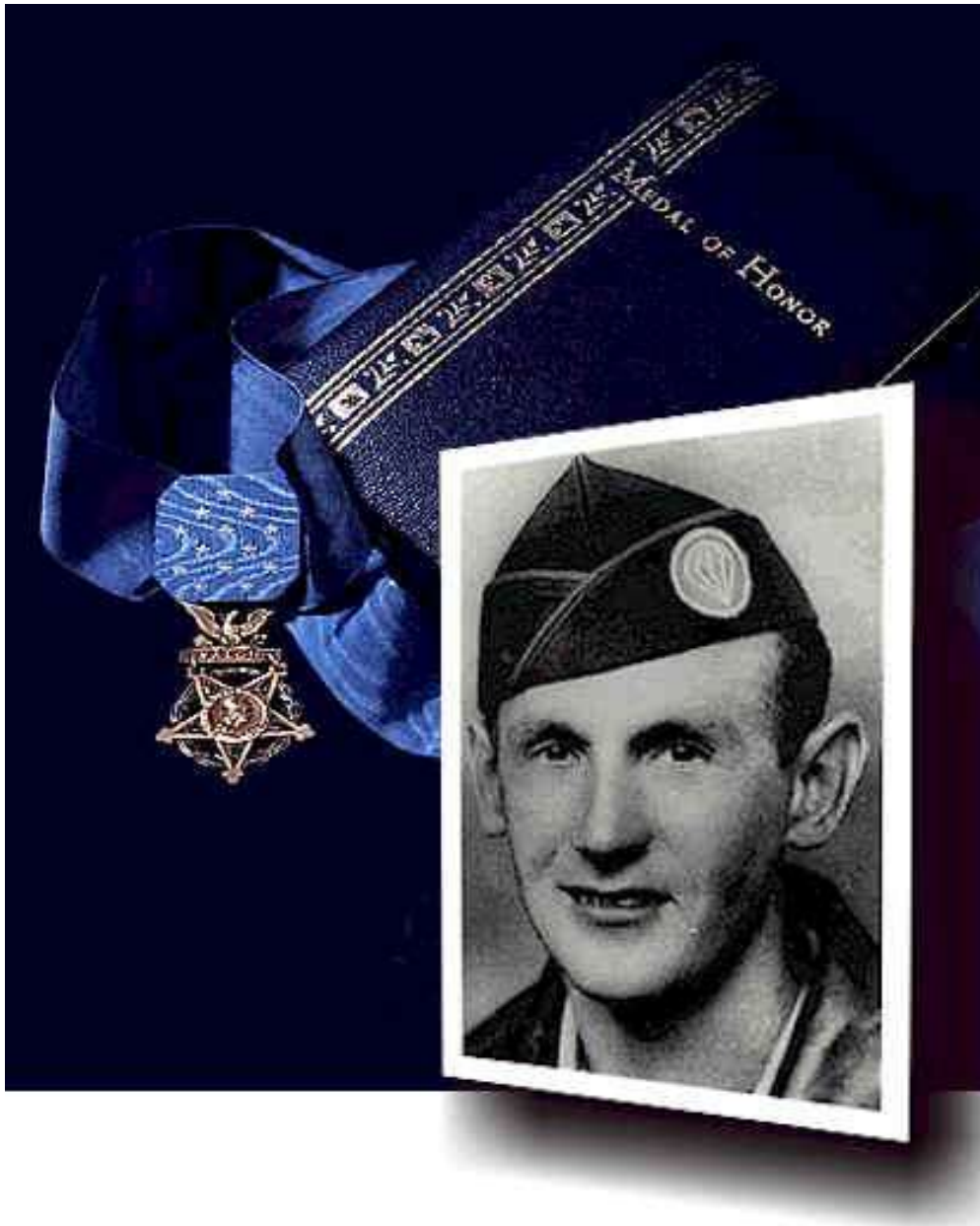
503rd trooper Leo Fallgren wearing his M42 jump suit.
"One piece coveralls were good, but not if you had to visit the latrine - and tropical diarrhea was endemic."
(503rd Heritage Bn)

Note: It is now about 48 hrs since the jump. Col. Kinsler has no idea of the exact location of his units or of the terrain forward. The air force has complete control of the air. In the air is the safest place to be. A coincidence?

[Journal Source: 503rd Heritage Battalion website]

Jerry Riseley's journal will be continued in the March issue of our newsletter. Ed





Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty at Noemfoor Island, Dutch New Guinea, on 23 July 1944. While moving to the relief of a platoon isolated by the enemy, his company encountered a strong enemy position supported by machine gun, rifle, and mortar fire. Sergeant Eubanks was ordered to make an attack with one squad to neutralize the enemy by fire in order to assist the advance of his company. He maneuvered his squad to within thirty yards of the enemy, where heavy fire checked his advance. Directing his men to maintain their fire, he and two scouts worked their way forward to a shallow depression within twenty-five yards of the enemy. Directing the scouts to remain in place, Sergeant Eubanks armed himself with an automatic rifle and worked himself forward over terrain swept by intense fire to within fifteen yards of the enemy position and opened fire with telling effect. The enemy, having located his position, concentrated their fire with the

result he was wounded and a bullet rendered his rifle useless. In spite of his painful wounds he immediately charged the enemy and using his weapon as a club killed four of the enemy before he was himself hit and killed. Sergeant Eubanks' heroic action, courage, and example in leadership so inspired his men that their advance was successful. They killed forty-five of the enemy and drove the remainder from the position, thus effecting the relief of our beleaguered troops.

[Source: 503rd Heritage Battalion Website]

RAY E. EUBANKS

Sergeant
U.S. Army

503d Parachute Infantry Regiment
Noemfoor Island, Dutch New Guinea
23 July 1944

Born: Snow Hill, North Carolina
General Order No. 20:29 March 1945



BOOK REVIEW: 'Eisenhower in War and Peace': For Ike the First Biography That Talks Across the Havoc of War

Reviewed by Gary R. Prisk
CO C/2/503d, Vietnam

"D-Day's on. Nothing can stop us now." Dwight D. Eisenhower

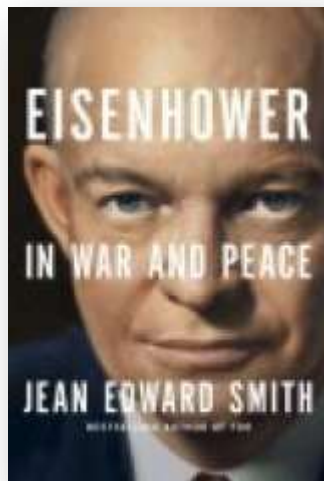
Little can match the age-old romance of cavalry or the pictures that governed my father's den. In 1952 Eddie Prisk -- 'The Major' -- enlisted my help, escorted me to his 1950 Chevrolet, handed me a bucket filled with 'I Like Ike' buttons, and we were off. Assigned 'every single' door in the Sheridan Park Naval Housing neighborhood of Bremerton, Washington, a navy blue-jacket town, my orders were clear.

I was relieved when Ike won the election. The Major stood a little taller. His picture with General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery was moved to gather more light.



Gary's father, Major Eddie Prisk, 2nd from left front row next to Montgomery, was one of 8 personal liaison officers assigned to Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Omar Bradley called these men "Monty's Walkers".

Major Edward 'Eddie' Prisk had been a US Army infantry major assigned to the British, and was interviewed and hired by Field Marshal Montgomery to be one of eight personal liaison officers for Monty, and was assigned to



21st Army Group Tactical Headquarters—from Normandy to the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. Omar Bradley affectionately called these liaison officers 'Monty's Walkers'.

As cobwebs want removing, Jean Edward Smith's *"Eisenhower in War and Peace"* (Random House, 976 pages, in-text photographs, \$40.00) has no unworthy ingredients. Smith's notes are drawn from storage depositories along Gunwarf Road, in Portsmouth, England, to the personal notes of Kay Summersby. Beautifully written, Smith's work brings to the art and craft of biography a prose that shows the reader the reason that produced the will that was Eisenhower's life—warts and all.

Reading Smith's work has been enjoyable. I will read it again and insert each of the hundreds of notes and quips as I go. The words ring with a proper sense of religious truth. At times I could hear the intensity of Eisenhower's voice. I could also hear his claims of false fidelity.

Smith details Eisenhower's military mistakes with clarity, tying Eisenhower's lack of combat experience to his failed offensive strategy of attacking all-along-the-front, as if the Civil War or the Great War had never occurred. Thousands of men lost their lives in North Africa, on the island of Sicily, at Salerno, and at Anzio because of Eisenhower. And yet, with these battles in his rear-view mirror, Eisenhower took command of the land battle from Montgomery after the Normandy invasion and stopped the Allied advance into the Ruhr—stopped to regroup along an extended front, so he could once again attack all-along-the-front, thus allowing the Germans to regroup. This error brought about the 'Longest Winter' with its Bulge and extended the war by six to eight months.

Smith details Eisenhower's friendship with General George 'Georgie' Patton, America's favorite cavalryman, with his ivory 45's and his helmet plume laid flat by the winds of war. Patton's WWI combat experience was brief however, perhaps a matter of hours, and Smith describes his wound as serious.

(continued....)



Such a wound in Vietnam's war, no bones, no arteries, no organs, were called 'Hollywood Wounds'—a pop of morphine and a ticket home. And so it was for Patton. On the way home, fresh from the front, Patton cushioned his recovery ensuring the enlisted man that drug him to safety received a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), thus ensuring that Georgie himself would receive equal recognition and perhaps more. And so he did—tradition.

I am impressed by Smith's generous treatment of Field Marshal Montgomery. Such recognition has been remote all these many years. Monty arrived in Egypt in early August of 1942 to take command of the British 8th Army that had been driven by Rommel's Afrika Korps across North Africa to Egypt's door. Even though he was in Egypt in August of 1942, biographers and historians have assigned the failed landings at Dieppe, on the coast of France to his folio.

The first Allied victories were achieved by Monty at Alam Halfa Ridge, and El Alamein in Libya in September of 1942, lighting the fires of optimism and setting the stage for OPERATION TORCH which Eisenhower completely fouled up by splitting his forces, and attacking on three fronts well away from Tunisia, thus leaving Malta exposed.

Smith rightly gives credit to Montgomery for planning the Normandy invasion, altering Eisenhower's staff proposal from a three-division front to a five-division front, from one landing site to five, and from five follow-on divisions to nine. Montgomery also insisted that a door-hinge be set at the city of Caen thus forcing the Germans to concentrate their forces at Caen, thus allowing Omar Bradley's troops to swing the door south, then east and then north.

That was the original plan. Bradley knew the plan and so did Eisenhower. Yet the press at the time featured is Monty's lack of aggression that allowed Germans to escape through the Falaise Gap. Eisenhower said nothing to correct the record.

General Omar Bradley is noted in Smith's work as one of the ablest of the lot. Major Edward 'Eddie' Prisk thought so as well.

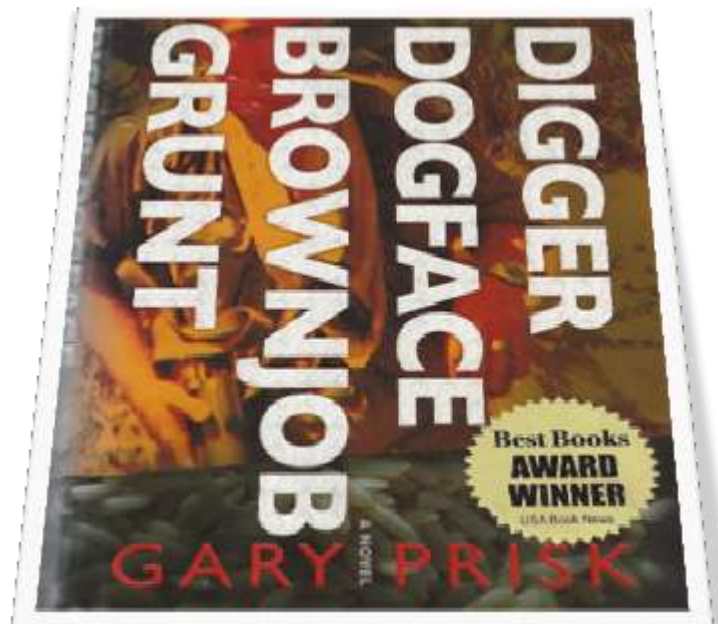
Jean Edward Smith's "Eisenhower in War and Peace" should be short-listed for the most prestigious awards. He showed that Dwight David Eisenhower's achievements as a soldier and a statesman were wholly consonant with his gifts.

About the reviewer:

Gary R. Prisk is a best-selling author and an infantry veteran of Vietnam's war and the first Gulf War. He began his army service as a Special Forces medic with First Group, attended parachute school at Fort Benning in 1964, received a regular army commission through ROTC at the University of Washington in 1966, fought in Vietnam's war with the fabled 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade in 1967 & 68, and became an army Ranger in 1969. Joining army reserves in the Seattle, Washington area Prisk returned to the University of Washington earning degrees in Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, an MBA in Finance, and taught Finance at the university as part of his doctoral studies in finance. Prisk continued his service in the army reserves for 29+ years ending his career as the reserve-component Chief of the Battle Coordination Center for VII Army Corps, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. After retiring from the construction industry Prisk began writing and lectures on Vietnam's war. Gary's older brother and the The Major's first son, Col. Court Prisk, also served in Vietnam as a battery commander with the 3/319th Artillery.



Cap



Fondly known by his men and buddies from Vietnam as "Cap", among his writings Gary authored the award winning novel, *Digger Dogface Brownjob Grunt*, a tale about war and the men who fought it by one who fought it with them. Available on [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) Ed

[Source: <http://www.huntingtonnews.net/28492>]





March 26, 2012

‘A True Hero’: Final, selfless moments of Vietnam veteran’s life revealed to his family

By Kayleen Cubbal
Courtesy of New Castle News

NEW CASTLE — Peggy Stull needed closure. Wayne McLeister needed peace. It took 45 long years, but the search finally has ended for both.

“Such a weight has been lifted off my shoulders,” said Stull, an East Wallace Avenue resident. *“I feel like a new person.”*

That is because Stull and her family finally know just what happened on a tragic day in 1967 when her brother, Charles L. Slack Jr. of New Castle, was killed in Vietnam at the age of 19.

And McLeister found someone with whom to share the information that has torn him up inside for more than four decades.

HOW IT HAPPENED

Charles Slack, known as “Chuckie” to his family, was just 18 when he enlisted in the Army following his June 1965, graduation from New Castle High. He received his Airborne Training at Fort Benning, Ga., and was sent to Vietnam as a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Division, 173rd Airborne Brigade. He was on a combat operation when, as his family was told, he died instantly when he was hit by fragments from a hostile grenade on Feb. 15, 1967, in Tay Ninh Province.

Slack’s body was returned to New Castle in a closed casket, with few details available to his parents, Charles Sr., now deceased, and Emily, and his eight siblings. *“I think the way we dealt with it was by staying in denial,”* said the 58-year-old Stull, who was just 11 when her

brother was killed. *“Our parents were going through a divorce when Chuckie was sent over there and shortly after he arrived, the woman he was supposed to marry sent him a ‘Dear John’ letter. He was going through a tough time. So we just sort of thought maybe he decided to just stay over there and not come back and we were told that he died.”*

“Deep down I knew that wasn’t true,” Stull added, *“but I guess it was our way of coping with the grief, just not to face it.”* Then just over five weeks ago, on the 45th anniversary of Slack’s death, everything changed.

THE START OF IT ALL

A classified advertisement in the *New Castle News* paid tribute to Slack.

“Chuck died while aiding wounds of a fellow soldier and gave his life to save a fellow American,” the memoriam read, concluding with the words,

“A True Hero. May you always be remembered for your sacrifice.”

“I saw it and I couldn’t breathe,” Stull said. *“Someone out there knew something about Chuckie.”*

Stull learned that the advertiser had asked to remain anonymous, so she and her Internet-savvy husband consulted with her brother, David, and began to search online for any mention of Slack.

“My husband found it first,” she said. *“We both were typing away on our computers, searching on Chuckie’s name, and he said, ‘you better come and look at this, Peggy.’”*

There, 45 years melted away in an instant as Stull read on a site called *“Find a Grave Memorial,”* a posting that McLeister had made just four days earlier.

“I only knew him a few minutes as he was assigned to be my bodyguard, along with my dog. I was wounded in the face, but he stayed with me. We were pinned down just a few feet from a bunker and were preparing to move when the firing started. From accounts from another (soldier), we started to move, the VC (Viet Cong) dropped a hand grenade and Charles jumped on it and died instantly saving me and my dog,” McLeister wrote. *“To me, he is my HERO and one that will be with me forever.”*

(continued...)



That discovery put both members of Slack's family and McLeister on a collision course with healing that continues to this day.

SHOCKING DISCOVERY

Not knowing how to contact McLeister or even where he lived, Stull searched on Facebook. To her shock, the now-68-year-old, who lives near Dallas, not only had a Facebook account, but he also devoted some space on it to his appreciation for Slack.

She sent him a message, he answered and, within hours, Stull discovered not only how her brother had died, but that he died a hero. She also learned that McLeister had gone through years of tough times as a result of his time in Vietnam, specifically the day when Slack was killed.

A FATEFUL MEETING

"We were on patrol in the jungle, my German shepherd and I," said McLeister, who was part of the 39th Scout Dog Platoon, which used dogs trained to track the enemy to alert their handlers when danger was nearby. McLeister and his dog, Ceaser, had been together about eight months when they happened upon Slack's unit.

Slack, who was a private, offered to come to the front line to serve as a sort of bodyguard for McLeister, a sergeant, and Ceaser.

"I asked Charles his name and he said, 'Slack,'" and I said, *"C'mon, what's your name really??"* He said with this sheepish grin that he had, *"It's Slack, but I don't cut any slack out here, so you don't have to worry."*

"I introduced him to my dog and they bonded right away," McLeister added. *"The three of us just took to each other immediately."*

Within minutes, firing started as the group of about 12 American soldiers, including Slack and McLeister, approached a dry creek bed.

"It was crazy," McLeister said. *"There was a lot of firing going on and when it finally slowed down, I stood up and looked across the creek and there was an enemy soldier in the bunker and he shot me in the face. Bullets shattered my nose and there was blood everywhere. Everyone else ran and jumped into the creek, but Charles stayed with me. He washed my eyes out and got the blood out of them."*

"He started to lead me back to the unit and one of our leaders yelled that at the count of three, they would open up firing and for us to run toward them. Charles was a couple of feet to my right rear and he and I looked

at each other for a second and our eyes locked. I will never forget that look, it was one of total trust. As soon as I started to move, I heard just a tremendous explosion, it actually picked me up and tossed me through the trees."

Wounded with a bullet fragment lodged next to his spine, McLeister did the best he could to drag himself toward his new friend. There, he saw Slack, lying mortally wounded.

"I didn't actually see it happen, but I realized at that moment that the explosion was a grenade and he fell on it to protect me and my dog," McLeister said, his voice choking with emotion.

McLeister and Slack were airlifted out of the area.

"They carried him on a poncho," McLeister said. *"I was badly injured and in and out of consciousness, but I grabbed his pack and carried it. I think I only knew him maybe 20 minutes — although it could have been four or five hours for all I know, there was no judging time in a situation like that — but there was no doubt in my mind that he saved me."*

McLeister returned to the front lines after he was treated for his wounds, and he and Ceaser also came to a sad ending in May of that same year. They were walking between a fallen tree when black wasps from the tree converged upon them. McLeister said he and his dog immediately were covered in wasps. McLeister nearly died from the venom of the stings and was returned to the states for treatment.

"I never knew what happened to Ceaser, if he made it out or died from the stings," he said. *"He was such a great dog, I mourned him for a long time."*

REMEMBERING A HERO

McLeister served 22 years in the military, but even after he was discharged, he never forgot Slack or the sacrifice he made.

McLeister discovered through Internet searches that Slack was the only American soldier killed and he was the only one injured that day. He also was able to confirm his belief that Slack had fallen onto the hand grenade by someone who said he witnessed the event, information that Stull also was able to confirm through the National Archives.

(continued....)





Charles "Chuckie" Slack, A/1/503, KIA 2/15/67

Married with two children and two grandchildren, McLeister says that connecting with Stull and the Slack family has rejuvenated him.

"I race to the computer around 4 a.m. every day to see if Peggy has emailed," he said, adding that he now has two wishes to make his journey come full-circle — meeting Peggy and her family, including Emily, now an 86-year-old Union Township resident, and to see that Slack receives the Medal of Honor, the *"highest military decoration awarded by the United States government given to those who conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States."* Slack did receive the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal.

McLeister said that two people who witnessed such bravery must come forward for the Medal of Honor to be awarded and he cannot count as one since he did not actually see Slack fall on the grenade.

"I've carried Charles around in my heart for 45 years and in my mind, there is absolutely no question that he's a hero," McLeister said. *"I want it for Peggy and her family to complete the closure."*

"For a private — just a kid with his whole life ahead of him — to give his life for a non-commissioned officer like myself was just way above and beyond the call of duty and I would like to see it recognized."

Stull said she, her mother and siblings, all of whom still live in New Castle, would love to see that happen, but no matter what, they are eternally grateful for the events of the past weeks and their connection with McLeister.

"We have closure not only knowing how Chuckie died, but that he died a hero," she said. *"There was a reason that Chuckie did not come home alive and now we understand why. Finally, we have peace."*



Them Cowboys



Most pilots had a mutual admiration society when it came to 173d grunts. We really admired how you guys went in day in and day out to fight Charles.

I always appreciated how fast you unloaded our resupply choppers when we brought in supplies. We all knew we were targets while we were on the ground making the racket we made. I often saw LTs helping unload the birds. That was some team effort.

Don't know much about other gunships, but we didn't have any Cobras in our company while I was there. The Falcon gunship platoon was B-model Hueys that flew rotor blade height with us as we went into hot LZs.

I remember when we had another gunship escort - not Falcons - one time. Our lead asked them if they needed any oxygen at the altitude they were flying. Our guys got down in the dirt with us flying race track patterns over the LZ while we were getting in and getting out.

Those were the days my friends; we thought they'd never end. Now a-daze, it's hard to remember the details, but we remember the feelings of being a close knit team.

Tony Geishauser Cowboy Pilot, 335th AHC



The final resting place of Tony's Huey on 16 March 66 after fight at LZ Zulu Zulu during Operation Silver City. Rumor has it he intentionally allowed his bird to be shot down so he could live his life-long dream of fighting in ground combat with the 2/503d. © Ed

(Photo by Tom Goodwin, HHC/2/503)



Elvester Hester, Jr. A Sky Soldier & Devout Christian

Elvester Hester, Jr. was a quiet, well-mannered trooper from Greensboro, NC. Rumor was he had a troubled youth with frequent altercations, and I believe he had some knife scars from a supposed gang fight. This is all hearsay and I divulge it only to set the tone for his heroic deeds.

For Elvester had become a devout Christian who had promised not to take another life. To say it was peculiar for an Airborne Infantryman in Vietnam to take that vow is nothing less than impossibility. But Elvester succeeded in keeping that vow unto his death.

In February 1968, our unit was west of Ban Me Thout on a search and destroy mission sweeping towards the Cambodian border. The NVA units in the area were mauled badly during the recent Tet Offensive, but were still offering strong resistance. We had been in contact with them for over a week with frequent firefights and sniper harassment. On February 12, 1968 we had humped past a burned out village and laagered on a flat plain just inside the tree line. My platoon was sent out to recon and soon found a large regimental size NVA unit that had also stopped for the night.

We were immediately surrounded and cut off from our company. Elvester's platoon was sent to reinforce what was left of my platoon and was also surrounded and cut off from the main unit. There was a mass of dead and wounded troopers in need of rescue and there was Elvester dashing to save them. He succeeded in pulling a few wounded soldiers to safety and was headed out again when he was caught in a hail of AK-47 bullets.

Herein lies the irony. Elvester carried his M-16, MK-26 grenades, and all the other killing tools that were required but he never used them. When we recovered his body we found no bullet in the chamber of his weapon. No one could believe he was so dedicated to a promise that he would put his life in jeopardy for it. You can see now why this truly remarkable man is still indelibly etched in memory.

My platoon got wiped out that day in what came to be known as the *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. Elvester's platoon suffered overwhelming losses as well, but there are men alive today because of his bravery.

May God grant him eternal peace!

Scott H. Smith
A/1/503d



Elvester Hester
1947 – 1968

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Your Rights While A Tricare Hospital Patient

You have the right to receive all the hospital care that is necessary for the proper diagnosis and treatment of your illness or injury. According to Federal law, your discharge date must be determined solely by your medical needs, not by "Diagnostic Related Groups" (DRGs) or by TRICARE payments.

You have the right to be fully informed about decisions affecting your TRICARE coverage and payment of your hospital stay and any post-hospital services.

You have the right to request a review by a TRICARE Regional Review Authority (RRA) of any written notice of non-coverage that you may receive from the hospital stating that TRICARE will no longer pay for your hospital care. RRAs employ groups of doctors under contract by the Federal Government to review medical necessity, appropriateness and quality of hospital treatment furnished by TRICARE patients. The phone number of the RRA for your area is:

North Region	South Region	West Region
1-877-874-2273	1-800-334-5612	1-888-874-9378

Talk To Your Doctor About Your Stay In The Hospital

You and your doctor know more about your condition and your health needs than anyone else. Decisions about your medical treatment should be made between you and your doctor. If you have any questions about your medical treatment, your need for continued hospital care, your discharge, your need for possible post-hospital care, don't hesitate to ask your doctor. The hospital's patient representative or social worker will also help you with your questions and concerns about hospital services.

If You Think You Are Being Asked To Leave The Hospital Too Soon

Ask a hospital representative for a written notice of explanation immediately, if you have not already received one. This notice is called a "notice of non-coverage." You must have this notice of non-coverage if you wish to exercise your right to request a review by RAA.

For complete details, visit:

<http://www.tricare.mil/Publications.aspx>

"An Important Message From TRICARE"



**HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY, PACIFIC
APO San Francisco 96558**

GENERAL ORDERS

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS



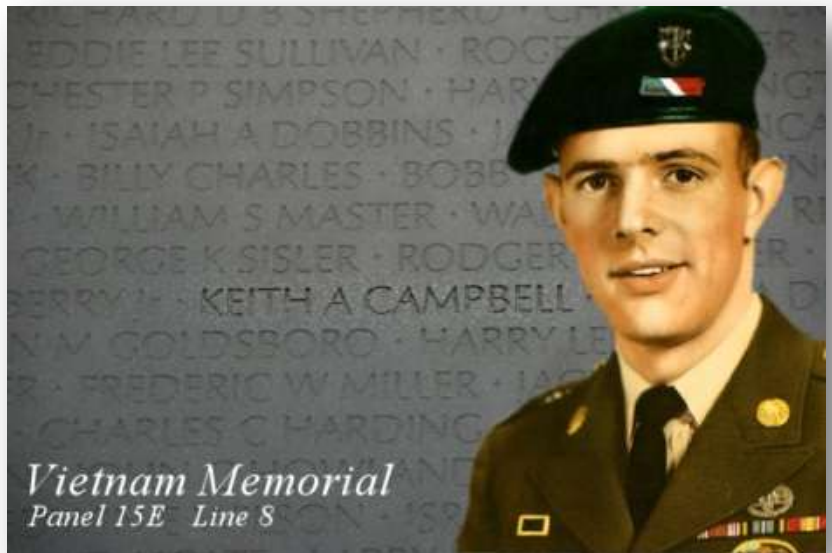
1. TC 320. The Distinguished Service Cross is AWARDED posthumously to:
KEITH A. CAMPBELL, Specialist Four (E4), United States Army,
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne),
503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate).

Awarded: Distinguished Service Cross

Date
action: 8 February 1967

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Four Campbell distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 8 February 1967 while serving with elements of the 503d Infantry assaulting a Viet Cong bunker complex. During the initial engagement, the lead company had suffered numerous casualties, including the medical personnel. Specialist Campbell volunteered to assist in treating the wounded, and dauntlessly moved up to the front line. Exposing himself to the intense hostile fire, he began to



administer aid to the wounded soldiers. Discovering that one casualty lay fifty meters in front of the friendly lines and next to an insurgent bunker, Specialist Campbell called for covering fire as he maneuvered forward. Disregarding the extreme dangers, he fearlessly ran through a hail of bullets and exploding grenades, but was forced to take cover behind a low mound of dirt. From this position, he killed a Viet Cong sniper who was firing on him from a tree. Undeterred from his mission, Specialist Campbell then crawled the last twenty meters to the stricken man. Dragging the soldier to the cover of a nearby tree, he started to administer first aid. As he fearlessly protected the man from further hostile fire, Specialist Campbell was mortally wounded. His unimpeachable valor and selfless sacrifice against insurmountable odds succeeded in saving a fellow soldier's life. Specialist Four Campbell's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.

FOR THE COMMANDER:
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:
Adjutant General



Delta Company 2/503d

In August 1967, there was no Delta Company in the 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry (Airborne).

On 1 September 1967, that changed. Personnel reported to a tent next to the runway at Dak To. The following day, Captain Ken Smith (Col), First Sergeant Mike Deeb (CSM) who had been in the same positions in Alpha Company, organized the personnel according to the company table of organization and equipment. Despite what everyone may have thought then and even now the main difference between Delta and the other companies was that Delta's men still had to learn each other's names.



RTO Bob Fleming

Delta was an experienced company from the start. Everyone had some experience having come from one of the other companies in the battalion. A few came from battalion Recon. The troops had been picked from the Battalion TO&E at random from A, B and C Rifle Companies. Delta had a good pick.

Few Rifle Companies can point back to their history and show where they started out in one of the most militarily significant places in a war. Delta Company 2/503 can.

Delta spent the first month in Dak To. (I can't think of anything significant happening). It spent this time becoming a unit. Losing the Alpha and Bravo and Charlie Company identities -- now we were Delta Company.

Around 1 October we were sent to Tuy Hoa along the South China Sea coast to help the 101st Airborne Division protect the rice harvest from the VC. When we arrived the Army trucked us to the beach because of a screw up where they couldn't get enough slicks to chopper us all out to the field at one time. There was a beautiful beach, sun and an ocean. Permission was given and all of D/2/503 was swimming naked in the ocean, since no one had swimming gear. The salt water probably was good for all the jungle rot in the ranks. It certainly brightened up the spirits of everyone.

Eventually we were made to get out of the water when the water started to get rough. Rip tides started pulling people out. Delta had steaks that First Sergeant Deeb was able to wrangle somehow. A trade might have been involved. And we slept on the beach. It really was a good day.

The following day we were sent out and it was back to work. Tuy Hoa was VC country and so it was a different way of operating. But it wasn't Dak To.

Everyone seemed to feel better being in Tuy Hoa than Dak To -- guys would get pissed if you said that name.

Around October 31, or so we received word we were returning to Dak To. No one wanted to go back. But we went. Captain Smith was reassigned to Brigade. Our new Company Commander was 1LT Bart O'Leary. When Delta Company arrived at Dak To it was difficult to recognize it. When we left in September it was only a dozen tents. Now it was an encampment of some major unit. Who? The 4th Infantry, or First Cav? In true Army fashion we never had time to find out. They had enough slicks available to get us out of there this time. Off we went, back to the bush.

(Here's where it gets hazy. Hell it's all hazy if you want to know the truth).

I'm not sure where they sent us first. We ended up at FSB16. We were there while Bravo was in contact with the NVA not far from the FSB. By the time we arrived it was over. We were part of the policing of that battle site. Then we moved on to Hill 875.

Delta led the left column going up Hill 875. The first man from Delta Company killed on Hill 875 was Kenneth Jacobson. He was the point man.

There is no use in me going over 875 again. You have stuff on that. As far as what happened after the Hill I don't know. I was in the hospital thru January. I got back just barely in time for Tet and they were out in the field except for the EM club wrecking story at Camp Enari which I think is in Gary Prisk's book, *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*.

I never went back out in the field with Delta. CSM Deeb had written a letter to the new 1SG to ask him to give me a job in the rear. Deeb knew in addition to a 11B2P I was also a 71H2P plus I knew some operations, supply, etc.

Many of you have heard Gary tell you I knew what I was doing. That's why he sent me to his XO meetings. I knew more than the LTs who were there. Not that that's much. But I was a stateside 71H in the 101st and they didn't have a sense of humor about paperwork so I had to get good.

Delta Company was the best Unit I served with in my three years in the Army.

Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d



DELTA COMPANY 2/503d JOINS THE FIGHT

Ken Smith, Col. (Ret)
CO A/D/2/503d

On 7 July 1967, I was sitting on the Dak To Helipad waiting for a Cowboy slick to take me to the rear area. After serving four months as Battalion Operations Officer, I was supplanted by a Major and received word that I would assume command of 2/503 Headquarters Company.

I was surprised when the Deputy Brigade Commander's C&C ship set down near me and I was beckoned to get on board. Only when settled and buckled in did I learn that Captain Dave Milton of Company A had been wounded and that I would assume command of that unit.

During the next six weeks I worked with a group of excellent leaders of all ranks to ensure that Alpha returned to the status of excellence and proficiency that it enjoyed prior to the 22 June "Battle of the Slopes." About the time I was getting truly comfortable in my assignment, the ground beneath my feet drastically shifted.

LTC Ed Partain, the Battalion CO, paid me a visit. I was told that within three days I would surrender command of Company A and stand up a fourth company in the battalion and take it to the field in two weeks' time. I had three days to prepare a plan for how this would be done. Nothing I had ever been taught prepared me for this type of a challenge.

Blessed with an extremely wise 1SG, I huddled with Mike Deeb and together, with advice from Company XO Bart O'Leary, we developed the following plan.

We would draw approximately one third of our strength from each of the line companies. To ensure that we received an appropriately talented group from each source, the Companies were tasked to divide their strength into the three proficiency groups, and by lottery we would receive an equal mix of soldiers from each group. After some discussion (and a little begging), LTC Partain exempted 1SG Deeb, Lt O'Leary, 3/319th Artillery FO Sgt Randy Tenney and RTO Bob Fleming from the lottery and they received direct assignments to the emerging unit.

A Few of Delta's Finest



Ken Smith



Mike Deeb



Bob Fleming

The fundamental challenge with which the leadership team was faced was how to meld combat warriors of various levels of experience into a coherent unit in two weeks. Given the limited training window available, the leadership team decided to spend approximately two-thirds of the time available on squad level tactics, and one-third on organization and platoon level training.

With no standard army training aids available, we gathered C-ration cases and commo wire and constructed "pop-up targets" along lanes through which battle trained sergeants led their squads. Of course, the squads and platoons spent a lot of time discussing tactics and techniques and refining SOP's. Simultaneously, XO O'Leary, with excellent support from Battalion level assets, supervised establishment of a company headquarters administrative and supply element from scratch.

Finally, the big day came and Delta Company took to the field for its first combat mission. There were a few glitches (mis-oriented units performing cloverleaf sweeps, incorrect call signs, etc.) but with each day in the field combat proficiency improved. Within a few weeks, the company achieved the reputation for superior tactical effectiveness it maintained throughout the rest of the Vietnam deployment.

In late October, with great sadness, I surrendered (against my wishes) command of Delta Company to a richly deserving XO who led it with distinction through some of the heaviest combat on Hill 875 the battalion experienced throughout its entire Vietnam deployment.

I will always be grateful for the privilege of commanding two such excellent companies and the superb warriors and leaders at all levels with whom I was associated.

Kenneth V. Smith



Jim “Killer Kelly A Hell of a Guy

I have all of 7 pictures from my time in Nam but my most cherished photo was sent to me by my best friend’s girlfriend. She had called me wanting to learn how Jim “Killer” Kelly had died. After explaining how he was killed, she forwarded this picture of the two of us (Jim is on the left).



Jim and Dave in the ‘Nam

We had been sent to the ocean due to everyone’s intense “jungle rot” and ringworm afflictions. We set up a 180 degree perimeter with the ocean to our back and bathed in the ocean twice a day in shifts to help clear up our puss-covered feet and legs. By this point all the tetracycline pills we had been taking weren’t doing a thing to cure the rot. Everyone had taken them for too long for them to do any good.

Jim and I set up our “hooch” on a fortified gravesite to the left...living large! Needless to say, we semi-healed our skinny bodies and enjoyed a few days on the beach. Amazing how those “C rats” never seemed to curtail our weight loss!

It didn’t take long for the “crud” to return once we were back in the Highlands!

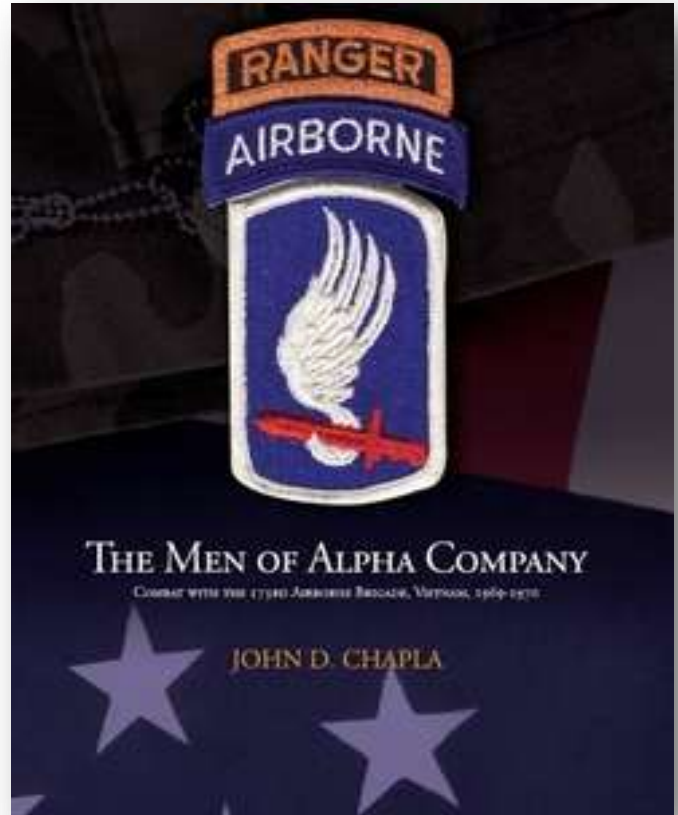
Jim was a hell of a guy! RIP and ATW.

Dave von Reyn
C/2/503d

James Michael Kelly
Sergeant
Army of The United States
20 April 1949 - 12 January 1969
Owings Mills, MD
Panel 35W Line 077

The Men of Alpha Company: Combat With the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vietnam, 1969-1970

By John D. Chapla



The Men of Alpha Company details the service, sacrifices and heroism of the paratroopers of the celebrated 173d Airborne Brigade during a year of combat in South Vietnam, as seen by a man who led them as a rifle platoon leader and company executive officer.

Available at: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/jdchapla173>

Chapter 14, Southern California Quarterly Meeting
Our next meeting will be held Saturday, February 16, at the AMVETS in Irwindale, CA at 1100 hrs. All active, non-active and new candidates are encouraged to join us when we’ll be recognizing the 46th anniversary of the Blast of 1967. We also have invited as our special guest of honor, WWII vet John Teffenhart a survivor of the Blast in Corregidor. Attendees are asked to bring a donation for our post meeting raffle. Lunch will be provided.

Wambicook@aol.com or 626-664-0219.





Gary Wetzel

January 8, 1968

173d AHC

PFC (later Sp4) Gary Wetzel was a door gunner on "Robin Hood 866" in January, 1968. He was nearing the end of his second tour when his helicopter was hit by an enemy RPG rocket while landing in a hot LZ with an insertion team. The grounded helicopter was hit repeatedly by enemy fire and the pilot, Bill Dismukes, was wounded. As PFC Wetzel went to the assistance of his pilot, another enemy rocket impacted the ship just behind the pilot's seat. Wetzel



Gary, 1984

was blown out of the helicopter, suffering severe wounds to his right arm, chest and legs, and his left arm was almost severed from his body - hanging only by a flap of skin. In spite of his multiple wounds, Wetzel climbed back into the damaged ship and took an enemy automatic weapon position under fire with his door gun. The enemy gun had the American troops pinned and Wetzel was able to destroy it with his fire. Wetzel then tried to go to the aid of his pilot again, but passed out from loss of blood. When he regained consciousness, his crew chief was dragging the wounded pilot to the shelter of a nearby dike. Wetzel crawled over and attempted to help the crew chief move the pilot to safety, but passed out a second time. After he and the other survivors were rescued, Wetzel's left arm was amputated and he spent five months in military hospitals recovering from his injuries and infections. Gary Wetzel was awarded the Medal of Honor on November 19, 1968. "Robin Hood 866" was a UH-1D. It had the 173d "Robin Hood" nose art, and 11th Combat Aviation Battalion tail boom vertical stripes (white-green-white for the 173d). At this point I don't know if the tail number was only the three-digit "866" or a five-digit number. "866" flew with rear cargo doors during this action. You can see a photo of heavily damaged "866" after its recovery on page 20 of Wayne Mutza's book "UH-1 Huey in Action", published by Squadron/Signal Publications. (Source: Web)



173D MID -WINTER CONFERENCE ORLEANS HOTEL & CASINO

JANUARY 18-20 2013



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Request for motion to form new Chapter 12, "Desert Herd." Tabled until board of directors and membership meeting at 2013 reunion.
- How to improve membership
- 8th of November Run/sponsorship
- Brigade expected redeployment status
- Medals of America/Sky Soldier store
- Foundation update
- Memorial Update
- Gold Star update
- 2013 reunion update
- 2015 reunion proposals: Oklahoma City, Phoenix, San Diego.
- Chapter annual activities update
- Chapter annual reports due
- Sky Soldier magazine timely submissions
- 14000 association members 9000+ inactive 4700+ active
- Association Presidential candidates: Incumbent, Roy Scott or Charles "Pappy" Patchin.
- Financial Statements

Members are encouraged to contact their chapter board representative or responsible national officers directly for specific details.

[Provided by Wambi Cook, A/2/503d]





Harold M. Welch One of the Greatest Generation

January 27, 2013

To all of my buddies and friends:

Yesterday morning at 9 a.m. my father, Harold Welch passed peacefully away after many years of fighting lung problems. He died the morning after his 89th birthday. He was my friend, my hero, and my best friend. My Dad said serving with Patton's 3rd Army in WWII was something that had to be done to keep the freedom we cherish today. He laid 36 miles of line in 36 hours ahead of the infantry going toward Germany. He fought at the Battle of the Bulge, among other areas of Europe.



**Harold & Steve
Two war vets,
Two best friends.**

I do know this, I have never known a man so caring when it came to America's Freedom, his family, and all those who he met in life. Harold or Boompa as he was known lovingly by our family had this ability to see something in his mind and then build it after drawing it. Memories flood my mind as I remember the years I've been his son. I remember someone who worked with my Dad telling me that he wished My Dad was his Dad which to me says volumes about his Character, integrity, love, respect and loyalty to those who knew him. I consider myself very blessed to have known him as my best friend.

I remember playing softball with him, all the hours of hunting and fishing and just the quality of time we had together. Growing up in the Great Depression he had many stories of how families pulled together to make it, how at 10 years old he started picking apples on ranches to help support his family. He loved life and it would take many hours to tell you what it was like to know this hero who told me there was nothing that was worth more in this life than his country and the family he loved.

I will miss him more than words can say, but I know God has a place for him because if anyone deserves itIt's definitely My Dad, (MY HERO).

**Steve Welch
C/2/503d**

~ Rest easy Boompa, job well done Sir ~

Vietnam Veterans of America VVA Chapter 755 Florida Meeting Scheduled

I'm sending this early alert for those of you who plan your calendars in advance.



Normally, the next chapter meeting would be on February 14, Valentine's Day. The officers decided to move the meeting up a week to free up that evening for family.

The February meeting will be on Thursday, February 7 at 1900 at the Osceola Council on Aging.

I will be sending out the regular notice with the January meeting minutes later this week.

Hope to see you on the 7th.

**Vinnie Monitto
Secretary/Treasurer
VVA CH 755
SECVVA755@aol.com**

Last Month's WHODAT?



**Super, duper A/2/503 trooper Archie Caffee.
(Photo by Jim "Top" Dresser, A/2/503d)**





INCOMING!



~ Sad Duty ~

Perhaps I didn't sign up for the newsletters at the right time. I have 2011 newsletters, and Peter George sent me the link for the most recent newsletter. The one I am most interested in getting is OPERATION MACARTHUR THE BATTLE AT DAK TO. I have downloaded and printed the ones I did receive - have them in 3 ring binders - shelved with my other Vietnam books and literature. The newsletters are great history because they come from our own. Thanks in advance if you can make this request happen.

I was in a position to know of all KIA and WIA brothers during my time there from 6 Sept 66 - 27 Sept 67. The Battle of the Slopes still weighs heavy in my mind and heart. I did go into the field once a month for 5-7 days at a time as liaison in support of trooper complaints/needs in regard to finance. This time was enough to connect with them and to feel the pain when any became KIA and WIA. I had to close out each "jacket". I got to know them as people, where they were from, and in many cases family listed.

My enlistment was from Aug '63 (82nd Jan '64-Sept '67) - Sept '67. Thought about making it a career (SSG E-6), but God had other plans for a calling. Thanks for listening.

Airborne All The Way (and then some)

Dave Nordan
Co A Spt Bn, '66-'67

Reply: Hi Dave. Good hearing from you bro. Have added you to the list to receive the newsletter each month. Attached are the two issues featuring the battles at Dak To in June and November '67 - both difficult reads. If you are missing any of Issues 1 thru 49 let me know and I'll email them to you. Thanks for that difficult work you did for us - don't think any of us would have cared for that sad duty. Have a great New Year brother, and ATW! Ed

~ Pissing Off D Company ~

I was with the 173d in '68 and I read the newsletter from front to back as soon as I get it, but one thing I never see is anything about Delta 2/503rd. You have something about all the other companies in each of the bats, what did we do to piss you off so much that you would completely ignore us.

Your brother in arms,

Sgt. Gary Seiler
D/2/503d

P. S. I still love the newsletter.

Reply: Hi Gary. I'm not pissed off at D Company and I certainly don't ignore you guys, but agree there could be a lot more in our newsletter about Delta Company, Echo Company as well. I rely heavily on our guys to send in their stories, photos, newspaper clippings and any other historical info they have about the companies in which they served - that's where most of our published stories come from.

Unfortunately, of the roughly 2000 Sky Soldiers on the circulation list, there aren't a lot of D Company troopers - in fact you weren't on the list but have added you now. Please send in info about your Company whenever you like, and maybe you can pass this on to other buddies from Delta asking them to do the same.

Also, please send me your name as you wish it to appear on your 2/503d *Combat Service Citation*, issued and signed by four of our former battalion commanders, Cols. Dexter, Carmichael, Walsh and Sigholtz, and I'll email it to you. While not an official army award it's nice to have. Thanks!

Happy New Year bro, and ATW! Ed

P.S. I'll go on a search and find mission for D Company stuff.

~ A Small Airborne Community ~

I have Doc Lynn Morse's email addy and phone number so I sent it to Sean Cassidy in reference to the lady named Karin and her godfather William T. Hagerty. Maybe Lynn can tell her more. Also my son being a former combat medic and a paratrooper to boot was in the hospital at Ft. Leonardwood one day working when this man walked by and saw my son's name tag, Baskin. He said I served with a guy in Nam in 1967 named Baskin, and Adam said he might have been my dad. Sure enough it was. Lynn patched me up once and sent me on my way so no dust-off was needed. We live in such a small Airborne community. AATW and then some!

Jim Baskin
B/4/503d

Reply: That's good of you, Jim. You're right, a small Airborne community. Years ago when I had a business in Miami we had the same mailman for years. One day I put a 173d sticker on the bumper of my car. He came in and asked me if I had served with the 173d. Turns out he also was with 2/503. Have a great New Year my brother! Ed

(continued...)



~ What's The Source? ~

Hi. As always great work, only one question. On your casualty report by month, where do you get your info? The reason I'm asking is that I only see 1 name from my unit, D16 Armor. We lost 7 in '68 and 3-4 in '69 we can confirm.

Here are the 2 members of my crew that I know are on the Wall and are confirmed. I know we had a DSC awarded to our CO for the battle of Tuy Hoa, and I believe there was 5-7 KIA's that day. I will get info for you and write something for the bulletin.

Guys' names are

Robert Oliver Wells, TX
Kimbrugh Golsby, Jr., PA

I will send you date of KIA asap. And as always hope to see you in one of our meetings. You're bro.

Jose Perez-Ortiz
D 16th Armor

Reply: Hi Jose: I get the names of our KIA from the 173d Association list, and then check it against the Virtual Wall online for photos and write-ups/dedications. If you have a D16 KIA list please send it to me so we don't miss any of our guys. Just yesterday put the KIA pages together for February all years for next month's newsletter, but show no D16 guys. Remember, I'm just doing one month each issue but covering all years in-country. Next month will list our KIA during February only.

On the brigade list Wells was KIA in March '69, and Golsby in July '69, so their names will appear in those issues coming up later this year.

How bout a D16 story and pics from you?? Have a great New Year brother!! Thanks Jose. Ed

~ Silver Wings Upon His Chest ~

Please add me to your newsletter list. I am Bob Suchke, US Army (retired). I served with the 82nd, 101st, Ranger Department, 25th Div and 13 years in SF (1st, 5th and Tng Gp).

I collect worldwide parachute wings and badges. If any of your readers have a similar interest I am especially interested in older USA parachute wings that are maker marked sterling silver. I have a want list if anyone is interested.

Thanks. All the best. Airborne!

Bob Suchke

triplecanopy@windstream.net

***“War does not determine
who is right –
only who is left.”***

Bertrand Russell
Philosopher, 1872-1970

‘Friendly Fire’ of the Worst Kind

Took my time reading the 2d Bn newsletter. I had to take a long break when I read the item about Mike Creamer (75th Ranger suicide, see Issue 49). Susan and I really enjoyed his and Martha's company when we got together. I remember what a nice guy he was and how intense at times. We got the news from Martha and we were heartbroken. I consider me a pretty tough old bird and when I finished the piece I found my eyes were not “computer tired” but had tears in them. For all that we have done from WWII to today we must support each other and make sure we don't lose another brother to ‘Friendly Fire’. If it doesn't feel right call somebody who understands. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Charles “Pappy” Patchin, LTC
B/D/3/319th

Exchanges Offer MILITARY STAR(R) Card

Week of December 31, 2012

One way shoppers can help reduce costs and strengthen their Exchange benefit is by using the MILITARY STAR(R) Card. Unlike bank cards, swiping a MILITARY STAR(R) Card produces no fees as the card is administered by the Exchange and revenue generated is shared with military communities through contributions to quality-of-life programs. The card also benefits the cardholder through gas savings during the year as well as ten percent savings on food purchases at Exchange restaurants. The card is accepted at all Army and Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Exchange activities, as well as the Exchange Online store at www.shopmyexchange.com.

Authorized exchange shoppers can learn more about the MILITARY STAR(R) Card by visiting shopmyexchange.com and clicking "Credit Services."



**The PX at Camp Zinn.
Doubt the Star Card would
have worked there.**



Delta Trooper

My name is Paul Littig, I was with D/2/503 from 11/67 - 11/68. I am sending pic's of myself so there may be some other D/2's that could remember me. I stay in contact with a couple of grunts I served with but I do not want to disclose their names or pic's without their authorization. You can understand.

Like most grunts I have stories to tell, but if you go on you-tube they're somewhat all the same.

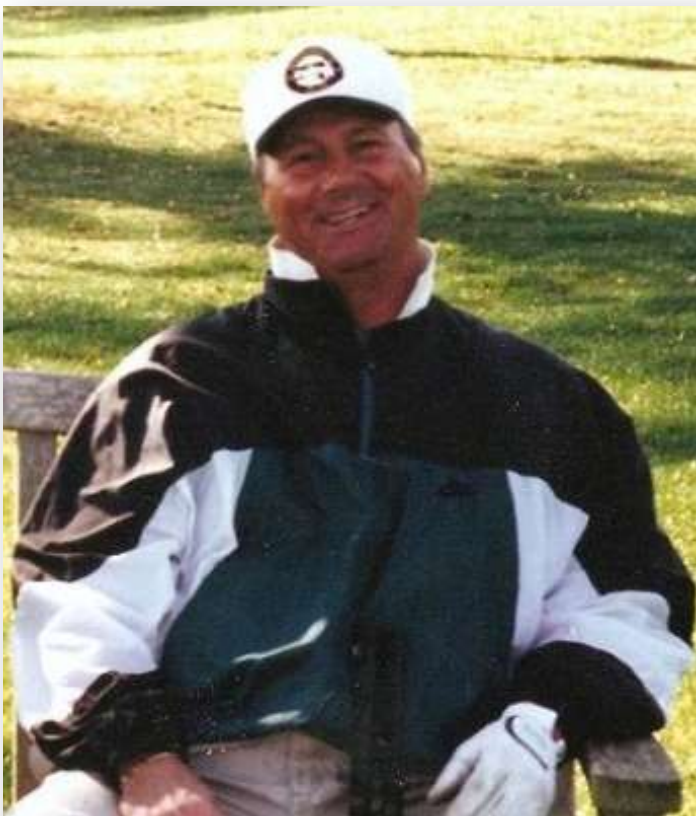
Thanks for thinking of the D/2's.

Happy New Year...and have a safe landing...

**Littig – Out
D/2/503d**



Paul at LZ English, 1968.



Paul on the links enjoying life, 2012.

This Month's *WHODAT?*



Anyone recognize this 2/503d trooper with his young buddies?

VA Extends Health Care, Compensation for Gulf War Illnesses

(Excerpt)

The VA has extended presumptive service-connection for Gulf War veterans suffering from undiagnosed and medically unexplained chronic multi-system illnesses to Dec. 31, 2016. The claims filing period had been set to expire at the end of 2012.

"This is a sound decision by the VA because researchers are still baffled by the extensive illnesses suffered by veterans of the 1990-91 Gulf War," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. *"It's crucial that the VA continues to provide service-connected health care and compensation to the men and women who served in that war."*

"The prevalence of these illnesses has continued nearly unabated since the war," Jesinoski said. *"Extension of the presumption of service connection is warranted, and will now cover a period of 25 years after the war ended."*

[See complete report at

<http://www.dav.org/news/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=687>]



Additional Features to Increase Veterans' Access to their Personal Health Information

WASHINGTON – On Jan. 20, VA released an enhanced VA Blue Button, adding several new categories of information from the VA Electronic Health Record. Blue Button is the personal health record inside the My HealtheVet self-service platform and through My HealtheVet, VA Blue Button enables Veterans to download an electronic file that contains their personal health information.

"We are excited to introduce these new features of VA Blue Button, advancing the quality health care we give Veterans daily. The paradigm of patient-centered care means fully engaging patients in their health and care," said Undersecretary for Health Robert A. Petzel, M.D. *"Enabling patients to have better access to their health information is an important step in supporting them as active partners."*

Veterans now also have access to the VA Continuity of Care Document (VA CCD), which contains a summary of the Veteran's essential health and medical care information. The document can be exchanged between providers and read by a growing number of computer applications. The VA CCD uses recognized standards that support the exchange of information between health care systems and providers for effective continued care of the patient.

Veterans can now also access VA OpenNotes, which 'opens' clinical notes, allowing Veterans to read their health care team's notes from appointments and hospital stays. VA OpenNotes provides Veterans the ability to read and discuss notes with their health care teams, family and caregivers, offering them greater control over their health care.

Previously, Veterans with a premium My HealtheVet account could access appointments, allergies and adverse reactions, chemistry/hematology laboratory results, immunizations and wellness reminders. New features now available in VA Blue Button include: demographics, problem list, admissions and discharges (including discharge summaries), laboratory results (microbiology), pathology reports (surgical pathology, cytology and electron microscopy), vitals and readings, radiology reports, and a listing of Electrocardiogram (EKG) reports. In addition, self-reported food and activity journals are now also available for inclusion in the VA Blue Button.

These improvements showcase VA's continued efforts to expand the types of information available to Veterans who have an upgraded or Premium My HealtheVet account, which is easily obtained at no cost through the website at: www.myhealth.va.gov

Honoring Them Helio Dudes



In an upcoming edition of our newsletter we will feature stories from Sky Soldiers and the men of the Cowboys, Caspers and Razorbacks about our chopper buddies in service to the 173d. Send in your recollections or stories and any photos you might have to rto173d@cfl.rr.com When we receive enough submissions we'll share them with everyone. On the subject line of your email please put "Choppers". Here's a brief recollection to help you get started:

~ Thumbs Up ~

"We were coming out of the boonies as the final stick in a short LZ surrounded by trees, sometime and somewhere in Vietnam in '66, with the bad guys coming our way. There were too many of us for a single Huey but we all jumped on that last chopper out. I happened to be crunched in right behind the young captain of the bird. He revved up that beast and away we slowly went toward the tree line, lumbering up while the forest came closer and closer – most of us thought we were going to die by tree. The captain only had one chance at clearing the trees and he was taking that chance. Somehow, that brave pilot got his over-loaded bird airborne as we heard and felt the tops of those trees hitting the skids of his magnificent flying machine. As we cleared the trees and soared away to safer terrain I tapped the captain on his shoulder and gave him a 'thumbs up'. Like some kind of heroic personality out of a John Wayne or James Bond flick, the young pilot simply and calmly nodded, once. He was one cool character, and if I found him today I'd gladly buy him a beer, or many."

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

