



January – February 2019, Issue 84
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See all issues to date at the 503rd Heritage Battalion website:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 503d Photo of the Month ~

On 16 February 1945, 74 years ago Rock Force paratroopers of the 503d PRCT make one of multiple combat jumps onto the enemy held stronghold of the Island of Corregidor.



“The first flight began dropping on Corregidor at 0833 hour. At 1000 hour, the jump fields were secured for the subsequent flights. Initial opposition on top of the Rock was light; however, a high wind swept many jumpers outside the intended jump area, some becoming casualties by the action of the enemy entrenched along the coast.”
 (See Corregidor historical report on Pages 64 thru 70)





We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory and Honor of the Young Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units We Lost 50 Years Ago In the Months of January & February 1969, and to Commander in Chief, George H.W. Bush



“The world is lacking because of your absence. My world is richer for having known you.”

Albert "Doc" Martel, 173d Abn Bde, RVN

In tribute to his friend, Edward Alan “Doc” Lamb, C/4/503



Arthur Lee Andrews, 22

SSG, A/4/503, 2/25/69

2/23/07: *“We Served Together.*

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.” John B. Andres, Jr.



~ Final Mission of SGT Scott J. Bailey ~

Posted on 3/9/16 - by wkillian@smjuhsd.org

SGT Scott J. Bailey and CPL Austin R. Chenoweth were serving with 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, on January 15, 1969 when they were ambushed near Strong Point #4 on highway QL-19, approximately 8 miles west of An Khe. The Daily Staff Journal for the date reads: (The 1st Platoon) “A” 1/50th with 1 (M48) tank (1/69th Armor) made contact in the vicinity of Strong Point #4 with an enemy force armed with small arms, 60mm mortars, B-40 rockets and anti-tank grenades. The entire element received intense fire with 2 armored personnel carriers (APCs) hit by B-40 rockets. Two additional platoons from “A” Company reacted swiftly and the enemy broke contact & attempted to withdraw. The 2 APCs were destroyed and the M48 Tank was damaged. There were 11 U.S. men wounded and 2 killed (SGT Bailey and CPL Chenoweth). The enemy had 10 killed and 1 man captured. Six days later, an ambush set by Company A's 2nd platoon exacted revenge on the enemy for the men killed on January 15th. [Taken from ichiban1.org]

Gary Alex Archer, 22

PTE, 9RAR, 2/4/69

“Sydney NSW. Archer died on 4th February 1969 at the US 106 General Hospital in Tokyo, Japan, of burns received in an accident at Nui Dat when his tent caught on fire. Buried Terendak, Malaysia,”



Johnnie Marvin Ayers, 19

SP5, A/1/50th, 1/17/69

(Virtual Wall states 173d Eng. Co.)

4/17/06: *“You will always be remembered in my heart and mind. With love, your brother,” Charley*



Scott Jay Bailey, 19

SGT, A/1/50th, 1/15/69

8/6/05: *“Scott like many of us had left a young wife behind and he was soon to be a father. He didn't know much about the politics of war, but he knew his role as a soldier and he did it well. He was a good leader and a good friend. Everyone approaches war a little differently, Scott approached it head-on and in the lead. He died fighting when 1st Platoon was ambushed west of An Khe. The world is a better place because he was here.” John Smerdon*



Marvin Donald Barnes, 25

SSG, B/1/503, 2/28/69

2/28/14: *“Continue to rest in*

peace. It has been 45 years since we lost you. I think about that day all the time and wish that we could have done something different. I still talk to a couple of the guys that was with us that day, and like me, they think on you often. I guess it is something that stays in our minds forever.” Unsigned



(See Marvin's Silver Star citation on following page)

~ A Note from The Virtual Wall ~

The ambush described below took place on Route QL19 west of An Khe and cost the lives of two men: SGT Scott J. Bailey and CPL Austin R. Chenoweth of Dove Creek, CO.



(Tributes continued....)



~ Silver Star ~

Marvin Donald Barnes

Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War

Action Date: February 28, 1969

Service: Army

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Company: Company B

Battalion: 1st Battalion (Airborne)

Regiment: 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Inf Brigade

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Staff Sergeant Marvin Donald Barnes (ASN: 5683xxxx), United States Army, for gallantry in action while serving with Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Infantry Brigade, in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Barnes distinguished himself by gallantry in action while engaged in military operations against an armed hostile force on 28 February 1969, while serving as Squad Leader on a combat operation. Sergeant Barnes' squad was on a search and destroy operation when his patrol encountered an enemy initiated contact. Unhesitatingly he moved through the bullet swept area to maneuver his men and gain fire superiority. Throughout the ensuing battle, Sergeant Barnes personally directed the retaliatory fire of his men while repeatedly exposing himself to intense small arms and automatic weapons fire. Sergeant Barnes, seeking to maintain contact, led his men on his hands and knees through the dense brush in order to find the enemy. While searching for the enemy, Sergeant Barnes was wounded in the left shoulder by a well-concealed sniper but refused medical treatment. Sergeant Barnes again began crawling on his hands and knees in search for the enemy when he was mortally wounded. Sergeant Barnes' extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

General Orders No. 372 (June 16, 1969)

Arthur Wayne Bartlett, Sr., 34

SFC, A/4/503, 2/25/69

12/10/25: "A true hero to me and my friend. He will always be remembered. I never imagined anything would happen that was as sad and horrible as this would happen to my friend. Until this happened. My friend and him never got to meet, and he talks of an empty place where he is supposed to go. So I will pray and I hope u will to." **Joey Helean**



~ 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
CPL Russell J. Holland, Clayton, NM
CPL David E. Thomas, Mableton, GA
PFC Joseph B. Oliphant, Ventnor City, NJ



Martin Thomas Batchelor, Jr., 20

SGT, A/4/503, 2/25/69

11/17/17: "Airborne Infantry Paratrooper...God Bless You Martin...for All you GAVE. Martin died a Soldier's Death in an elite unit....that he volunteered for....that shows what heart Martin had. Thank you for your great sacrifice and service Martin and only 4 weeks from going home." **By K**



Sherman Duane Bradford, 19

SGT, C/2/503, 1/26/69, C/2/503

7/14/16: "We Remember. We think about you all the time. Evans died with you that day and Linus was wounded. We have a toast for you at every reunion. Love Ya." **Doc, Linus, Wolf Man, Grumpy, Sgt's Knapp & Mattingly**



Larry Brown, 23

SP4, D/3/503, 1/20/69

11/23/10: "We Remember. Larry is buried at Piney Grove Cem, Baldwin, FL. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**



Larry, with a couple of his buddies.

(Tributes continued....)



Robert Alan Byrne, 22

PTE, 4RAR, 2/11/69

"Sydney NSW. Byrne was wounded in a mine explosion at Phuoc Tuy on the morning of 31st August 1968, and died at the Repatriation General Hospital Concord NSW on February 11, 1969. Buried Northern Suburbs Crematorium NSW."



Peter Allan Chant, 29

L/CPL, 9RAR, 2/14/69

"Rose Park SA. Chant was killed in contact with a bunker system at Bien Hoa 14th February 1969. Buried Centennial Park Adelaide SA."



Austin Ray Chenoweth, 21

CPL, A/1/50th, 1/15/69

8/19/03: "My cousin. Ray was my cousin. We were both in our early twenties when he went to Viet Nam. I remember the military escorts spending the day with the family before and after Ray's funeral. The day was a blur but I remember those escorts who were by Ray's parents side and how they leaned on those escorts for support, emotionally as well as physically. Ray gave his life for us and we shall never forget his sacrifice. His family of many aunts, uncles, cousins, from Oklahoma will always have fond memories of him." **Vicky Beier**



See tribute to Scott Bailey above for Final Mission of Ray Chenoweth.

John Raymond Cock, 29

SGT, 9RAR, 1/19/69

"Adelaide SA. Cock was killed in action in Phuoc Tuy Province, 19th January 1969. Buried Centennial Park Adelaide SA."



Jimmy Lee Culwell, 19

SGT, A/2/503, 1/29/69

10/28/07: "Brave One. Jimmy I never got the chance to tell you how proud we are of you. You left us way to soon. I am proud to tell everyone that you are my cousin. Thank you and all the others for your sacrifices and your bravery for fighting for our FREEDOM. Thank you everyone." **Ronda Dophied Wester**



2/9/18: "Sergeant Culwell died from wounds he received while on a combat operation as a result of being hit by fragments of a hostile booby trap. He was

admitted to a military medical facility, on an unknown date that he was wounded, placed on the Very Serious Injured list and later expired. Jimmy Lee Culwell, the son of Arthur Perry Culwell (1927-1977), World War II veteran, and Wilda Faye Isbell Lowrance (1927-2000), was survived by his parents, step parents, and brothers Kenneth Ray and Arthur Eugene Culwell. His father is buried in Akins Cemetery Akins, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma while Jimmy Lee and his mother are buried in Resthaven Memorial Park, Lubbock, Texas."

The Virtual Wall

Linwood Ray Cumbo, 20

PFC, D/3/503, 2/7/69

11/28/10: "We Remember. Linwood is buried at Cumbo Family Cemetery in Jackson, NC. BSM PH-OLC." **Robert Sage**



Robert Malcolm Davenport, 23

SGT, D/3/503, 2/7/69

3/5/04: "You weren't alone. 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**



Charlie Anthony Davis, 19

CPL, C/4/503, 1/7/69

1/15/05: "We Remember. Charlie is buried at Philadelphia Nat. Cem." **Robert Sage**



Caption:

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Davis hold Bronze Star and other medals and decorations awarded posthumously to their son, Cpl. Charlie Davis, who was killed in Vietnam in January while serving with 503d Airborne Infantry. Award was at Temple University. *Philadelphia Inquirer*



(Tributes continued....)





Bruce Edward Deerinwater, 21

SSG, A/1/503, 1/25/69
(Virtual Wall states C/2/503)

11/11/15: "You were only a Sophomore when we graduated, but we are so proud to have known you. The class of 1963, McAlester High School forever remembers your ultimate sacrifice." **Rusty Hudelson**

8/12/13: "Heroes never die, their memory fades away. A great American Indian." **Larry Taylor**



Jeffrey Max Duroux, 28

SGT, 9RAR, 1/5/69

"Grafton NSW. He survived the Battle of Long Tan with D Company 6RAR in 1966. He was killed while serving with 9RAR on 5th January 1969 in Bien Hoa when a bullet ricocheted from a tree and hit him. Buried Centennial Park Cemetery Adelaide SA."



Willard James Evans, 20

SGT, C/2/503, 1/26/69

3/3/03: "Airborne-All The Way. Hi, Evans. Well it's the year 2000 and I thought I might write a few words to you. We didn't know each other too well on that day they killed you but I always had a lot of respect for you. To this day I tell people about you and your rucksack (heavy as hell). Hope you weren't mad at us when we split up your rucksack after you were killed. I guess you know Grumpy, Linus and I paid you a visit at the Wall some time ago. I have a fourteen year old son who is going on his class trip to D.C. in a few weeks. I'm going to give him something to lay at the Wall for you. Well that's it I guess until I see you someday. (Doc Cosmo)." **Michael "Doc" Cosmo**



Richard Palmer Gates, 25

SP4, B/3/503, 2/13/69

8/3/12: "A good friend, roommate at college, best man at wedding; who knows what you may have accomplished." **Peter A. Smith**



Eric Stuart Gold, 19

SGT, E/20th LRRP, 1/5/69
(Incident date 12/28/68)

2/3/12: "Teammate. Served with Eric on Team 47, 4th Platoon, Co E20 LRP and later C75 remember the day we visited him in the hospital we all filed past him in his bed, he was in a coma from his wounds but I told him to hang in there and get well. We were told



later that day he had passed from his wounds, it was a hard loss for all that knew him. Rest in Peace Brother."

Bruce A. Kochy

E Company (Long Range Patrol) 20th Infantry (Airborne), First Field Force Vietnam (IFFV) was activated on September 25, 1967 in Pleiku, South Vietnam.

The unit was organized with highly trained and motivated soldiers, most of whom had at least 6 months in combat and had undergone an intensive selection program before being assigned. The unit was organized to provide long range reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, and special type missions in a corp level basis and usually operated in 4-6 men teams. The company also had the capacity to operate as a platoon size force and conduct regular recon-in-force missions. At times, they were attached to Special Forces units and were trained by them at the MACV Recondo School in Nha Trang, South Vietnam. On February 1, 1969 E Company was inactivated and was redesignated as C Company (Ranger) 75th Infantry (Airborne), First Field Force Vietnam and continued its mission until it was deactivated on October 25, 1971 in An Khe, South Vietnam. "RANGERS LEAD THE WAY". By E20 LRP



Allan Walter "Midge" Graham, 22

CPL, 9RAR, 1/7/69

"Port Augusta SA. Graham died at the 24 US Evac. Hospital Long Binh on the morning of 7th January 1969 of wounds received during a fire fight the previous day in Bien Hoa Province. His wife died by her own hand on the 8th January 1969. They are buried together in the Stirling North Cemetery."



Samuel Graham, 22

PTE, 4RAR, 1/31/69

"Glasgow Scotland. Graham was killed in action in Bien Hoa Province on 31st January 1969. Buried Canberra Cemetery ACT."



(Tributes continued....)



Ronald Arthur Harris, 26

T/CPL, 2 SAS SQN, 1/17/69

"Meekathara WA. On 17th January 1969, he was accidentally killed by his own Patrol Commander as he tried to locate the position of his patrol, in Bien Hoa when returning to the patrol position. He took the wrong entry path and was shot. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery WA."



life we planned together. And we had so many wonderful plans. I have lost you, your Mom and Dad. My fondest memories were of snuggling with you and Casey on the sofa watching the tube and Sunday dinners with your Mom and Dad. I miss us. I miss your family. Know you continue to be missed and loved now and forever. Your Bright Eyes." Meg



Frank Edward Hicks, 18

SGT, C/1/503, 1/19/69

12/16/10: "We Remember. Frank is buried at Pomona Cemetery, Pomona, CA. SS BSM PH." Robert Sage



Robert MacDonald Key, 21

PTE, 9RAR, 1/19/69

"Melbourne VIC. Key was killed by a rocket propelled grenade during a contact in Phuoc Tuy 19th January 1969. Buried Springvale Crematorium Melbourne VIC."



Russell James Holland, 20

CPL, A/4/503, 2/25/69

6/28/18: "Tribute to Sky Soldier. On behalf of all the paratroopers who served with you in the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) and all who followed, we offer our respect and remembrance of your ultimate sacrifice. May you never be forgotten and your family and friends take comfort in your valor in serving." Mike Switzer



Edward Alan Lamb, "Doc", 20

SP4, C/4/503, 1/31/69

(Virtual Wall states HHC/2/503)

5/29/06: "In Loving Memory on this Memorial Day 2006, EDWARD ALAN LAMB, 'Doc Lamb', C/4/503. You were a great friend, buddy and comrade. We did our medical training together at Fort Sam Houston, and we served together in Nam. I had always wanted to send these couple of pictures I had of you to your family. I hope they will get to see them. I will never forget you Doc Lamb, you were an honorable young man. The world is lacking because of your absence. My world is richer for having known you." Albert "Doc" Martel



Anthony Jeffery Huelin, 25

Sub Lieut, RAN, 1/3/69

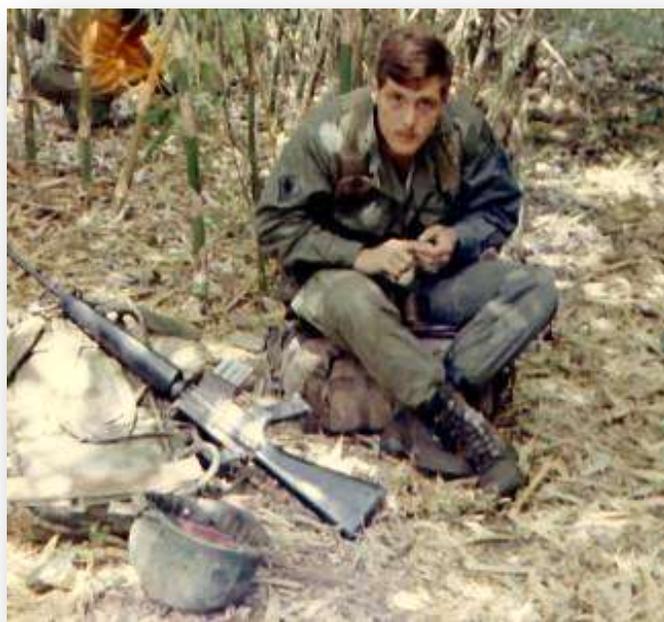
"Melbourne VIC. Huelin arrived in Vietnam in 1968. He was killed when his helicopter struck power lines near Saigon on 3rd January 1969. Buried Mount Thompson Crematorium QLD."



Paul Robert Jordan, 21

SGT, E/20th, 1/24/69

2/3/12: "My Friend and Teammate. Paul and I were teammates on Team 44 he was pointman and I was the slackman. I was with him when he died going into what turned out to be a hot LZ. He died in my arms on that Huey and the images of that day have stayed with me as if it were yesterday. Paul I missed you all these years and remember you often." Bruce A. Kochy



"Doc" Lamb



James Michael Kelly, 19

SGT, D/1/503, 1/12/69

(Virtual Wall states C/1/503)

10/21/14: "Your 'Bright Eyes'. Not a day goes by, even now, that I don't think about you and wonder.....what if.....we never got the chance to marry and have the



(Tributes continued....)



**Richard Louis Lanctot, 19**

SGT, E/4/503, 2/25/69
 (Virtual Wall states A/4/503)
 6/11/08: "I will miss his smile."

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**

**Raymond Alfred McGuire, 22**

PTE, 4RAR, 2/16/69

"Burwood NSW. A rifleman private with B Company, McGuire died of fragmentation wounds while on patrol in Bien Hoa on 16th February 1969. Buried Forest Lawn Cemetery Leppington NSW."

**Byron Dean McQuinn, 19**

CPL, A/1/50th, 2/24/69

10/18/07: "Uncle. 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**

**Ismael Laureano-Lopez, 23**

SP4, A/2/503, 2/21/69

(Wall of Faces states KIA 2/20/69)

12/19/06: "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." **Unsigned**

**Thomas Frederick Meredith, 22**

PTE, 9RAR, 1/10/69

"VC troops shot and killed Meredith on 10th January 1969, in Bien Hoa. Buried Rookwood Cemetery NSW."

**Harold Robert Musicka, 23**

CPL, 9RAR, 1/19/69

"Melbourne VIC. He was accidentally killed on 19th January 1969 when a friendly forces soldier saw a moving figure and discharged three rounds of ammunition. Buried Centennial Park Cemetery SA."

**Peter Anthony Malone, 21**

T/CPL, 3 Cav Reg, 1/18/69

"Sydney NSW. Malone a crew commander when his APC was hit by a enemy mine which exploded and killed him on 18th January 1969, in Bien Hoa. Buried Liverpool Cemetery NSW."

**George Nagle, 23**

PTE, 9RAR, 1/6/69

"Tipperary Ireland. Nagle died during Operation Goodwood 35kms from Nui Dat. The rifleman private was struck by a claymore mine in an extended contact with the enemy in Phuoc Tuy on 6th January 1969. Buried Clonmel Cemetery Ireland."

**Geraldo Marquez, 20**

SGT, 173d LRRP/N-75th, 2/28/69

5/29/17: "Thank you for your sacrifice. My Tio Jerry. Thank you for your ultimate sacrifice. Although I was only a young child when you left us, I remember your service. Watch over us."

Maxine Garden

**Shril Brad Nance, 20**

SSG, C/4/503, 1/7/69

(Virtual Wall states C/1/503)

11/14 2003: "You are still with us and will never be forgotten. From your brothers of the Headhunter Platoon, C/1/503, 68-69. Until we meet again ... AIRBORNE!"
A memorial from a fellow Squad/Team member in Vietnam, who wishes to be anonymous.

**Malcolm Ross McConachy, 21**

L/CPL, 9RAR, 2/8/69

"Mt Isa QLD. The former labourer died from gunshot wounds on 8th February 1969 during operation Goodwood in Bien Hoa. Buried Townsville Cemetery QLD."



(Tributes continued...)





Shril, as a young boy, with his family.

8/27/17: *"Sad day...S/Sgt Nance was my squad leader and a very dear friend. A combination that seems a bit of a oxymoron. But a good friend he was. On that sad day we we're winding down a month long operation that saw a moderate amount of enemy contact. It was about 3 PM when we came upon a handful of VC gathered at the face of a cave. They spotted us and ran into the cave. SSgt. Nance and another soldier followed them in. Shots were fired and SSgt. Nance was mortally wounded. The other soldier was trapped inside overnite. The next morning we recovered SSgt. Nance' body and the other soldier. Sadly, the enemy was able to escape during the nite. SSgt. Nance led by example. He never asked us to do something he wouldn't do himself. He died by that code. He was a Mormon from Salt Lake City and took a jab at trying to sway me towards a more Christian life. Being a kid from Brooklyn, his attempt failed. To this day I cannot understand why God took his life and let me continue on. I pray that his family is ok and hope someone reads this so they know just how special he was. By the way, I believe he converted our company medic, which is pretty cool. Airborne 'All The Way' Sarge....hopefully I'll see you on the other side....."*
Neil Haffey



Joseph B. Oliphant, Jr., 20

PFC, A/4/503, 2/25/69

4/1/08: *"We were kids together.*

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." **Story Librizzi**



Jerry Lee O'Neal, 20

CPL, C/2/503, 1/26/69

9/30/05: *"Your Birthday is just around the corner again. Our Mom's is this Sunday and wish you could be here with to celebrate. But we know that you will always be in our hearts and keep you in our memory. We all miss you and someday we will all be together. Love you always, your loving sister,"*

Joyce Gipson, Veterans' Day 2003

REMEMBERED

by his sister,
Joyce Gipson
 02 Oct 2005

**My Brother, My Friend
 On a hill long forgotten
 In a war never won
 The Army lost a hero
 My parents lost a son
 The world lost his laughter
 His courage and his grin
 I lost my brother
 I also lost my friend
 A life cut too short
 By a loss way too strong
 Tho Jerry grows no older
 In our hearts he still lives on
 Silver stars, awards, and medals
 Can't bring my brother back to me
 But in my mind's eye I still see him
 There Weasel laughs eternally.**

From his sister,
Joyce Gipson

~ A Note from The Virtual Wall ~
**C Company, 2/503rd Infantry, lost three men
 on 26 Jan 1969:**
SGT Sherman D. Bradford, Arleta, CA
SGT Willard J. Evans, Toledo, OH
CPL Jerry L. O'Neal, Flint, MI (Silver Star)

Wilbert Owens, 20

PVT, D/1/503, 1/12/69

5/29/10: *"We Remember. Wilbert is buried at Reeltown Cemetery in Noyasulga, AL."* **Robert Sage**



(Tributes continued...)



Robert Van Pack, 24

CPT, C/4/503, 1/7/69

1/26/18: "Small World. The first night I arrived in Tuy Hoa before being sent to Dog Company to take over my platoon, I met Robert Pack in the Officers hooch and learned that he was from Duncan, OK and had played football under my father Woody Cooper who was the head coach for the Duncan high school football team. My Dad said Van wasn't that talented as a quarterback, but had the biggest heart he had ever seen! I was on BN Opns TOC duty the day Robert was killed by a sniper. He only had a few weeks for his tour to end and was to be married to a nurse he had met in Vietnam. He had volunteered to lead a company until a replacement Captain arrived. Great guy & wonderful, dedicated Soldier! God bless him and his loved ones!"

Jerry L. Cooper



Joseph Howard Pierce, Jr., 20

SGT, D/2/503, 2/22/69

2/25/05: "My Uncle Joseph. I never had a chance to meet you but from what I understand from my mother and aunts and uncles you was 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**



Bruce James Plane, 21

PTE, 9RAR, 1/20/69

"Ardrossan SA. He was killed on 20th January 1969 in Bien Hoa five weeks after he arrived in Vietnam. Buried Ardrossan Cemetery SA."



Hildefonso M. Ramirez, 26

CPL, D/3/319, 1/31/69

"To the family of Hildefonso, Paula Assuncion, and Christina Leippe, Edward Haskin, and Esther Haskin. Hildefonso has touched many lives and will not be forgotten." **Unsigned**

2/16/01: "I didn't forget you. This man was a very gentle man. His sense of humor kept our hearts light when they would otherwise be very heavy. I carried Hilde to the med-i-vac that day."

Michael Siddall



Joseph Steven Ramsay, 22

PTE, 4RAR, 1/31/69

"Scotland. Blast injuries during an enemy contact in Bien Hoa killed the rifleman private on 31st January 1969. Buried Hemmant Cemetery QLD."



John Raymond Rebets, 21

SGT, B/2/503, 2/3/69

6/3/10: "We Remember. John is buried at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield, MI. SS BSM AM ARCOM PH/OLC." **Robert Sage**



Victor Neils Peterson, 23

PTE, 4RAR, 2/16/69

"Southport QLD. He died from blast wounds during an enemy contact on 16th February 1969 west of route 15 Phuoc Tuy during Operation Goodwood. Buried Pinnaroo Cemetery QLD."



Reginald Arthur Phillips, 21

PTE, 9RAR, 1/18/69

"Murraybridge SA. Died of gunshot wounds on 18th January 1969 in 1 Australian Field Hospital, after being wounded in Bien Hoa. Buried Murray Bridge Cemetery SA."



Body Not Recovered

PARKER, DAVID WAYNE
08 FEB 1969

Hometown: Stone Mountain, GA.

(Tributes continued....)



**William Rivera-Garcia, 22**

SGT, C/2/503, 2/15/69

6/28/18: *"Tribute to Sky Soldier. On behalf of all the paratroopers who served with you in the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) and all who followed, we offer our respect and remembrance of your ultimate sacrifice. May you never be forgotten and your family and friends take comfort in your valor in serving."*

Mike Switzer**Glen Everett Rountree, 27**

SSG, A/3/319, 1/13/69

5/2/10: *"We Remember. Glen is buried at Chapman's Chapel*

Cemetery in Glencoe, AL. SS BSM 2 PH."

Robert Sage**Award Of The Silver Star (Posthumous)****ROUNTREE, GLEN E. RA1561xxxx****Staff Sergeant United States Army,****Battery A, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery,****173d Airborne Brigade (Separate),****APO San Francisco 96250.****Awarded: Silver Star (Posthumous)****Date action: 29 December 1968****Theater: Republic of Vietnam**

Reason: Gallantry in action: Staff Sergeant Rountree distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 29 December 1968, when he was returning in a ¼ ton vehicle from Qui Nhon with Private Netter and Private Brown. On Highway #1, south of fire support base Ollie, their vehicle was ambushed by an enemy force. Private Brown was killed and Sergeant Rountree seriously wounded with the first volley of fire received from enemy automatic weapons and small arms positioned on both sides of the road. Private Netter could not start the vehicle after the engine died. Sergeant Rountree refused help and told Private Netter to run for help to a nearby Army Vietnamese outpost while he stayed with the vehicle and engaged the enemy. Without regard to his own personal safety and even though wounded in both legs and his pelvis, Sergeant Rountree fired the M-60 machine gun mounted on the jeep until there was no more ammunition. Still receiving enemy fire, he then fired his M-16 while attempting to contact his element, Battery A, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery, for help on the radio present in the jeep. He continued to valorously fire until a rescue force arrived and he was evacuated. Sergeant Rountree's extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

[See a buddy's tribute to Glen in Issue 42, Page 34]

**Dewey Dolen Ruis, Jr., 20**

SGT, D/1/503, 2/5/69

(Virtual Wall states D/2/503)

10/10/13: *"Volunteering. Dewey Ruis was from Florida and served in Delta Company, of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Dewey was killed when he volunteered to enter a 'Spider Hole' to capture two Viet Cong. The Cong had been discovered crossing a field and took cover in the hole. The Captain tried negotiating their surrender using interpreters. The two would not respond. It was decided to send in a volunteer who could fit into the hole. Dewey was short and compact and volunteered. I asked him why he was volunteering and he replied with a grin, 'Maybe I'll get a medal.' He was joking as he was a happy go lucky guy. He crawled into the hole and began threading the tunnel. On a ledge build into the tunnel one of the VC lay. As he passed the position the Cong shot Dewey in the head. A medic volunteered to go in the hole after Dewey. Shortly after entering he hole he was able to get a rope around Dewey's feet but in the process the Cong shot the medic dead. The Captain tried to get the Cong to surrender, when that failed he decided to try tear gas. Tear gas was pumped into the hole in a great volume. Despite the gas the Cong refused to surrender. A that point it was decided to use 'Shape' charges to blow in the underground tunnel complex. After the Shape charges were set off the bodies of the Cong were found. Their skin had been severely burned by the CS gas. In the end nothing of significant intelligence was recovered. Dewey did get a medal he earned the hard way.....but the world lost a wonderful, joyous young man."* **Unsigned**

**Joseph Bradley Rush, 19**

SGT, D/16th Armor, 1/31/69

2/10/01: *"My cousin Joe B Rush. I was 13 when my cousin 'Joe B. Rush was killed in Vietnam. I had corresponded with him and had sent him some cookies, I think for the 4th of July probably in 1968. I received a couple of letters from him indicating that the cookies hadn't arrived yet, but that he was sure they would 'soon.' I always wondered if he got them. It would be interesting to hear from others that served with him. At this point I really remember very little about him."* **Beth Rush Tibbitts**



(Tributes continued....)



James Robert Smith, 20

CPL, D/3/319, 2/7/69

8/28/11: "We Remember. James is buried at Long Island National Cemetery." **Robert Sage**

Peter Charles Smith, 23

PTE, 9RAR, 1/19/69

"Sydney NSW. He died from wounds on 19th January 1969 in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Rookwood Crematorium NSW."



Arnold Sykes, 25

PTE, 9RAR, 1/19/69

"Bunbury WA. He died in action from multiple gunshot wounds in Phuoc Tuy on 19th January 1969. Buried Bunbury Cemetery WA."



 **David Eugene Thomas, 20**

CPL, A/4/503, 2/25/69

6/11/10: "We Remember. David is buried at New Hope Baptist Church Cemetery in Douglasville, GA. BSM/OLC PH." **Robert Sage**



 **Gregory Charles Tucker 20**

CPL, B/2/503, 1/24/69

10/12/11: "We Remember. Gregory is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**



 **Elton Ray Venable, 20**

SGT, HHC/173d Bde, 2/19/69
(Virtual Wall states C/75th Inf)

2/3/12: "Teammate. 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 with the Koreans out of their base south of Tuy Hoa, VN. He was a character...lot of memories. Rest in Peace Brother." **Bruce A. Kochy**



James Lee White, 21

PVT, A/2/503, 2/23/69

6/16/10: "We Remember. James is buried at Northside Cemetery in Fayetteville, NC." **Robert Sage**



Note: It is likely most or all of the Bronze Star awards to the men above were awarded for Valor, however, available records state Bronze Star only. Ed

KIA Sources:

- 173d Airborne Brigade List of KIA
- Australian & New Zealand Web Lists of KIA
- Virtual Wall Website
- Wall of Faces Website



We Knew Some Boys A Long, Long Time Ago

**We knew some boys, some little boys,
A long, long time ago.
Their eyes were bright, their step was light,
Their hearts were all aglow.**

**And tho their lives were young those days,
A magic carrousel,
We still recall the games they played,
The games they knew so well.**

**There came a time we said goodbye,
We've been apart since then.
And no one knows as well as I,
They won't be back again.**

**And if we search around the world,
Until eternity.
We'll never find those little boys,
Those boys they used to be.**

Lew "Smitty" Smith, HHC/2/503
Modified song lyrics





Jon Meacham's Eulogy for Commander in Chief George H.W. Bush



The story was almost over even before it had fully begun. Shortly after dawn on Saturday, September 2, 1944, Lieutenant Junior Grade George Herbert Walker Bush, joined by two crew mates, took off from the USS San Jacinto to attack a radio tower on Chichi-jima.

. As they approached the target, the air was heavy with flak. The plane was hit. Smoke filled the cockpit; flames raced across the wings. "My god," Lieutenant Bush thought, "*this thing's gonna go down.*" Yet he kept the plane in its 35-degree dive, dropped his bombs, and then roared off out to sea, telling his crew mates to hit the silk. Following protocol, Lieutenant Bush turned the plane so they could bail out.

Only then did Bush parachute from the cockpit. The wind propelled him backward, and he gashed his head on the tail of the plane as he flew through the sky. He plunged deep into the ocean, bobbed to the surface, and flopped onto a tiny raft. His head bleeding, his eyes burning, his mouth and throat raw from salt water, the future 41st President of the United States was alone.



Navy pilot, George H.W. Bush, WWII

Sensing that his men had not made it, he was overcome. He felt the weight of responsibility as a nearly physical burden. And he wept. Then, at four minutes shy of noon, a submarine emerged to rescue the downed pilot. George Herbert Walker Bush was safe. The story, his story and ours, would go on by God's grace.



Submariners of the U.S.S. Finback rescue George Bush from a raft in the Pacific Ocean during WWII in 1944.



Through the ensuing decades, President Bush would frequently ask, nearly daily, he'd ask himself, "*Why me? Why was I spared?*" And in a sense, the rest of his life was a perennial effort to prove himself worthy of his salvation on that distant morning. To him, his life was no longer his own. There were always more missions to under-take, more lives to touch, and more love to give. And what a headlong race he made of it all. He never slowed down.

On the primary campaign trail in New Hampshire once, he grabbed the hand of a department store mannequin, asking for votes. When he realized his mistake, he said, "*Never know. Gotta ask.*" You can hear the voice, can't you? As Dana Carvey said, the key to a Bush 41 impersonation is Mr. Rogers trying to be John Wayne.

(continued...)



George Herbert Walker Bush was America's last great soldier-statesman, a 20th century founding father. He governed with virtues that most closely resemble those of Washington and of Adams, of TR and of FDR, of Truman and of Eisenhower, of men who believed in causes larger than themselves. Six-foot-two, handsome, dominant in person, President Bush spoke with those big strong hands, making fists to underscore points.

A master of what Franklin Roosevelt called the science of human relationships, he believed that to whom much was given, much is expected. And because life gave him so much, he gave back again and again and again. He stood in the breach in the Cold War against totalitarianism. He stood in the breach in Washington against unthinking partisanship. He stood in the breach against tyranny and discrimination. And on his watch, a wall fell in Berlin, a dictator's aggression did not stand, and doors across America opened to those with disabilities.



President Bush signs *The Americans With Disabilities Act*

And in his personal life, he stood in the breach against heartbreak and hurt, always offering an outstretched hand, a warm word, a sympathetic ear. If you were down, he would rush to lift you up. And if you were soaring, he would rush to savor your success. Strong and gracious, comforting and charming, loving and loyal, he was our shield in danger's hour.

Now, of course, there was ambition, too. Loads of that. To serve, he had to succeed. To preside, he had to prevail. Politics, he once admitted, isn't a pure undertaking; not if you want to win, it's not. An imperfect man, he left us a more perfect union.

It must be said that for a keenly intelligent statesman of stirring, almost unparalleled, private eloquence, public speaking was not exactly a strong suit. *"Fluency*

in English," President Bush once remarked, *"is something that I'm often not accused of."* Looking ahead to the '88 election, he observed inarguably, *"it's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or the other."* And late in his presidency, he allowed that *"we are enjoying sluggish times, but we are not enjoying them very much."*

His tongue may have run amuck at moments, but his heart was steadfast. His life code, as he said, was *"Tell the truth. Don't blame people. Be strong. Do your best. Try hard. Forgive. Stay the course."* And that was and is the most American of creeds. Abraham Lincoln's *"better angels of our nature"* and George H.W. Bush's *"thousand points of light"* are companion verses in America's national hymn. For Lincoln and Bush both called on us to choose the right over the convenient, to hope rather than to fear, and to heed not our worst impulses, but our best instincts.

In this work, he had the most wonderful of allies in Barbara Pierce Bush, his wife of 73 years. He called her *"Barb," "the silver fox"*—and when the situation warranted—*"the enforcer."* He was the only boy she ever kissed. Her children, Mrs. Bush liked to say, always wanted to throw up when they heard that. In a letter to Barbara during the war, young George H.W. Bush had written, *"I love you, precious, with all my heart, and to know that you love me means my life. How lucky our children will be to have a mother like you."* And as they will tell you, they surely were.



First Lady, Barbara Bush, 1925-2018

(continued....)



As Vice President, Bush once visited a children's Leukemia ward in Krakow. Thirty-five years before, he and Barbara had lost a daughter, Robin, to the disease. In Krakow, a small boy wanted to greet the American Vice President. Learning that the child was sick with the cancer that had taken Robin, Bush began to cry. To his diary later that day, the Vice President said this: *"My eyes flooded with tears. And behind me was a bank of television cameras. And I thought, 'I can't turn around. I can't dissolve because of personal tragedy in the face of the nurses that give of themselves every day.' So I stood there looking at this little guy, tears running down my cheek, hoping he wouldn't see. But if he did, hoping he'd feel that I loved him."*

That was the real George H.W. Bush, a loving man with a big, vibrant, all-enveloping heart. And so we ask, as we commend his soul to God, and as he did, *"Why him? Why was he spared?"* The workings of providence are mysterious, but this much is clear: that George Herbert Walker Bush, who survived that fiery fall into the waters of the Pacific three quarters of a century ago, made our lives and the lives of nations freer, better, warmer, and nobler.

That was his mission. That was his heart beat. And if we listen closely enough, we can hear that heartbeat even now. For it's the heartbeat of a lion, a lion who not only led us, but who loved us. That's why him. That's why he was spared.



Rest easy Commander.

(web photos added)





INCOMING!!!



~ Bravo Bull Doing Good Work For Vets ~

Thanks for the 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter (Issue 83) and in particular the announcement of **VA \$200 Million in Funding for Grant and Per Diem Program to Support Homeless Veterans Nationwide** (Page 14)!

I have never mentioned my 501(c)(3) foundation the **Williams-Sterling Foundation, Inc.**

www.williamssterlingfoundation.com **Homeless Warriors Housing Program** and what we're attempting to do to assist in helping our Homeless Brothers and Sisters.

I will check into this award ASAP!

Jim Williams
B/2/503

~ Looking for Son of a Buddy ~

This is Retired MSG Norman Green, I was with C 2/503rd from July 68 until July 69. I was wounded on 21 December 68 the same day my commander was KIA, Cpt Wissell. I saw in our recent newsletter (Issue 83, Page 9) a message from his son Harold. I was wondering if there was a way for me to contact him. If you cannot give me his address I understand. Here is mine. Email azgrandfather@windstream.net I live in Georgia. Thank you for any help

Norman Green
RET. MSG

PS THANK YOU FOR THESE NEWSLETTERS

Note: We didn't have an email address for Cpt. Wissell's son Harold. If anyone can hook them up, please contact Norman at his email address above. Thanks. Ed

~ A Squared-Away LT ~

Nice newsletter, as always. Your lead photo of **Gary Prisk** is great - he was one of our platoon leaders and a great guy as well as a squared away lieutenant. Prisk was ROTC and just a good leader. Do you have a current email for him? I have his home address and see him at reunions when I go but no good email anymore. Best Regards and....Airborne!



Mike

Mike Marsh, C/2/503, '67-'68

Note: We hooked-up Gary with Mike who was one of his "Hill People". Ed

~ Sister Looking for Buddies of Brother ~

The sister of PFC **Kelly Eugene Whitaker**, B/1/503, KIA on November 8, 1965, during Operation Hump, is looking for buddies who knew her brother.

Please forward this request to all your 1/503 buddies. Any troopers who may have known Kelly may contact his sister **Francine Craig** at: francine84@bellsouth.net



Kelly Eugene Whitaker

Private First Class
B CO, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,
USARV, Army of the United States
Memphis, Tennessee
June 25, 1947 to November 08, 1965
On the Wall at Panel 3E, Line 38

~ A Marine's Ring Found in Florida ~

Message from the finder, Ken Brooks, a friend of **Gary Prisk (C/D/2/503)**:

"Santa Rosa Beach is in Florida's panhandle, between Pensacola and Panama City (which got wiped out in the last Hurricane), on the Gulf Coast.

'Adagio' is a large vacation hotel right on the beach in Santa Rosa Beach (may be kindling wood by now)," where the ring was found.



Sky Soldiers, please pass this info on to all your Marine buddies. The ring includes an inscription distinctive to the owner. Anyone with information about the ring's owner can email Gary at garyprisk@yahoo.com who will put you in touch with Ken. ATW!

(INCOMING!!! continued...)



~ Cousin Looking For Buddies of Her Cousin ~

I found your email address in one of the 2/503d Vietnam Newsletters online. I'm searching for information regarding my cousin. You may not be able to help me, but perhaps you might have some leads I could follow.

My cousin, **Terry Adam Bryson** was KIA in Binh Dinh Province on 2 February 1970. I have the basic info available online: DOB, DOD, etc. He served more than a year in the Army; went to Vietnam November 1969. Served with HHC Company, Company E, 2nd Bn, 503 Inf. Reg. (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade. His MOS was Light Weapons Infantry. He was killed by an explosive device; body remains recovered.



Terry

1. The Coffelt Database has some unit information, but in order to access it, I need to know the division he was in. I've looked and have become lost in the alphabet and numerical soup. Could it have been the 82nd? Or 101st? Based out of Ft. Campbell, KY, or Ft. Bragg, NC? Or another division?

2. One source I've found noted that Terry was Airborne qualified. Does this mean that he had gone to jump school (Ft. Benning?) and received jump wings?

3. I would like to find any of his surviving buddies and/or commanding officers he served with who might be willing to message with me regarding the incident in which he was killed and his experiences with his unit prior to his death—a very short time after arriving in Vietnam.

4. A relative told me that one of his buddies was **Dan McMillan**, who had offered information about that incident at one time, but I don't think that relative followed up. I don't have any follow-up contact info on Dan McMillan except that he did return to the States, but I don't know if he is still living or where.

5. Other basic info I found listed "Coordinates: U," but I don't understand the meaning. The same thing with "RVN Report #01595."

6. One source indicated Special Forces, but I don't believe he ever trained as a Green Beret—he hadn't been in the Army long enough. But could it have been possible that he had participated in a LRRP/Green Beret mission at some time?

If you're wondering why my interest:

1) He is my cousin, whom I haven't seen since we were about 15 years old. Our families weren't close, and I moved out of town, so we lost contact.

2) Several years ago, I realized how little I really knew about the war, which shamed me, since Terry had given his life there, and I had two family members on my husband's side of the family who served there; and my husband was with the USMC stationed at Cherry Point, NC, from 1968-1972. I felt that the least I should do to honor these men was to learn as much as I could about the war and what their experiences might have been like. That led to a truly intense desire to learn more, which I have spent the last 5 years engaged in.

I apologize for writing such a lengthy tome. Just trying to let you know who I was and why I am searching and what I'm looking for in the event that info might be helpful. Thank you for your attention to my inquiry.

Deborah Kitchens
dbkitchens6@gmail.com

Note: Any trooper who knew Terry or Dan, please contact Deborah at the email address above. Thanks. Ed

~ Correction ~

This past November we recirculated Issue 47, dedicated to the Sky Soldiers and men of attached units who fought the battles at Dak To and Hill 875. Included in that edition was a report by **Sam Stewart**, C/2/503, a survivor. Sam asked the following correction to his report be included here:

"I was reading my article on Pages 119-120 in Issue #47 and noticed a typo. On page 120, right column, line 8, I stated that **Sgt. Koontz** was the 1st platoon Sgt., when in fact **SSG Krawtzow** was the 1st platoon Sgt. in C Co. at that time -- he moved over as 3rd platoon Sgt. during the reorganization after the battle and remained with us in the 3rd plt. until his, **Roger Dick's**, and my DEROS at the end of Mar. '68. Sgt. Koontz, KIA 19 Nov. on 875, was my team leader. Aloha,

Sam Stewart
C/2/503



Sgt. Koontz Team Ldr on left, KIA; Madrid, Rifleman, WIA.
[See SSG (1SGT) Krawtzow's Silver Star Citation, Page 32]

(INCOMING!!! continued...)



~ From a Sky Soldier's Daughter In-Law ~

My beautiful and caring daughter in-law Ericka Smith (we call her Ecka), emailed me this thank you piece the other day with the note, "Thought you might like this. xoxo". She brought a tear to this old soldier's eye.

Lew "Smitty" Smith

HHC/2/503

In the beginning....1965

McNamara warns Johnson that communists are gaining strength in South Vietnam



Following a visit to South Vietnam, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara reports in a memorandum to President Lyndon B. Johnson that the South Vietnamese government of Nguyen Cao

Ky "is surviving, but not acquiring wide support or generating actions."

He said that Viet Cong recruiting successes coupled with a continuing heavy infiltration of North Vietnamese forces indicated that "the enemy can be expected to enlarge his present strength of 110 battalion equiva-



Decisions....Decisions

lents to more than 150 battalion equivalents by the end of 1966." McNamara said that U.S. policymakers faced two options: to seek a compromise settlement and keep further military commitments to a minimum, or to continue to press for a military solution, which would require substantial bombing of North Vietnam.

In conclusion, McNamara warned that there was no guarantee of U.S. military success and that there was a real possibility of a strategic stalemate, saying that "U.S. killed in action can be expected to reach 1,000 a month." In essence, McNamara cautioned Johnson that sending additional troops was not likely to prevent the stalemate. In the end, however, Johnson chose to seek a military solution.

By 1969, there were more than 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam.

Source: History website

(Web photo added)

[Sent in by the ever watchful Dave Glick, B/2/503]



Ecka, the beautiful and caring, on Thanksgiving Day with two turkeys.



Write a War Book or Memoir?

While we include no paid advertising in our newsletter, we're pleased to include complimentary notices of war-related written material by troopers of the 173d, 503d and attached units from WWII, Vietnam and active duty. Email details and a cover image to rt0173@att.net for inclusion in a future issue. Ed



VA recognizes Vietnam Veteran with first Medal of Honor Medallion during ceremony at Mississippi cemetery

November 2, 2018



Milton Olive (Skipper), B/2/503

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) furnished the first Medal of Honor (MOH) Medallion for the private headstone of **Pfc. Milton L. Olive III**, a decorated Vietnam-era war hero, during a ceremony Nov. 1 at West Grove Cemetery in Lexington, Mississippi.

With the passage of Public Law 114-315 on Dec. 16, 2016, Congress authorized VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to issue, upon request, a medallion, headstone or marker signifying a Veteran as an MOH recipient who served on or after April 6, 1917, and is buried in a private cemetery with a private headstone or marker.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie saluted Olive for his selfless bravery during a battle in the Vietnam conflict. *"Private First Class Olive was posthumously awarded a Medal of Honor for his service during the Vietnam War after he heroically used his body to cover a grenade to save the life of his fellow soldiers,"* Wilkie said. *"The Medal of Honor Medallion illustrates VA's commitment to ensuring all who see this symbol will know of the courageous sacrifice of our nation's distinguished service members."*

For information on applying for the MOH Medallion, visit this link https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Bronze_MOH_Medallion.pdf Information on all types of VA headstones, markers and medallions can be found at this link <https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp>

VA operates 136 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA also provides funding to establish, expand, improve and maintain 111 Veterans cemeteries in 48 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service.

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of The Congress the Medal of Honor, posthumously, to Private First Class Milton L. Olive, III United States Army for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Private First Class Milton L. Olive, III, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty while participating in a search and destroy operation in the vicinity of Phu Cuong, Republic of Vietnam, on 22 October 1965. Private Olive was a member of the 3d Platoon of Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, as it moved through the jungle to find the Viet Cong operating in the area. Although the Platoon was subjected to a heavy volume of enemy gun fire and pinned down temporarily, it retaliated by assaulting the Viet Cong positions, causing the enemy to flee. As the Platoon pursued the insurgents, Private Olive and four other soldiers were moving through the jungle together when a grenade was thrown into their midst. Private Olive saw the grenade, and then saved the lives of his fellow soldiers at the sacrifice of his own by grabbing the grenade in his hand and failing on it to absorb the blast with his body. Through his bravery, unhesitating actions, and complete disregard for his own safety, he prevented additional loss of life or injury to the members of his platoon. Private Olive's conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country. 🇺🇸



How sharing my PTSD struggles helped others—and me

By: Army Sgt. Jon Harmon

9/4/2018

Army Sgt. Jon Harmon lost both legs after stepping on an improvised explosive device while on a mission in Afghanistan in 2012. Today he speaks to commands and veterans about his personal struggle with mental health and how he works to overcome it.
(U.S. Army photo by Kevin Fleming)



During my deployment to Afghanistan in 2012, my team was providing security and fire support for a key leader engagement with the local village elders. The mission was uneventful ... until it wasn't. The next thing I remember, I felt a massive displacement of heat and overpressure. I had stepped on an improvised explosive device and had lost my right leg. My left leg suffered severe, irreparable damage. In the immediate response, two more IEDs were detonated, which caused 12 of my fellow paratroopers to sustain severe injuries, and killed one.

All I had ever wanted to be was a paratrooper. But now, I had to adapt to my new normal: being a double amputee. I focused on the life-changing physical injuries I sustained, and learned to walk again. Eventually I progressed enough to return to duty. But my recovery wasn't over. Years later, I fell into a dark place, struggling with survivor's guilt and post-traumatic stress disorder. I had never dealt with my invisible injuries. I discovered that PTSD can creep up on you and get worse over time. For me, it involved flashbacks and emotional numbness.

It was around the time of my divorce that I had an emotional breakdown and contemplated taking my own life. But I thought about the guys I served with in the 82nd Airborne Division and said to myself, "*How could I be so selfish?*" My brothers died on the battlefield, and I lived. I owed it to them to get help.

After that, I started seeing a therapist who specialized in treating PTSD – that treatment continues today. Therapy helps me to process some of what I had compartmentalized and pushed aside, and it gives me a clean slate to process everything.

It was hard to say "*I need help,*" especially because I was an NCO. But I realized that as a leader, I should be

setting the example. It was my opportunity to show others that reaching out is all right.

It's important for people to know they're not alone, especially when they find their own dark place. Relying on your support network can be lifesaving. Whether talking to groups or another veteran, I have discovered that sharing my personal struggles with mental health not only helps others, it also helps me.

I've also found the buddy system to be incredibly helpful. Every Friday I call one of my combat veteran buddies to see how they're doing. I can usually tell on the phone if they're okay or not, and just having someone to talk to is crucial. Everyone deals with their personal struggles in their own way, and even though some prefer no contact, it's important to keep trying.

I know I've come a long way, but just like everyone who has experienced the chaos of war, I will always bear the scars. When I feel overwhelmed, I know to call a friend and say, "*I need help.*" When I experience flashbacks, I use a tactic my therapist refers to as "grounding." For me, this means concentrating on something, such as the look and feel of everyday objects around me. That concentration helps bring me back to reality.

Today, I'm working on my inner peace. I attend group PTSD sessions with other combat veterans to learn how to cope with my symptoms. I also attend yoga classes to help me with relaxation methods. Yes, even paratroopers can do yoga – and like it.

A friend came to visit the other day. He lost 28 guys in Vietnam. I asked him when the last time was that he visited Vietnam, and he replied, "*2 a.m.*" That hit me really hard. He said the key to living a happy life is to learn to deal with emotions and to process them in a healthy way. Otherwise the trauma of losing your friends in combat will destroy everything you love. For me, this means letting out emotions that will otherwise haunt me.

I believe the reason I'm still able to serve in uniform – and perhaps the reason I'm alive – is that I asked for help and I got it. It wasn't a one-time thing. I continue to get help and seek healthy ways to deal with my own PTSD. We all have our own paths and methods to cope with struggles. I hope that by sharing my story of recovery, someone will choose to ask for help instead of letting their struggles destroy them.

Source:

<https://health.mil/News/Articles/2018/09/04/How-sharing-my-PTSD-struggles-helped-others-and-me>

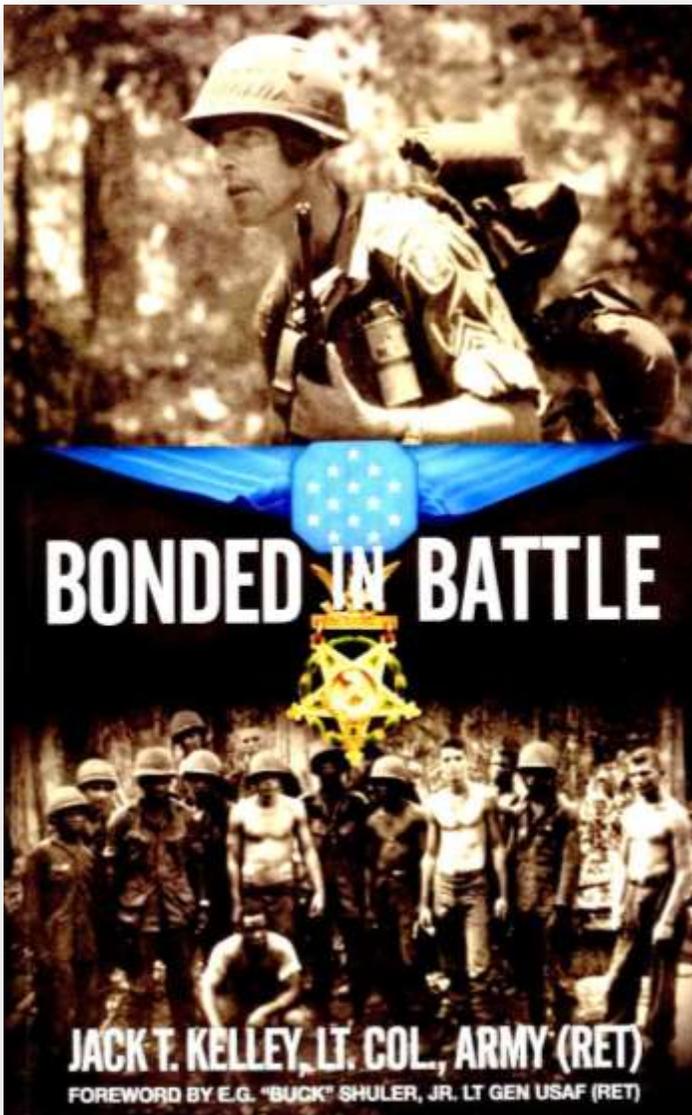


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Stories of 'No DEROS Alpha' 2/503d RVN



Cover photographs: Sgt. Charles Morris, Medal of Honor recipient, the survivors of 3rd Platoon after the battle.

Excerpt, by Cap Kelley:

Awards:

There were a number of awards presented in the following weeks after our battle on the 29th; Medal of Honor – 1, Silver Stars – 3, Bronze Star with Valor device – 10, Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device – 5, and 53 Purple Hearts.

At a Battalion awards ceremony at Camp Zinn the Battalion Commander, LTC (John) Walsh presented a number of the above awards. He called my name and presented me with the Bronze Star with Valor Device.

Although he did not say the following, he should have: *"Capt. Kelley, I am giving out the award not for what you did but for what Company A did."*

When the ceremony was over I returned to where my company was standing at attention and called them to Present Arms. The guidon flashed up and then came down with a salute; I unpinned the medal off my fatigue jacket and pinned it on the guidon, which told my company that it was they who had earned it. In other occasions during my career I have had other awards presented dealing with having been in the wrong place, at the wrong time, but with the right guys. In that career of twenty years in the Army, the best "right guys" were Company A on June 29, 1966.

Who were these men of Company A? We were mostly young and from different backgrounds, religions, races, and creeds; but we had two things in common. We were all AIRBORND SOLDIERS, and we were those who made up Company A, 2d Battalion, 503rd Airborne of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

In his work, *King Henry 5th*, William Shakespeare would sum up our calling and remembrance like this:

***"For He Who Today
Sheds His Blood With Me
Will Be My Brother
We Few
We Happy Few
We Band of Brothers"***

(Bonded in Battle, Pages 92-93)

LT Passarella & Bob "Doc" Beaton



June 29, 1966, Xuan Loc Province, Op Yorktown

To order *Bonded in Battle* please contact the author at:
JackTKelley@aol.com



U.S. Agent Orange/Dioxin Assistance to Vietnam

Updated November 9, 2018

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R44268 U.S. Agent Orange/Dioxin Assistance to Vietnam

Congressional Research Service

Summary

U.S. assistance to Vietnam for the environmental and health damage attributed to a dioxin contained in Agent Orange and other herbicides sprayed over much of the southern portion of the country during the Vietnam War remains a major bilateral issue. Between fiscal years (FY) 2007 and 2018, Congress appropriated over \$222 million to address these two issues. In addition, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (P.L. 115-232) authorized the transfer of up to \$15 million to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for the dioxin cleanup of the **Bien Hoa Airbase**.

Most of the appropriated funds have been used by USAID for the environmental cleanup of **Danang Airport**, one of the major airbases used for storing and spraying the herbicides between 1961 and 1971. A lesser amount of the appropriated funds have been used by USAID for assistance to Vietnam's persons with disabilities, generally, but not always in the vicinity of Danang or other dioxin-contaminated areas.

Congressional interest in Agent Orange/dioxin in Vietnam has largely been focused on two issues. The first issue is determining the appropriate amount and type of assistance to provide to address the environmental damage and the health effects of dioxin contamination in Vietnam. The second issue is oversight of how such assistance has been utilized by the State Department and USAID.

In November 2017, the United States and Vietnam completed the environmental remediation of approximately 90,000 cubic meters (118,000 cubic yards) of contaminated soil and 60,000 cubic meters (78,000 cubic yards) of lower risk materials at Danang Airport by a process known as in-pile thermal desorption (IPTD). Restoration and project closure operations were completed in November 2018. The project took six years, with an estimated overall cost of \$116 million.

Field studies have identified a number of other areas in Vietnam contaminated with the dioxin associated with Agent Orange, including the airports near **Bien Hoa** and **Phu Cat**, as well as sections of the **A Luoi Valley**. In January 2018, U.S. and Vietnamese governments signed a memorandum of intent (MOI) to begin the cleanup of the **Bien Hoa** airport. According to a USAID study, the environmental cleanup of Bien Hoa Airport could cost an estimated \$137 million to \$794 million, depending on what form of remediation is used.

The provision of health-related assistance to areas contaminated with Agent Orange/dioxin has raised questions about how USAID has utilized appropriated funds. By May 2017, USAID had obligated less than two-thirds of the appropriated funds for FY2011-FY2017. The funds have generally been used for disability assistance programs regardless of the cause of the disability, rather than for both health and disability programs targeting populations residing near Agent Orange/dioxin "hot spots."

While the obligations for environmental remediation activities generally have not been a matter of congressional concern, how USAID has obligated appropriations for health and disability activities has drawn some attention.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141) appropriated "*not less than \$20 million*" for environmental remediation and "*not less than \$10 million ... for health and disability programs in areas sprayed with Agent Orange and otherwise contaminated with dioxin.*" The Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2017 (H.R. 334) would require the Secretary of State to provide assistance to individuals in Vietnam with health issues related to exposure to Agent Orange, as well as "*to institutions in Vietnam that provide health care for covered individuals.*"

The act would also require the Secretary of State to provide assistance "*to remediate those geographic areas of Vietnam that the Secretary determines contain high levels of Agent Orange.*"



Vietnamese child purportedly suffering from toxins used during Vietnam War.

Read entire report at:

<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44268.pdf>



The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962

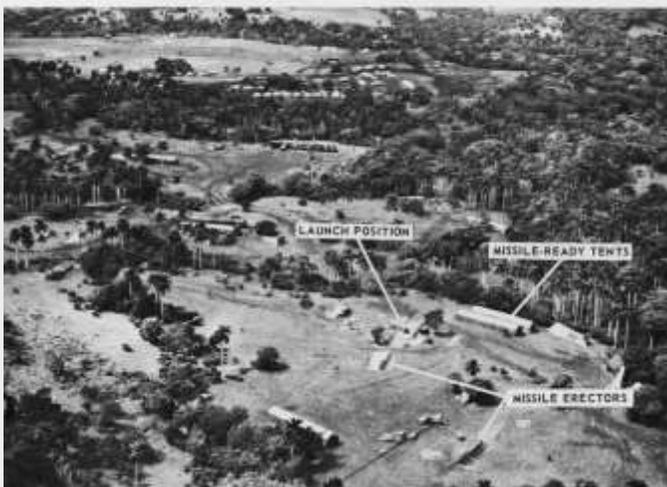
“The Cuban Missile Crisis, also known as the October Crisis of 1962 was a 13-day (October 16–28, 1962) confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning American ballistic missile deployment in Italy and Turkey with consequent Soviet ballistic missile deployment in Cuba. The confrontation is often considered the closest the Cold War came to escalating into a full-scale nuclear war.



In response to the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961 and the presence of American Jupiter ballistic missiles in Italy and Turkey, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to Cuba's request to place nuclear missiles on the island to deter a future invasion. An agreement was reached during a secret meeting between Khrushchev and Fidel Castro in July 1962, and construction of a number of missile launch facilities started later that summer.

The 1962 United States elections were under way, and the White House had for months denied charges that it was ignoring dangerous Soviet missiles 90 miles from Florida. The missile preparations were confirmed when an Air Force U-2 spy plane produced clear photographic evidence of medium-range (SS-4) and intermediate-range (R-14) ballistic missile facilities.

MEDIUM RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE BASE IN CUBA
SAN CRISTOBAL



The US established a naval blockade on October 22 to prevent further missiles from reaching Cuba; Oval Office tapes during the crisis revealed that President Kennedy had also put the blockade in place as an attempt to

provoke Soviet-backed forces in Berlin as well. The US announced that they would not permit offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba and demanded that the weapons already in Cuba be dismantled and returned to the Soviet Union.

After a long period of tense negotiations, an agreement was reached between Kennedy and Khrushchev. Publicly, the Soviets would dismantle their offensive weapons in Cuba and return them to the Soviet Union, subject to United Nations verification, in exchange for a US public declaration and agreement to avoid invading Cuba again. Secretly, the United States agreed that it would dismantle all US-built Jupiter MRBMs, which had been deployed in Turkey against the Soviet Union; there has been debate on whether or not Italy was included in the agreement as well.” 

Ranger's Memories Of The Cuban Missile Crisis

I remember it well, as **Joe Logan** does and every paratrooper at that time, because I was on leave in New Orleans.

At about 0400, I received a telegram from the CG, 82d Abn Div., **“Your leave is canceled. Return immediately.”** I was on a Delta flight at 0700 to Atlanta, then on to Fayetteville. There was no shuttle or terminal. The stewardess told me that my next aircraft was loading two a/c away. I ran and mounted the exterior stairwell to make the flight but my luggage did not.

Got to Bragg and rigged my gear. 2/504 was going to drop in a sugarcane field. Opns Sgt and I had a personal plan to assemble at the Bank of Havana for our Christmas bonus.

The next night I was the Division Duty Officer and had to inspect the rigged pallets of ammo. They were lined up on a firebreak and covered 3 miles in distance. One of several alerts that didn't go until we went to RVN from Oki.

The good news is that all of the prep for 5 years had me ready for RVN. RLTW. BDQ Roy

Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret)
CO B/2/503, Oki/RVN



BDQ Roy



Parachute Jumper

Parachute Jumper

is a 1933 American pre-Code black-and-white drama film that was directed by Alfred E. Green. Based on a story by Rian James titled "Some Call It Love", the screen production stars Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Bette Davis and Frank McHugh.

United States Marine Corps Lieutenants and pilots Bill Keller (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.) and

"Toodles" Cooper (Frank McHugh) are shot down in the skies over Nicaragua. When they are found drunk and unharmed in a cantina, they and the Marine Corps go their separate ways. They are offered jobs as commercial pilots, but when they arrive in New York City, they find their would-be employer has gone bankrupt.

Unemployed and almost out of money, they meet blonde Southerner Patricia "Alabama" Brent (Bette Davis). Keller convinces her to share their apartment to save on expenses.

Keller narrowly escapes death when he parachute jumps for some money. Next, he becomes the chauffeur for Mrs. Newberry (Claire Dodd), the mistress of gangster Kurt Weber (Leo Carrillo). She makes it clear that she expects more than just being driven around by him. Weber comes in and finds Mrs. Newberry kissing Keller. He kicks her out, but is impressed by the cool way Keller handles himself when threatened with a gun. Weber hires him as his bodyguard. By chance, Alabama gets hired by Weber as a secretary.

Later, Keller and Cooper become entangled in Weber's smuggling schemes, flying in contraband from Canada. On the return trip, Keller shoots down two airplanes who intercept and fire upon him, thinking they are hijackers when they are really part of the Border Patrol. There are no fatalities.

Weber and his henchman Steve Donovan (Harold Huber) set a trap for two disgruntled, unpaid ex-employees; Donovan guns them down in cold blood, intending to frame Keller, but Alabama overhears and calls Keller away from the scene. As a result, Keller



hands in his resignation, but Weber persuades him and Cooper to make one more delivery for him. After Cooper leaves, Keller learns that they have been smuggling not liquor, but narcotics. The authorities close in on Weber's office; Weber and Keller get away, but Weber leaves Donovan behind to get shot down. Weber has Keller fly him away. The Border Patrol catches up and shoots them down. Keller has time to arrange it to look like Weber was the pilot and he was a kidnap victim.

Unable to find work, Cooper decides to rejoin the Marines. Keller finally finds Alabama and asks her to marry him, saying that he can support her if he too reenlists in the Corps.

Our review: Altho the parachute jumping scenes may be interesting and exciting to see, if any, we surely will make it a point to miss this one the next time it comes up on *Turner Movie Classics* -- way too many Marines named "Tootles" in it. Ed 😊

The M61 Grenade

Fragmentation - M61 - developed to be effective with casualty radius of 15 meters. The M61 uses two separate arming actions, pulling the pin and releasing the jungle clip prior to throwing the grenade, with a 4-5 second delay after the handle flies off. Can be thrown for 125 feet by average soldier. Do not throw after 5 seconds.



(Shared by Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503)

*“Truth...the
life force of
democracy.”*

Bob Woodward



Condolences to Bravo Bull Larry Paladino on the Loss of His Sister, ‘Sky Soldierette’ Claudia Paladino-Tobin

Larry’s younger sister, Claudia, passed away on Saturday, December 8, following a long illness. Claudia was a friend of the 2/503d and all veterans; a lady of exceptional intellect and wit, who displayed deep humanistic qualities in her writings and her life’s conduct. A vocal member of the LLH Gang comprised mostly of 173d Airborne Troopers, a gang which speaks out about justice and fairness for everyone. In fact, it was Claudia who penned the name of our group. Our friend made this world just a little bit nicer. Rest easy young lady, and Larry, we are so saddened for you and your family, and we share in your grief. Ed



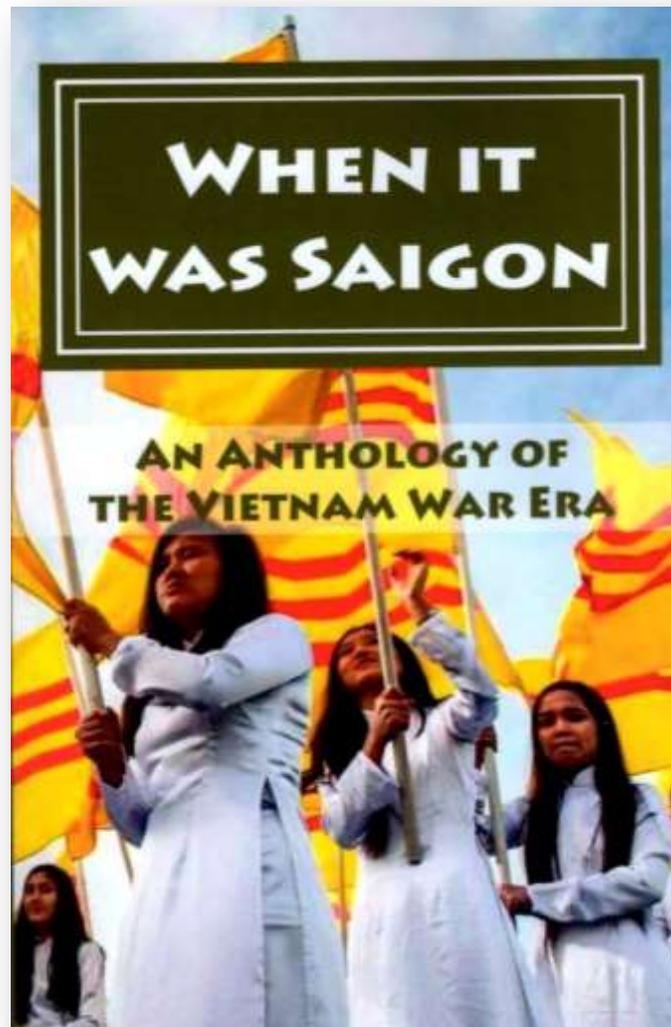
LLH Gang Members, Claudia and Larry

Humanist Philosophy

A philosophy shared by Claudia

“A philosophy, world view, or system of beliefs is ‘humanistic’ whenever it shows a primary or overriding concern with the needs and abilities of human beings. Its morality is based upon human nature and human experience. It values human life and our ability to enjoy our lives so long as we don't harm others in the process.”

New Book by Sky Soldier Chuck Dean



“Intimately written, ‘When it was Saigon’ possesses the power of the personal touch by those who experienced the Vietnam War Era in the ‘60’s and ‘70’s.

This singular collection is nothing less than a personalized record of young Americans embroiled in an unpopular war.

Each narrative is a heartsong of the times. A thought-provoking read... full of accounts that beg to be read over and over again.”

Copies of this book, in both hard copy and digital (Kindle) formats, may be obtained from www.amazon.com

See Pages 25-27 for 2/503 Alpha Company CO Jack Kelley’s story which appears in Chuck’s book. Ed



From "When it was Saigon"... edited by Chuck Dean

How to Say a Dumb Thing And Still Get the Job

**Jack Kelley CPT US Army
Company Commander
A Company 2nd Bn, 503rd Abn Infantry
Vietnam 1966**



Cpt Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret), CO A/2/503

It was January of 1967 and several of the officers had gathered at the 173rd Abn Bde Headquarters at Bien Hoa. I had recently turned over my Company, Company A, 2d Bn, 503rd Inf to Captain Ed Carns and reported to the Brigade Headquarters for a new job. I would be working for Major Jerry Bethke, the Brigade S-1, as his Assistant S-1.



Center is Cpt Ed Carns, COL (Ret), CO A/2/503



"Brigadier General Gerald H. Bethke, incoming commander of the 173rd Brigade, hands the colors to Command Sergeant Major Billy J. Cobb during a Change of Command ceremony."
(gov archives)

As this was occurring a new general for the brigade had arrived and Brigadier General Paul Smith was turning over his command. The new CG was Brigadier General John R. Dean, and the word was out that he was searching for someone to be his Aide de Camp.



MG Paul Smith, 1915-2014

(continued....)



I'm not sure why Major Bethke, unbeknownst to me, had thrown my name in the hat and nominated me for the position. I, along with several other Captains and Lieutenants was summoned to the CG's office to be interviewed by General Deane. When it came my turn to be interviewed the General asked many questions about my background. He began with where I had gone to college. My answer was "The Citadel".

He queried me about my duty and how long I had commanded Co A. He went on to ask me a number of other questions dealing with my time as a Company Commander. And then the fateful question came...he asked that if in the event I was selected would I be interested in serving as his Aide. *If I was interested?* I was *not* interested, and now I was going to have to let him know.

I braced myself and replied, *"No Sir. I am pleased and honored that you would consider me for this duty but I have just become the Assistant S-1 and I'm still learning how to do that job."* I was not sure what he thought of my answer, but he concluded the interview and excused me from his office.

Sometime later I got back to my office ready to settle into my new job as S-1 and went in to see Major Bethke. He asked how the interview went and I shared the details with him, including me telling the General I had to decline his offer for the job because I had a new job as S-1.

Bethke seemed slightly astonished. *"So, you told the General No?!"*

I went over that part of the interview again, repeating what I had told the General. The Major chuckled, and then announced, *"Well the General just called and informed me that you had told him that you didn't want the job."* Still chuckling he then told me, *"Guess what? You got the job! You're the new Aide!"* I was pretty much blown away with that news, but it turned out to be the highlight of my 20-year Army career.

The new job was like just that...a new job. Like many of you in the military there seemed to always be a forever changing of jobs, and getting readjusted to new equipment, methods, and bosses. Being a new Aide was just that...and plus.

As the General's Aide I got involved in a very special way at all levels in the Brigade; from platoon, Company, to Battalion. My main communications, as a Company Commander, were with the four platoon leaders in the company, the Company Commander, the Battalion Commander, and his Staff. While flying with the General in his chopper my primary job was to receive all calls (and know a myriad of call signs) and, if appropriate, pass them on to the General (the Old

Man)...or inform them of where else they might need to address their messages.

The equipment was a challenge. Before at company level there had been only two PRC 25 radios; one for the Battalion Command net, the other with Company elements. I was lucky to have two exceptional RTO's that manned those radios. Now there was a stack of radios bolted into the helicopter to enable the General reach whoever he needed to reach, and there was just me to respond to those incoming messages. Fortunately, the Old Man was patient, and I was so thankful that he was.

Each morning we'd lift off early and remain out all day, not returning until dusk. Often we'd take off again during the night and remain up for all hours when there was contact, or other activity in the area of operations. Our pilot was Cpt Rod Beasley and his co-pilot was Warrant Officer Grover Hudgens; two professional and exceptional aviators. We would be everywhere in an area of operations that the General felt there was a need for his presence.

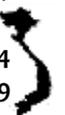


This included visiting the various units and troops on the ground, checking out defensive positions, talking to commanders and their troops, and visiting hospitals. During the hospital visits, whether a General Hospital or one of the MASH units, I'd always carry a box of Purple Hearts. It was a very proud moment when visiting 173rd casualties to stand beside the Old Man while he took a Purple Heart and pinned it on a trooper and to then thank him for his service. Of course when we would return to base camp it was my job as well to make sure that those awards were recorded with personnel.

Casper Pilot Cpt Rod Beasley was also a fixed wing aviator in Bien Hoa 1965 (Casper website)

The General was a special man, and had a great sense of humor. On one particular night I got to experience it fully, and the interesting thing is that the joke was on him. Soon after we lifted off in his chopper to oversee a night operation some nurses from the 3rd Surgical MASH unit at our base camp crept into the General's hooch and short-sheeted his bed. As the prank materialized when he got back the General cracked up and could not stop laughing.

(continued...)



The next day the humor continued, but so did security. It was increased to a new level...after all, for nurses to be able to sneak into his quarters like that brought concern to those responsible for his safety. The General stayed amused by the "ambush" for a long time after. War is hell.

Most folks who knew and worked for the General called him General, or Uncle Jack, or Parachute 6 on the radio. Being his Aide, I had a close and personal relationship but simply called him... "Sir". I was impressed that even with all my faults and shortcomings we managed to get along so well. And to this day I'm amazed that it was so easy for him to overlook this Aide's flaws and weaknesses, but perhaps that was one of his strong suits that later led him to become a four-star general in the U.S. Army.

General Deane was one outstanding officer, mentor, and an officer who loved his troops, and I loved him. The finest officer I have known. On August 13, 2013 as an ordained minister I had the privilege of officiating the general's funeral. It was conducted at West Point and there was a great sadness in me at his passing. However, the good news is that I'll see him again...in Heaven. Praise the Lord! And yes, sometime we do say the stupidest things, like "No I don't want the job, Sir."...and then it turns out to be gold dust.



General John R. Deane, Jr., "Uncle Jack"
1919 – 2013

[Reprinted from "When it was Saigon" courtesy of
Chuck Dean and Jack Kelley....Photos added]



All-American Doc



Badge Prep, 11/05/18. An Army combat medic assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC., readies his equipment before embarking on his final evaluation lane while competing for the expert field medical badge at Fort Bragg, N.C., Nov. 6, 2018. Sgt. Dustin Biven 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.



Fall From Valor

On November 16, 2018, ABC News reported two Navy SEALs and two Marines have been charged in the death of a Green Beret.

"Charges were preferred yesterday against two Sailors and two Marines in the death of Army Staff Sergeant Logan Melgar, who died June 4, 2017, while serving in Bamako, Mali," said a Navy statement.

"The four personnel face charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice including Felony Murder, Involuntary Manslaughter, Conspiracy, Obstruction of Justice, Hazing and Burglary," the statement said.



SSG Logan Melgar of Lubbock, Texas, died in Mali on June 4, 2017. His death is being investigated as a homicide.
(U.S. Army photo)



World Leaders, Led by Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Among Others, March in Rain Along the Champs-Elysees in Paris During Somber Ceremony to Mark the 100 Year Anniversary of the End of WWI and to Honor the Fallen. For Security Reasons U.S. Commander in Chief Followed Procession by Car With His Deepest Respect.



(web photos)



White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly, left, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., bow in honor and respect during a ceremony at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery during a light rain.

More than 2,000 American soldiers are buried at the World War I cemetery, many of whom died in the Battle of Belleau Wood. Kelly and Dunford, who were joined by their wives, placed a wreath in front of the cemetery's chapel and walked through the rows of gravestones under a low cloud cover and a light rain.

Due to what some considered to be stormy weather, the Commander In Chief's helicopter couldn't fly, so he remained at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris, but we are confident his thoughts and prayers were for our fallen whom he traveled to France to honor. He did visit a U.S. cemetery in the rain on the following day.

(continued...)





World leaders including U.S. Commander in Chief greet Russian President Vladimir Putin in France.



Commander in Chief Donald Trump delivers remarks during a steady downpour at the Suresnes American Cemetery near Paris as he honored American vets and heroes.

“Trump gave the speech on the centennial anniversary of the First World War, which he was in Paris to celebrate over the weekend.

'Exactly 100 years ago today, on Nov. 11 1918, World War One came to an end. Thank god,' he said. 'It was a brutal war.'

The U.S. president called it *'one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history'* and a *'horrible, horrible war'* in an 11-minute address with the Eiffel Tower behind him.

'We're gathered together at this hallowed resting place to pay tribute to the brave Americans who gave their last breath in that mighty struggle,' he said.

Lightening the mood, he told six WWII veterans he said were in attendance, *'You look like you're in really good shape, all of you. I hope I look like that someday. You look great.'*

The Commander expressed in an interview with Fox News Sunday he regretted not marking Veterans Day with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery.

'I should have done that,' the president said. 'I was extremely busy on calls for the country.'



A Thank You To Vets

Remarks by Harry Patch, the last veteran of WWI, who died in 2009 at 111 years old.



"I felt then, as I feel now, that the politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organising nothing better than legalised mass murder."

Sent in by the sister of an RVN Cowboy chopper pilot with her note to all vets, "Thank you for your love of country, and your courageousness." Thank you sister.

West Virginia State University ROTC Hall of Fame Inductee Capt. Samuel C. Evans

INSTITUTE, W.Va. – The West Virginia State University (WVSU) ROTC Hall of Fame added 14 new members during an induction ceremony on Oct. 5, 2018.

Joining the ranks of those enshrined in the ROTC Hall of Fame was Capt. Samuel C. Evans; The induction ceremony is free and open to the public and will also feature remarks from WVSU President Anthony L. Jenkins and musical performances by the WVSU Wind Ensemble.

Evans is a native of Bellaire, Ohio, who graduated from WVSU in 1963. He was commissioned a second lieutenant into the Medical Service Corps and assigned to the Sixth Special Forces Group in Fort Bragg, N.C., where he became the first African-American commander of a special forces unit. Evans volunteered for two tours of duty in Vietnam where he was part of the first combat parachute jump with the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) since World War II.

After military service, Evans worked for the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company, and later the U.S. Department of Treasury, before becoming involved with international development opportunities. In 1995, Evans in conjunction with the Chinese Academy of Medicine developed a product called Genvia to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Since its inception, the Yellow Jacket ROTC Battalion has commissioned over 900 men and women as second lieutenants in the United States Army as well as produced more General Officers than any other ROTC program of its size in the country. The Yellow Jacket Battalion includes cadets from the University of Charleston and the West Virginia University Institute of Technology.

The ROTC Hall of Fame induction ceremony is part of Homecoming activities at WVSU. For more information, and a complete schedule of Homecoming events, visit <http://connect.wvstateu.edu/homecoming> or call (304) 766-3387.

Follow West Virginia State University on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @WVStateU.

"West Virginia State University is a public, land grant, historically black university, which has evolved into a fully accessible, racially integrated, and multi-generational institution, located in Institute, W.Va. As a 'living laboratory of human relations,' the university is a community of students, staff, and faculty committed to academic growth, service, and preservation of the racial and cultural diversity of the institution. Its mission is to meet the higher education and economic development needs of the state and region through innovative teaching and applied research."

Congratulations to Capt. Sam Evans, who served as the Medical Operations Officer under Dr. Donald Klinestiver for six months with the 2/503 Med Platoon, RVN.



Excerpt....

Combat photographer Roger Hawkins: Stories behind the pictures

Roger Hawkins grew up in the tiny borough of Aspinwall on the Allegheny River just north of Pittsburgh and went on to live an adventure recorded in his wartime photographs.

Author: KPNX Staff 

Published: May 27, 2016

(Long Range Recon Patrol west of Anh Khe,
Vietnam late 1968)



Soldiers who paint themselves green, wear uniforms stripped like tigers, and avoid armed conflicts are called LRRPs. They avoid toe-to-toe conflicts because their job is to see, report, and keep much larger enemy forces off balance.

LRRPs can move unseen and leave little sign because they travel lightly armed in six or seven man teams. I had asked LRRPs from the 173rd Airborne located in An Khe if I could accompany one of their missions expecting to be turned down. Without batting an eye, they said "yes" and took me through the intricacies of immediate action drill (a method of breaking contact with an enemy) and then down to the range to see if I could shoot. I could.

The next morning I was on a helicopter flying into the hills west of An Khe. The doors were off and a soft light permeated the interior of the aircraft. The turbines powering the Huey helicopter were too loud for sustained thought let alone sustained conversation so I could not ask what the trooper next to me was thinking.

However, I could tell from his look that he had retreated into his personal space to deal with what might lie ahead. With my camera I captured the smoke grenade on his shoulder, paint on his face, and the thousand-yard-stare compressed into the six feet of the troop compartment.



A helicopter carrying a LRRP team from the 173rd Airborne Brigade and myself hopped from hilltop to hilltop.

A helicopter carrying a LRRP team from the 173rd Airborne Brigade and myself hopped from hilltop to hilltop. We couldn't hide the helicopter from anyone watching so we played a version of the shell game forcing potential watchers to guess which of our landings was the real one.

I had already agreed with the patrol that I would be the first one out so I could get pictures of the rest of the team jumping off the skids. The thought that, if we were hit, the pilot might leave me really tied my stomach in a knot. The chance of being killed was frightening. The possibility of being left behind was worse.

Thankfully things were happening fast, after I hit the ground I only had time to click the shutter twice before the whole team was on the ground with me and the aircraft was nose down tail up and climbing for altitude.

Our first priority was to get as far away as fast as we could from the landing site (actually not a landing, but a brief hover). I was an officer and the team was enlisted but I had no authority and no vote. I followed, photographed and kept my mouth shut and let the pros do their work. They were in shape and I was not, so as we climbed the only thing occupying me was breathing, climbing, and sweating.

I was sure I was already dead from exhaustion when the team leader, Sgt. Sylvester Brocato, announced we had reached the Promised Land and we all slumped down in the jungle, our new home. Then nothing happened. We sat there all day till the sun faded. We sat motionless in the dark for hours.

(continued....)



Suddenly there was a glimmer of flashlights in the valley; fifty more or less. The Sgt pulled me under a poncho along with a compass, map, red flashlight to protect our night vision and a radio hand set. He worked out the target coordinates and called them into a firebase 15 miles away.

Shortly we heard what sounded like a supersonic school bus tumbling end-over-end fly over the top of our hill and burst in an orange ball of flame in the pitch black jungle. The Sgt thought it looked on target (but distance is deceiving when you can't see your hand in front of your face) so he whispered again into the mike and said, "fire for effect." Soon a lot more hell rained down on the jungle and our job was done.

See entire article at:

www.12news.com/article/news/special-reports/combat-photographer-roger-hawkins-stories-behind-the-pictures/75-217732250

[This story was too good to pass up. Repeated attempts failed to contact Mr. Roger Hawkins]



173d LRRP Team, 1966

L-R: Manuel Moya, Roger Bumgardner, Bruce Baugh, Raymond Hill and Reed Cundiff



Chargin' Charlie Remembers His Sarge

I never knew that Sgt K received this award and always wondered what happened to him. He took over the third platoon after Hill 875 and we became friends. He really looked after me until his DEROS.

Roger Dick
C/2/503

SILVER STAR CITATION

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to **Sergeant First Class Peter A. Krawtzow** (ASN: RA-5537xxxx), United States Army, for gallantry in action. Sergeant First Class Krawtzow distinguished himself while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam during the period of 19 through 23 November 1967, while serving as a platoon sergeant with Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, on a search and destroy mission. On 19 November, when Company C made contact with a large North Vietnamese Army force, the order to assault was issued. Sergeant Krawtzow quickly organized the men in the rear of his platoon and moved them to his platoon leader's location. Sergeant Krawtzow continually exposed himself, with little regard for his own safety, to the intense enemy machine gun, rocket and mortar fire in order to direct the movement of his platoon. After pulling back and reorganizing, Sergeant Krawtzow discovered that his platoon leader had been killed. Although wounded earlier, he immediately assumed command of the platoon and placed it within the company perimeter. Sergeant Krawtzow was later informed that all of the officers in the company had been killed. He immediately assumed command of the company and went from position to position, encouraging his troops and preparing them for the night. When relieved of his command of the company the next day, Sergeant Krawtzow continued to function as platoon leader. For the next three days, he maintained firm control over his platoon. Sergeant Krawtzow's aggressiveness, superior tactical knowledge and extraordinary personal valor were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



Caravan of Migrants Heading North to U.S. Border Could Be Here By Christmas



Clearly, they are coming to attack and overthrow our government.

Lady Liberty...Mother of Exiles



The New Colossus

“Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes
command

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
‘Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!’ cries she
With silent lips. ***‘Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’***”

Emma Lazarus
November 2, 1883

Then again....**NAAAHHH.**

VA mobilizes federal agencies to offer free legal services to help Veterans

November 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) together with representatives from the departments of Labor, Justice, Defense, Homeland Security, the U.S. Navy and others, signed a joint statement aimed at improving access to free legal services for Veterans in need.

Federal agencies and the Veterans legal services community came together at VA headquarters in Washington D.C. to celebrate VA’s Medical Legal Partnerships and to recognize volunteers who serve at VA-based free legal clinics.

Currently, VA hosts at least 170 free legal clinics in its VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers across the country, by partnering with external legal service providers, such as local bar associations, legal aid organizations and law school clinics.

“Legal assistance stands high on the list of many Veterans’ important but unmet needs,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. *“Our goal is to make sure our Veterans have access to not only health care and disability benefits, but to community legal services that are central to their overall well-being.”*

Veterans often face stressful legal situations — such as eviction, foreclosure, child support or driver’s license revocations — that can affect their ability to gain or maintain employment and housing, or focus on medical treatment. At the VA-hosted event today, VA and other federal agencies committed to encourage and further the provision of volunteer legal services to Veterans. As a prime example of the VA-based legal clinics nationwide, attorneys and paralegals from VA and 13 other federal agencies have provided pro bono legal assistance on their own time to Veterans at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center’s legal clinic, run by the Veterans Pro Bono Consortium. During the past year, the legal clinic at that facility has served more than 800 Veterans.

For more information about VA’s coordination of legal services for Veterans at VA facilities visit <https://www.va.gov/OGC/LegalServices.asp>





Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2019



101st Airborne Division Snowbird Reunion, Westshore Marriott Hotel, Tampa, FL , February 6-9, 2019. **Contact web:** <http://snowbirdreunion.com/>



82nd Airborne 7th Annual Airborne Reunion, Lexington, KY, February 28 - March 3, 2019 **Contact web:** www.82ndairborneassociation.org/phone/events.html



Firebase Airborne 50th Anniversary Reunion, Riverview Inn, Clarksville, TN, May 12-14, 2019. **Contact web:** <http://beardedarmenian.wixsite.com/fsairborne/reunion-2019>



1st Battalion 50th Infantry Reunion, May 14-17, 2019, Hampton Inn and Suites, Phenix City, AL. **Contact web:** www.ichiban1.org/html/reunion.htm



Casper Platoon Reunion, Tropicana Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV, April 23-25, 2019. **Contact:** Ned Costa, **Phn:** 562-682-3100, **Eml:** NCHuey721@aol.com, **Web:** <http://www.casperplatoon.com/2019.htm>



2019 All American Week, Fort Bragg, NC, May 20-23, 2019, **Contact:** **Eml:** www.504thpirassociation.org/phone/events.html



Charlie Airborne Arctic Paratroopers FWA Reunion, Las Vegas NV at the Luxor Hotel, May 31, 2019 to June 2, 2019. **Contact:** Dave Leiva, **Phn/Fax:** 623-512-5481, **Eml:** biffleiva@gmail.com



173d Airborne Brigade Annual Reunion, Charleston, SC, June 5-9, 2019. **Contact:** Wayne Bowers, **Phn:** 803-237-3169, **Eml:** bowway@aol.com



101st Airborne Division Association Reunion, Hotel Elegante, Colorado Springs, CO, August 21-25, 2019. **Contact web:** www.rmeagles.org/reunion/



73rd Joint Reunion 11ABN & 187 ARCT, Clarion Hotel Conference Center, Lexington, KY, September 24-29, 2019. **Contact:** **Phn:** 856-233-0515



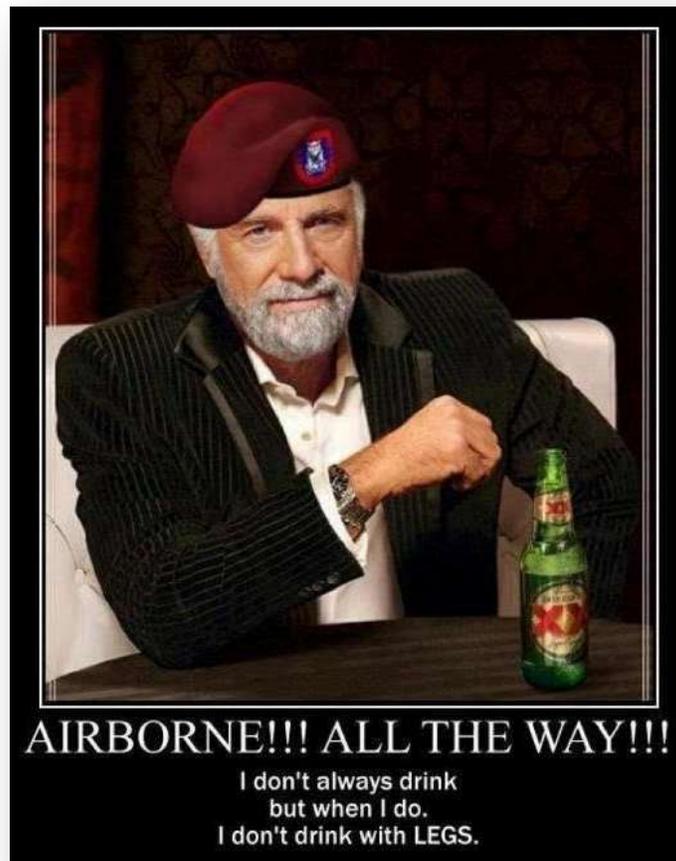
The International Paratrooper and Skydiving Reunion, Hotel El Tropicano, San Antonio, TX, October 13-15, 2019. **Contact:** Joe Rodriguez, **Phn:** 210-995-7727. Phillip Gonzales, **Phn:** 210-685-9904, **Eml:** phillgonz49@aswaa.org



B/2/501st, 101st Airborne Reunion, Evansville Double Tree by Hilton, Evansville, IN, October 16-19, 2019. **Contact web:** <http://b2501airborne.com/reunion.htm>



Web info: <http://dday-anniversary.com/>



AIRBORNE!!! ALL THE WAY!!!

I don't always drink
but when I do.
I don't drink with LEGS.

Sent in by Ron Thomas, 173d LRRP

(continued...)



173d Reunion ~ 2019 Registration Form



SKY SOLDIERS DESCEND ON

Charleston, SC

JUNE 5-9, 2019 | HOSTED BY SC CHAPTER 30



Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Unit served within the Brigade _____ Dates served _____

Guest 1 Name _____ Male/Female

Guest 2 Name _____ Male/Female

Guest 3 Name _____ Male/Female

Registration Fees

- _____ \$173/Association member* (includes hospitality room, drink tickets, banquet, welcome meal, gift)
- _____ \$173 per guest* (includes hospitality room, drink tickets, banquet, welcome meal, gift)
- _____ \$55 per Gold Star Family member
- _____ \$100 per Active Duty Soldier (NOT on orders)
- _____ FREE - Active Duty Soldiers on orders (i.e. Command, Color Guard)

Optional Activity Fees

- _____ \$30/person - Patriots Point trip (includes transportation and admission)
- _____ \$20/person - Harbor boat tour add on (must also be registered for Patriots Point trip)
- _____ \$20/person - Downtown Charleston Historic Market trip (includes transportation)
- _____ \$40/person - Golf Outing (includes transportation, cart rental, and lunch)
- _____ \$25/person - Welcome meal only (CAUTION: included with full registration)
- _____ \$55/person - Banquet only (CAUTION: included with full registration)
- _____ FREE - Ladies Event (must register to attend)
- _____ FREE - Gold Star Luncheon - 173d Gold Star Families only (must register to attend)
- _____ \$10 - Raffle ticket (winner will receive \$1,000)
- _____ Donation to offset reunion costs (choose any amount)

Vendor Fees

- _____ \$125 - Association member vendor registration fee (includes 1 table, 2 chairs)
- _____ \$150 - Non-association member vendor registration fee (includes 1 table, 2 chairs)
- _____ \$75 per additional table
- _____ \$50 - electricity at vendor table

TOTAL COST

To register and pay online, visit www.173dreunion2019.com

Make checks payable to: 173d Airborne Brigade Association

Mail to: Wendell Satterfield, PO Box 525, Gray Court, SC 29645

For hotel reservations: Embassy Suites by Hilton Charleston Airport - 843-747-1882

For additional information: Wayne Bowers, 803-237-3169, bowway@aol.com

- * Registration available online and by mail until 19 May 2019. Walk-ins welcome at \$199.
- * You must be registered to participate in the 173d Airborne Brigade activities listed above. Registration fee does not include any mini reunions (such as 4th Battalion).

Note: If you are aware of any upcoming "Airborne" or attached unit reunions, please email complete details to rto173@att.net for inclusion in our newsletter.

Airborne... All The Way!



Sage Advice Posted at a VFW Men's Latrine



This photo was taken one-handed.



Rocky's Team Sky Soldiers Competes in MOAA Golf Tourney in Florida

Comprised of Dick Starcher (former Army MP), Mike Britt and Dave Fanuef (military relatives), and Lew "Smitty" Smith (HHC/2/503), *Rocky's Team Sky Soldiers* competed in the **MOAA Good Deeds Foundation 2018 Annual Fundraiser Golf Tournament** at Cocoa Beach Country Club, in Cocoa Beach, FL in December, where over 100 military brass were seen chasing their little balls around the course -- Paratrooper golfers had bigger balls.

While Rocky's team turned in a respectable score of 56 for the 18 holes, they finished well out of the money, but were pleased to contribute to MOAA philanthropic endeavors.

The team is named in memory of **Don "Rocky" Rockholt**, A/2/503 of Dak To fame, and former golf buddy of ours. Ed



"Rocky"

AGENT ORANGE LINKED TO HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

In a recent web posting in November by *MilitaryTimes*, they report, "New research linking veterans' high blood pressure with wartime exposure to chemical defoliants could dramatically expand federal disability benefits for tens of thousands of Vietnam-era troops.

The findings, from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, conclude that 'sufficient evidence' exists linking hypertension and related illnesses in veterans to Agent Orange and other defoliants used in Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s.

They recommend adding the condition to the list of 14 presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, a group that includes Hodgkin's Disease, prostate cancer and Parkinson's Disease."

The report further states, "If Veterans Affairs officials follow through with the recommendation, it could open up new or additional disability benefits to thousands of aging veterans who served in those areas and who are now struggling with heart problems."

The photo and caption below of 173d troopers appeared in connection with the report.



"Two U.S. paratroopers squat in tall elephant grass and look toward the area where sniper fire was heard during landing operations north of Saigon, Vietnam, on Nov. 8, 1965. New research shows a strong link between chemical defoliant exposure during that war and high blood pressure later in life." (AP file photo)

Read entire report at:

www.militarytimes.com/news/2018/11/19/new-research-could-lead-to-disability-benefits-for-vietnam-veterans-with-high-blood-pressure/





CHOPPERS AND MEN OF THE 2/503D RVN



(Photos from A.B. Garcia/HHC/2/503)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)



(A.B. Garcia)

(continued....)





(A.B. Garcia)



(Photos from Les Brownlee, B/2/503)



(Les Brownlee)



(Photos from Craig Marcus, HHC/B/2/503)



(Craig Marcus)



(Craig Marcus)



(Photo from Dick Eckert, B/2/503)



(Photos from Don Horger, A/2/503)

(continued....)





(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)

(continued....)





(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Don Horger)



(Photo from Freddie Parks, A/2/503)



(Photos from George Dexter, HHC/2/503)



(George Dexter)



(George Dexter)

(continued...)





(George Dexter)



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(George Dexter)



(George Dexter)



(George Dexter)



(Photos from Jack Leide, C/2/503)



(Jack Leide)



(Jack Leide)



(Jack Leide)



(Jack Leide)

(continued...)





(Jack Leide)



(Jack Leide)



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(Jack Leide)

(continued...)





(Jack Leide)



(Jack Leide)



(Photos from Jack Ribera, A/2/503)



(Jack Ribera)



(Jack Ribera)



(Jack Ribera)



(Photo from Jaime Castillo, C/2/503)



(Photos from Jerry Patterson, C/2/503)

(continued...)





(Jerry Patterson)



(Jerry Patterson)



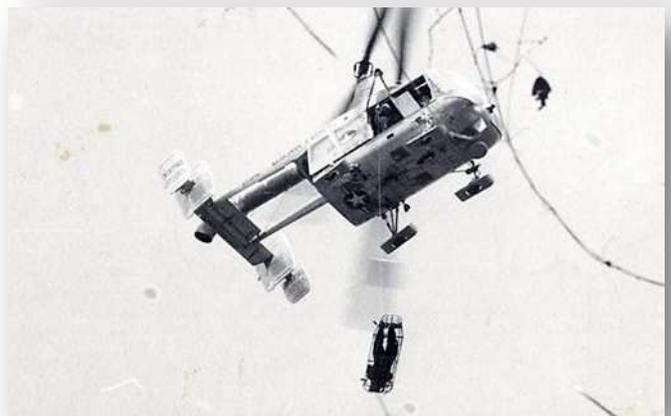
(Jerry Patterson)



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(Jerry Patterson)



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(Jerry Patterson)



(Jerry Patterson)



(Jerry Patterson)



(Jerry Patterson)



(Photo from Jim Dresser, A/HHC/2/503)



(Photo from Jim Healy, A/2/503)



(Photo from Jim Quick, B/2/503)



(Photos from Jim Robinson, B/2/503)

(continued...)





(Jim Robinson)



(Photos from Les Fuller, A/2/503)



(Les Fuller)



(Les Fuller)



(Les Fuller)



(Photos from Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503)



(Pat Bowe)



(Pat Bowe)

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(Pat Bowe)



(Pat Bowe)



(Pat Bowe)



(Pat Bowe)



(Photos from Richard Martinez, B/2/503)



(Richard Martinez)



(Photos from Ron Reitz, HHC/2/503)



(Ron Reitz)

(continued...)





(Photos from Lew Smith, HHC/2/503)



(Lew Smith)



(Lew Smith)



(Lew Smith)



(Photo from Wesley Johnson's family)



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



(Photos from Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503))



(Wayne Hoitt)

(continued...)





(Wayne Hoitt)



(Wayne Hoitt)



(Wayne Hoitt)



THE REAL MCCOY?

By Chuck Dean, 173d Abn Bde

It's time for a talk. No, maybe it's time to vent a little about something that's in our faces everywhere we go; panhandlers claiming to be vets.

Have I ever stopped my car and handed money to a panhandler claiming to be a vet? Nope, not yet...and won't. Why? Because I have a hard time



believing that everyone out there professing to be a vet really is a vet. It's the wannabe extraordinaire, and the harm it creates for real vets is enormous. I mean come on ... using the honest sacrificial efforts of those who did serve to deceitfully filch money is intolerable.

Way back when I did approach some of these guys because I've always wanted to help a vet whenever I could. I wanted to find out what was up. Once I even offered to take one to a restaurant and buy him a meal and he declined saying he would rather have money. Eh huh...to spend on what?

As a side note, in 1994 a survey was conducted and on the average a panhandler on the streets of Seattle raked in an average of around \$200 a day. Not bad, while a 100% service-connected disabled vet gets a healthy stipend of \$98 a day. Hey, he could always hit the streets...it's tax-free money! However, not many real vets that I know would lower themselves in such a way. There's just too much in-the-gut American pride ingrained in real vets to make a move like that.

Next time you get a chance, try asking some revealing questions; questions that any G.I. would have answers to, like; did you ever own a P-38? What are hospital corners? Did you ever belong to a three-round shot group? I've queried panhandlers like this before and gotten back some dumfounded looks or just silly answers. Heaven forbid that I would ever ask them to produce a DD Form 214!

But that's not all...panhandling wannabe vets are not the only culprits. There are some high-falootin' charities claiming to raise money to help veterans too. *AARP magazine* just did an article on it, and some of these go by such distinguished designations as *Act of Valor*, *Medal of Honor*, *Saving our Soldiers*, and even *Vets Fighting Breast Cancer!* They are using the whole idea of "Veteran" to fool the public and steal donations that could otherwise go to valid causes.

There are indeed homeless vets that can use our help; and there are charitable organizations that do good work (Pat Tillman Foundation is my favorite).

So this Christmas (and always) be diligent to check them out before stuffing hard-earned cash down a rat-hole.



Sky Soldier Doing Good Work

The board of directors of Human Rights First, an independent advocacy and action organization, that challenges America to live up to its ideals, has announced the selection of **MICHAEL BREEN** as the organization's next president and chief executive officer, effective October 1.

As a U.S. Army officer, Breen, who currently serves as president and CEO of the Truman National Security Project, led soldiers in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, serving for a



year as a platoon leader in the latter country's Pech and Korengal valleys with the 173rd Airborne.

After leaving the military, he served in the Office of White House Counsel and co-founded the International Refugee Assistance Project, working with refugee families in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. He holds a JD from Yale Law School and a BA from Dartmouth, and has also studied in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the United Kingdom.

Source:

<http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/people-in-the-news-09-09-18-appointments-promotions-obituaries>

American Ideals. Universal Values.

On human rights, the United States must be a beacon. Activists fighting for freedom around the globe continue to look to our country for inspiration and count on us for support. Upholding human rights is not only a moral obligation; it's a vital national interest: America is strongest when our policies and actions match our values.

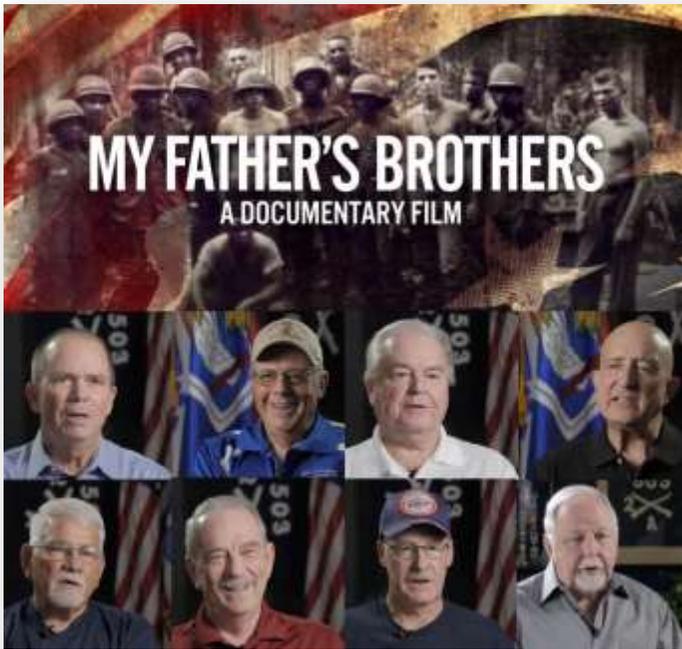
Human Rights First is an independent advocacy and action organization that challenges America to live up to its ideals. We believe American leadership is essential in the global struggle for human rights, so we press the U.S. government and private companies to respect human rights and the rule of law.

"Human Rights First is a non-profit, nonpartisan international human rights organization based in New York, Washington D.C., Houston, and Los Angeles."

[This report is not a promotion of this organization by this newsletter. Ed]



New Sky Soldier Documentary:



SOME BONDS ARE FORGED ON THE BATTLEFIELD

June 29, 1966. A seemingly ordinary Wednesday that would torment and bond a company of soldiers for more than fifty years.

In *My Father's Brothers*, filmmaker Shawn Kelley embarks on a journey to try to understand what his father experienced on that haunting day during the Vietnam War. Shawn's father introduces him to his brothers-in-arms, the men of A Company in the 173rd Airborne, whom he led into battle during Operation Yorktown. Outnumbered almost ten to one, the platoon that made initial contact with the Vietcong force is almost wiped out.

The film explores how each of these men survived that day and the days to come, both during and after the war. The survivors' stories of sorrow, resourcefulness, heroism and remembrance resonate and inspire. And fifty years later, the bond between them endures.



Medic Bob "Doc" Beaton gives aid to wounded buddy after battle on 6/29/66.

MY FATHER'S BROTHERS

"We were really close because the gray mud turned red."

Capt. Bill Vose, A/2/503

Film trailer: https://youtu.be/Pd8-uS328_k
Film website: <https://www.myfathersbrothers.com/>



DOD IDENTIFIES ARMY CASUALTY

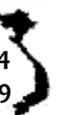
Nov. 25, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Sgt. Leandro A.S. Jasso, 25, from Leavenworth, Washington, died Nov. 24, 2018, in Garmsir District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, as a result of wounds sustained while engaging enemy forces in Khash Rod District, Nimruz Province, Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.

Jasso was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

For more information regarding Sgt. Leandro A. Jasso, members of the media may contact Lt. Col. Loren Bymer, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, NC at 910-432-3383 or by email at loren.bymer@socom.mil



On Veterans Day a Vet says Thank You to all Vets

Army Veteran reflects on “humbling experiences”

November 6, 2018

Health, Honoring Vets, Inside Veterans Health
by VAntage Point Contributor



Veteran Hope Nelson (above left) shares her thoughts on Veterans Day. She is pictured here with her college mentor Aimee Valles.

“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.”

So begins the oath of enlistment and the oath of commissioning for American service members. This oath carries on in the hearts and minds of all former and retired servicemembers. The oath represents an unbreakable vow and with it a bond connecting those of us who raised our right hands in allegiance.

As a newly minted Army Veteran myself, I have only recently begun my first civilian career at the Lexington VA Medical Center. Within a very short amount of time, I quickly realized just what I had gotten myself into. Not only am I surrounded by countless hats with “Vietnam Veteran” stitched on, but I have also had the privilege of seeing a unique gathering of World War II, Korean War, and other Veterans at a recent Kentucky Honor Flight send-off.

For those not aware, the Honor Flight provides some Veterans with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to our nation’s capital and visit war memorials dedicated to the wars in which they fought.

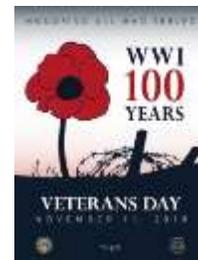
Capturing on camera the smiles of these Veterans about to embark on this incredible adventure was priceless and incredibly humbling for me. Through these initial encounters, I have felt first-hand the impact of the demographic I have now joined.

Alongside these gentlemen, the gravity of the title Veteran stirs up feelings of self-consciousness; I cannot help but compare my service to theirs. As we often hear, “All gave some and some gave all,” but I am starkly aware of just how small my own “some” feels: only four years of service with no deployments and all 5’2” of me is intact. I have all four limbs, eyesight, hearing, no shell shock, and a physically intact brain. Surely, I don’t design to be counted with them.

I count it an honor to stand among those who first raised their hands.

Despite my own feeling of inferiority next to those who came before me, I must remind myself of what I know is true: like my forbearers, I too did solemnly swear that I would support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic and that I would bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

As I reflect on the service of those before me, I am reminded of the words of our nation’s first president: *“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”*



When all is said and done, I know I raised my right hand and made an oath. I count it an honor to stand among those who first raised their hands to the same oath. My experiences may not be the same, however, understanding who they are is a part of my continued service to Veterans with the VA.

From a fellow Vet, a heartfelt thank you to all Veterans on this Veterans Day for teaching me humility, sacrifice, and true fellowship.

For more than 18 years, the violin has been an increasing source of enjoyment, stress relief, and creative challenge for Hope Nelson, who enjoys practicing classical music and playing along to favorite songs. While in the Army she was stationed at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. and Fort Irwin, Calif. Hope Nelson was a captain with the US Army Military Police and is now a public affairs specialist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.



**The White House
Office of the Press Secretary**

For Immediate Release

May 24, 2016

Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Vietnam

National Convention Center, Hanoi, Vietnam



PRESIDENT OBAMA: Xin chào! Xin chào Vietnam! Thank you. Thank you so much.

To the government and the people of Vietnam, thank you for this very warm welcome and the hospitality that you have shown to me on this visit. And thank all of you for being here today. We have Vietnamese from across this great country, including so many young people who represent the dynamism, and the talent and the hope of Vietnam. On this visit, my heart has been touched by the kindness for which the Vietnamese people are known. In the many people who have been lining the streets, smiling and waving, I feel the friendship between our peoples.

Last night, I visited the Old Quarter here in Hanoi and enjoyed some outstanding Vietnamese food. I tried some Bún Chả. Drank some bia Ha Noi. But I have to say, the busy streets of this city, I've never seen so many motorbikes in my life. So I haven't had to try to cross the street so far, but maybe when I come back and visit you can tell me how.

I am not the first American President to come to Vietnam in recent times. But I am the first, like so many of you, who came of age after the war between our countries. When the last U.S. forces left Vietnam, I was just 13 years old. So my first exposure to Vietnam and the Vietnamese people came when I was growing up in Hawaii, with its proud Vietnamese American community there.

At the same time, many people in this country are much younger than me. Like my two daughters, many of you have lived your whole lives knowing only one thing -- and that is peace and normalized relations between Vietnam and the United States. So I come here mindful of the past, mindful of our difficult history, but focused on the future -- the prosperity, security and human dignity that we can advance together.

I also come here with a deep respect for Vietnam's ancient heritage. For millennia, farmers have tended these lands -- a history revealed in the Dong Son drums. At this bend in the river, Hanoi has endured for more than a thousand years. The world came to treasure Vietnamese silks and paintings, and a great Temple of Literature stands as a testament to your pursuit of knowledge. And yet, over the centuries, your fate was too often dictated by others. Your beloved land was not always your own. But like bamboo, the unbroken spirit of the Vietnamese people was captured by Ly Thuong Kiet -- "the Southern emperor rules the Southern land. Our destiny is writ in Heaven's Book."

Today, we also remember the longer history between Vietnamese and Americans that is too often overlooked. More than 200 years ago, when our Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson, sought rice for his farm, he looked to the rice of Vietnam, which he said had "the reputation of being whitest to the eye, best flavored to the taste, and most productive." Soon after, American trade ships arrived in your ports seeking commerce.

During the Second World War, Americans came here to support your struggle against occupation. When American pilots were shot down, the Vietnamese people helped rescue them. And on the day that Vietnam declared its independence, crowds took to the streets of this city, and Ho Chi Minh evoked the American Declaration of Independence. He said, "All people are created equal. The Creator has endowed them with inviolable rights. Among these rights are the right to life, the right to liberty, and the right to the pursuit of happiness."

In another time, the profession of these shared ideals and our common story of throwing off colonialism might have brought us closer together sooner. But instead, Cold War rivalries and fears of communism pulled us into conflict....

(continued....)



....Like other conflicts throughout human history, we learned once more a bitter truth -- that war, no matter what our intentions may be, brings suffering and tragedy.

At your war memorial not far from here, and with family altars across this country, you remember some 3 million Vietnamese, soldiers and civilians, on both sides, who lost their lives. At our memorial wall in Washington, we can touch the names of 58,315 Americans who gave their lives in the conflict. In both our countries, our veterans and families of the fallen still ache for the friends and loved ones that they lost. Just as we learned in America that, even if we disagree about a war, we must always honor those who serve and welcome them home with the respect they deserve, we can join together today, Vietnamese and Americans, and acknowledge the pain and the sacrifices on both sides.

More recently, over the past two decades, Vietnam has achieved enormous progress, and today the world can see the strides that you have made. With economic reforms and trade agreements, including with the United States, you have entered the global economy, selling your goods around the world. More foreign investment is coming in. And with one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, Vietnam has moved up to become a middle-income nation.

We see Vietnam's progress in the skyscrapers and high-rises of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and new shopping malls and urban centers. We see it in the satellites Vietnam puts into space and a new generation that is online, launching startups and running new ventures. We see it in the tens of millions of Vietnamese connected on Facebook and Instagram. And you're not just posting selfies -- although I hear you do that a lot -- and so far, there have been a number of people who have already asked me for selfies. You're also raising your voices for causes that you care about, like saving the old trees of Hanoi.

So all this dynamism has delivered real progress in people's lives. Here in Vietnam, you've dramatically reduced extreme poverty, you've boosted family incomes and lifted millions into a fast-growing middle class. Hunger, disease, child and maternal mortality are all down. The number of people with clean drinking water and electricity, the number of boys and girls in school, and your literacy rate -- these are all up. This is extraordinary progress. This is what you have been able to achieve in a very short time.

And as Vietnam has transformed, so has the relationship between our two nations. We learned a lesson taught by the venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, who

said, "In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change." In this way, the very war that had divided us became a source for healing. It allowed us to account for the missing and finally bring them home. It allowed us to help remove landmines and unexploded bombs, because no child should ever lose a leg just playing outside. Even as we continue to assist Vietnamese with disabilities, including children, we are also continuing to help remove Agent Orange -- dioxin -- so that Vietnam can reclaim more of your land. We're proud of our work together in Danang, and we look forward to supporting your efforts in Bien Hoa.

Let's also not forget that the reconciliation between our countries was led by our veterans who once faced each other in battle. Think of Senator John McCain, who was held for years here as a prisoner of war, meeting General Giap, who said our countries should not be enemies but friends. Think of all the veterans, Vietnamese and American, who have helped us heal and build new ties. Few have done more in this regard over the years than former Navy lieutenant, and now Secretary of State of the United States, John Kerry, who is here today. And on behalf of all of us, John, we thank you for your extraordinary effort.

Because our veterans showed us the way, because warriors had the courage to pursue peace, our peoples are now closer than ever before. Our trade has surged. Our students and scholars learn together. We welcome more Vietnamese students to America than from any other country in Southeast Asia. And every year, you welcome more and more American tourists, including young Americans with their backpacks, to Hanoi's 36 Streets and the shops of Hoi An, and the imperial city of Hue. As Vietnamese and Americans, we can all relate to those words written by Van Cao -- "From now, we know each other's homeland; from now, we learn to feel for each other."

As President, I've built on this progress. With our new Comprehensive Partnership, our governments are working more closely together than ever before. And with this visit, we've put our relationship on a firmer footing for decades to come. In a sense, the long story between our two nations that began with Thomas Jefferson more than two centuries ago has now come full circle. It has taken many years and required great effort. But now we can say something that was once unimaginable: Today, Vietnam and the United States are partners.

(continued....)



And I believe our experience holds lessons for the world. At a time when many conflicts seem intractable, seem as if they will never end, we have shown that hearts can change and that a different future is possible when we refuse to be prisoners of the past. We've shown how peace can be better than war. We've shown that progress and human dignity is best advanced by cooperation and not conflict. That's what Vietnam and America can show the world.

Now, America's new partnership with Vietnam is rooted in some basic truths. Vietnam is an independent, sovereign nation, and no other nation can impose its will on you or decide your destiny. Now, the United States has an interest here. We have an interest in Vietnam's success. But our Comprehensive Partnership is still in its early stages. And with the time I have left, I want to share with you the vision that I believe can guide us in the decades ahead.

First, let's work together to create real opportunity and prosperity for all of our people. We know the ingredients for economic success in the 21st century. In our global economy, investment and trade flows to wherever there is rule of law, because no one wants to pay a bribe to start a business. Nobody wants to sell their goods or go to school if they don't know how they're going to be treated. In knowledge-based economies, jobs go to where people have the freedom to think for themselves and exchange ideas and to innovate. And real economic partnerships are not just about one country extracting resources from another. They're about investing in our greatest resource, which is our people and their skills and their talents, whether you live in a big city or a rural village. And that's the kind of partnership that America offers.

As I announced yesterday, the Peace Corps will come to Vietnam for the first time, with a focus on teaching English. A generation after young Americans came here to fight, a new generation of Americans are going to come here to teach and build and deepen the friendship between us. Some of America's leading technology companies and academic institutions are joining Vietnamese universities to strengthen training in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine. Because even as we keep welcoming more Vietnamese students to America, we also believe that young people deserve a world-class education right here in Vietnam.

It's one of the reasons why we're very excited that this fall, the new Fulbright University Vietnam will open in Ho Chi Minh City -- this nation's first independent, non-profit university -- where there will

be full academic freedom and scholarships for those in need. Students, scholars, researchers will focus on public policy and management and business; on engineering and computer science; and liberal arts -- everything from the poetry of Nguyen Du, to the philosophy of Phan Chu Trinh, to the mathematics of Ngo Bao Chau.

And we're going to keep partnering with young people and entrepreneurs, because we believe that if you can just access the skills and technology and capital you need, then nothing can stand in your way -- and that includes, by the way, the talented women of Vietnam. We think gender equality is an important principle.

From the Trung Sisters to today, strong, confident women have always helped move Vietnam forward. The evidence is clear -- I say this wherever I go around the world -- families, communities and countries are more prosperous when girls and women have an equal opportunity to succeed in school and at work and in government. That's true everywhere, and it's true here in Vietnam.

We'll keep working to unleash the full potential of your economy with the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Here in Vietnam, TPP will let you sell more of your products to the world and it will attract new investment. TPP will require reforms to protect workers and rule of law and intellectual property. And the United States is ready to assist Vietnam as it works to fully implement its commitments. I want you to know that, as President of the United States, I strongly support TPP because you'll also be able to buy more of our goods, "Made in America."

Moreover, I support TPP because of its important strategic benefits. Vietnam will be less dependent on any one trading partner and enjoy broader ties with more partners, including the United States. And TPP will reinforce regional cooperation. It will help address economic inequality and will advance human rights, with higher wages and safer working conditions. For the first time here in Vietnam, the right to form independent labor unions and prohibitions against forced labor and child labor. And it has the strongest environmental protections and the strongest anti-corruption standards of any trade agreement in history.

(continued....)



....That's the future TPP offers for all of us, because all of us -- the United States, Vietnam, and the other signatories -- will have to abide by these rules that we have shaped together. That's the future that is available to all of us. So we now have to get it done -- for the sake of our economic prosperity and our national security.

This brings me to the second area where we can work together, and that is ensuring our mutual security. With this visit, we have agreed to elevate our security cooperation and build more trust between our men and women in uniform. We'll continue to offer training and equipment to your Coast Guard to enhance Vietnam's maritime capabilities. We will partner to deliver humanitarian aid in times of disaster. With the announcement I made yesterday to fully lift the ban on defense sales, Vietnam will have greater access to the military equipment you need to ensure your security. And the United States is demonstrating our commitment to fully normalize our relationship with Vietnam.

More broadly, the 20th century has taught all of us - - including the United States and Vietnam -- that the international order upon which our mutual security depends is rooted in certain rules and norms. Nations are sovereign, and no matter how large or small a nation may be, its sovereignty should be respected, and its territory should not be violated. Big nations should not bully smaller ones. Disputes should be resolved peacefully. And regional institutions, like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, should continue to be strengthened. That's what I believe. That's what the United States believes. That's the kind of partnership America offers this region. I look forward to advancing this spirit of respect and reconciliation later this year when I become the first U.S. President to visit Laos.

In the South China Sea, the United States is not a claimant in current disputes. But we will stand with partners in upholding core principles, like freedom of navigation and overflight, and lawful commerce that is not impeded, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, through legal means, in accordance with international law. As we go forward, the United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, and we will support the right of all countries to do the same.

Even as we cooperate more closely in the areas I've described, our partnership includes a third element -- addressing areas where our governments disagree, including on human rights. I say this not to single out Vietnam. No nation is perfect. Two centuries on, the United States is still striving to live up to our founding

ideals. We still deal with our shortcomings -- too much money in our politics, and rising economic inequality, racial bias in our criminal justice system, women still not being paid as much as men doing the same job. We still have problems. And we're not immune from criticism, I promise you. I hear it every day. But that scrutiny, that open debate, confronting our imperfections, and allowing everybody to have their say has helped us grow stronger and more prosperous and more just.

I've said this before -- the United States does not seek to impose our form of government on Vietnam. The rights I speak of I believe are not American values; I think they're universal values written into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They're written into the Vietnamese constitution, which states that "citizens have the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and have the right of access to information, the right to assembly, the right to association, and the right to demonstrate." That's in the Vietnamese constitution. So really, this is an issue about all of us, each country, trying to consistently apply these principles, making sure that we -- those of us in government -- are being true to these ideals.

In recent years, Vietnam has made some progress. Vietnam has committed to bringing its laws in line with its new constitution and with international norms. Under recently passed laws, the government will disclose more of its budget and the public will have the right to access more information. And, as I said, Vietnam has committed to economic and labor reforms under the TPP. So these are all positive steps. And ultimately, the future of Vietnam will be decided by the people of Vietnam. Every country will chart its own path, and our two nations have different traditions and different political systems and different cultures. But as a friend of Vietnam, allow me to share my view -- why I believe nations are more successful when universal rights are upheld.

When there is freedom of expression and freedom of speech, and when people can share ideas and access the Internet and social media without restriction, that fuels the innovation economies need to thrive. That's where new ideas happen. That's how a Facebook starts. That's how some of our greatest companies began -- because somebody had a new idea....

(continued....)



....It was different. And they were able to share it. When there's freedom of the press -- when journalists and bloggers are able to shine a light on injustice or abuse -- that holds officials accountable and builds public confidence that the system works. When candidates can run for office and campaign freely, and voters can choose their own leaders in free and fair elections, it makes the countries more stable, because citizens know that their voices count and that peaceful change is possible. And it brings new people into the system.

When there is freedom of religion, it not only allows people to fully express the love and compassion that are at the heart of all great religions, but it allows faith groups to serve their communities through schools and hospitals, and care for the poor and the vulnerable. And when there is freedom of assembly -- when citizens are free to organize in civil society -- then countries can better address challenges that government sometimes cannot solve by itself. So it is my view that upholding these rights is not a threat to stability, but actually reinforces stability and is the foundation of progress.

After all, it was a yearning for these rights that inspired people around the world, including Vietnam, to throw off colonialism. And I believe that upholding these rights is the fullest expression of the independence that so many cherish, including here, in a nation that proclaims itself to be "of the People, by the People and for the People."

Vietnam will do it differently than the United States does. And each of us will do it differently from many other countries around the world. But there are these basic principles that I think we all have to try to work on and improve. And I said this as somebody who's about to leave office, so I have the benefit of almost eight years now of reflecting on how our system has worked and interacting with countries around the world who are constantly trying to improve their systems, as well.

Finally, our partnership I think can meet global challenges that no nation can solve by itself. If we're going to ensure the health of our people and the beauty of our planet, then development has to be sustainable. Natural wonders like Ha Long Bay and Son Doong Cave have to be preserved for our children and our grandchildren. Rising seas threaten the coasts and waterways on which so many Vietnamese depend. And so as partners in the fight against climate change, we need to fulfill the commitments we made in Paris, we need to help farmers and villages and people who depend on fishing to adapt and to bring more clean energy to places like the Mekong Delta -- a

rice bowl of the world that we need to feed future generations.

And we can save lives beyond our borders. By helping other countries strengthen, for example, their health systems, we can prevent outbreaks of disease from becoming epidemics that threaten all of us. And as Vietnam deepens its commitment to U.N. peace-keeping, the United States is proud to help train your peacekeepers. And what a truly remarkable thing that is -- our two nations that once fought each other now standing together and helping others achieve peace, as well. So in addition to our bilateral relationship, our partnership also allows us to help shape the international environment in ways that are positive. Now, fully realizing the vision that I've described today is not going to happen overnight, and it is not inevitable. There may be stumbles and setbacks along the way. There are going to be times where there are misunderstandings. It will take sustained effort and true dialogue where both sides continue to change. But considering all the history and hurdles that we've already overcome, I stand before you today very optimistic about our future together. And my confidence is rooted, as always, in the friendship and shared aspirations of our peoples.

I think of all the Americans and Vietnamese who have crossed a wide ocean -- some reuniting with families for the first time in decades -- and who, like Trinh Cong Son said in his song, have joined hands, and opening their hearts and seeing our common humanity in each other.

I think of all the Vietnamese Americans who have succeeded in every walk of life -- doctors, journalists, judges, public servants. One of them, who was born here, wrote me a letter and said, by "God's grace, I have been able to live the American Dream...I'm very proud to be an American but also very proud to be Vietnamese." And today he's here, back in the country of his birth, because, he said, his "personal passion" is "improving the life of every Vietnamese person."

I think of a new generation of Vietnamese -- so many of you, so many of the young people who are here -- who are ready to make your mark on the world. And I want to say to all the young people listening: Your talent, your drive, your dreams -- in those things, Vietnam has everything it needs to thrive....

(continued....)



....Your destiny is in your hands. This is your moment. And as you pursue the future that you want, I want you to know that the United States of America will be right there with you as your partner and as your friend.

And many years from now, when even more Vietnamese and Americans are studying with each other; innovating and doing business with each other; standing up for our security, and promoting human rights and protecting our planet with each other -- I hope you think back to this moment and draw hope from the vision that I've offered today. Or, if I can say it another way -- in words that you know well from the Tale of Kieu -- "Please take from me this token of trust, so we can embark upon our 100-year journey together."

Cam on cac ban. Thank you very much. Thank you, Vietnam. Thank you.



Crowds in Ho Chi Minh City bid farewell to President Obama. (web photo and caption)



C-17 Drops Equipment for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team



A C-17 aircraft drops equipment for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team during an airborne insertion exercise at Miroslawiec Air Base, Poland, June 8, 2018, as part of Swift Response 18, a joint Army-Air Force exercise.



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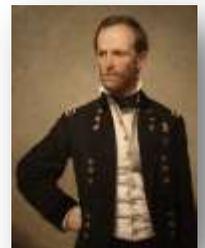
Visit the VA On-Line for a Wealth of Information

www.va.gov



Spoken of Commander in Chief Abraham Lincoln

"Of all the men I ever met, he seemed to possess more of the elements of greatness, combined with goodness, than any other".

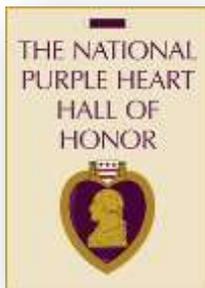


-- From *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*



The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

Visit the website below for the Enrollment Form for inclusion in *The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor* located in New Windsor, NY. The Hall is next to General Washington's last encampment during the Revolutionary War where he presented the award as a badge of honor.



As there are no records of who received the Purple Heart, the Hall relies on documentation presented by the recipient or a family member or friend.

If you know of anyone who forgot to duck, give them a copy so they may be included.

Keep well, *Airborne All The Way!*

Bob Beemer, B/2/503

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor offers visitors an incredible journey through military history as well as reminders of human sacrifice and the cost of freedom. We invite you to visit our 7500 square foot facility in New York's Hudson River Valley.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

374 Temple Hill Road (Route 300)

New Windsor, NY 12553

Phn: 845-561-1765

www.thepurpleheart.com

Details of one of the Purple Heart honorees on display at the Hall:

Michael G. Sturges

Hometown City: Spokane

Hometown State: Washington

Service Branch: Army

Conflict: Vietnam 1957-1975



Mike Sturges, A/2/503, is awarded the Purple Heart by 2/503 Battalion Commander LTC Bob Sigholtz at Camp Zinn, RVN.
(photo added)

VA updates disability rating schedule related to hematologic and lymphatic systems

December 10, 2018

WASHINGTON — Effective December 9, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated portions of the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD or Rating Schedule) that evaluates the hematologic and lymphatic systems.

These federal regulations used by the Veterans Benefits Administration help claims processors evaluate the severity of disabilities and assign disability ratings. "Our goal is to provide Veterans with the best possible customer service," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "When providing benefits, that means ensuring our benefits delivery is in line with current medical analysis."

One diagnostic code was removed, nine were added, and several were restructured. The complete list of updates to the rating schedule are now available online. Claims pending prior to December 9, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to the Veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after December 9 will be rated under the new rating schedule.

By updating the rating schedule for conditions related to the hematologic and lymphatic systems, VA claims processors can make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure Veterans understand these decisions.

VA remains committed to improving its service to Veterans continuously and staying at the forefront of modern medicine as it has for decades.

VA has issued several VASRD updates since September 2017, including updates for dental and oral conditions, conditions related to the endocrine system, gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast diseases of the eye and skin conditions.

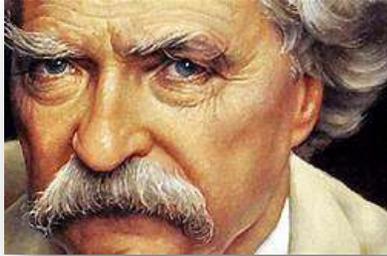
Source:

www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/



Brief excerpt.....or what we here view as *War Musings by Mark Twain* in "Letters From The Earth" or, *Our Country Right or Wrong*

In a speech which he made more than five hundred years ago, and which has come down to us intact, he said:



We, free citizens of the Great Republic, feel an honest pride in her greatness, her strength, her just and gentle government, her wide liberties, her honored name, her stainless history, her unsmirched flag, her hands clean from oppression of the weak and from malicious conquest, her hospitable door that stands open to the hunted and the persecuted of all nations; we are proud of the judicious respect in which she is held by the monarchies which hem her in on every side, and proudest of all of that lofty patriotism which we inherited from our fathers, which we have kept pure, and which won our liberties in the beginning and has preserved them unto this day. While that patriotism endures the Republic is safe, her greatness is secure, and against them the powers of the earth cannot prevail.

I pray you to pause and consider. Against our traditions we are now entering upon an unjust and trivial war, a war against a helpless people, and for a base object – robbery. At first our citizens spoke out against this thing, by an impulse natural to their training. Today they have turned, and their voice is the other way. What caused the change? Merely a politician's trick – a high-sounding phrase, a blood-stirring phrase which turned their uncritical heads: *Our Country, right or wrong!* An empty phrase, a silly phrase. It was shouted by every newspaper, it was thundered from the pulpit, the Superintendent of Public Instruction placarded it in every schoolhouse in the land, the War Department inscribed it upon the flag. And every man who failed to shout it or who was silent, was proclaimed a traitor – none but those others were patriots. To be a patriot, one had to say, and keep on saying, "Our Country, right or wrong," and urge on the little war. Have you not perceived that that phrase is an insult to the nation?

For a republic, who is "the Country"? Is it the Government which is for the moment in the saddle? Why, the Government is merely a *servant* – merely a temporary servant; it cannot be its prerogative to

determine what is right and what is wrong, and decide who is a patriot and who isn't. Its function is to obey orders, not originate them. Who, then, is "the Country"? Is it the newspaper? Is it the pulpit? Is it the school superintendent? Why, these are mere parts of the country, not the whole of it; they have not command, they have only their little share in the command. They are but one in the thousand; it is in the thousand that command is lodged; *they* must determine what is right and what is wrong; they must decide who is a patriot and who isn't.

Who are the thousand – that is to say, who are "the Country"? In a monarchy, the king and his family are the country; in a republic it is the common voice of the people. Each of you, for himself, by himself and on his own responsibility, must speak. And it is a solemn and weighty responsibility, and not lightly to be flung aside at the bullying of pulpit, press, government, or the empty catch-phrases of politicians. Each must for himself alone decide what is right and what is wrong, and which course is patriotic and which isn't. You cannot shirk this and be a man. To decide it against your convictions is to be an unqualified and inexcusable traitor, both to yourself and to your country, let men label you as they may. If you alone of all the nation shall decide one way, that that way be the right way according to your convictions of the right, you have done your duty by yourself and by your country – hold up your head! You have nothing to be ashamed of.

Only when a republic's *life* is in danger should a man uphold his government when it is in the wrong. There is no other time.

This Republic's life is not in peril. The nation has sold its honor for a phrase. It has swung itself loose from its safe anchorage and is drifting, its helm is in pirate hands. The stupid phrase needed help, and it got another one: "*Even if the war be wrong we are in it and must fight it out: we cannot retire from it without dishonor.*" Why, not even a burglar could have said it better. We cannot withdraw from this sordid raid because to grant peace to those little people upon their terms – independence – would dishonor us. You have flung away Adam's phrase – you should take it up and examine it again. He said, "*An inglorious peace is better than a dishonorable war.*"

You have planted a seed, and it will grow.

From Mark Twain essays between 1904-1909
Letters From The Earth, Uncensored Writings
Posthumously Published 1938, Pages 107-109
(web photo added)



Belated Congratulations to 4/503 Brother Stan DeRuggiero, Jr.



U.S. Rep. Chris Gibson presents the Silver Star medal to Vietnam veteran Stan DeRuggiero, Jr. of Austerlitz, right, on Thursday, April 14, 2016, in Washington, D.C.

(Provided by Rep. Gibson)

"As a fellow combat veteran, I am especially proud to have the opportunity to present the Silver Star to Stanley DeRuggiero, who put his life on the line to safeguard his troopers in the most dangerous conditions imaginable," Gibson said. "We are forever in his debt, and I am delighted that Stan and members of his family were able to be with us in Washington today to celebrate this momentous occasion. I also want to thank his fellow veterans from the 173rd Airborne for joining us and for their efforts to see that Stan's valor and selfless service to our country are properly recognized."

Stan's 90-year-old father, Stanley DeRuggiero, Sr., served in the Marine Corps during World War II.

~ Silver Star Citation ~

"For Gallantry in Action: On 17 June 1968, while serving as Fire Team Leader, 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, C Company, 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Specialist Four Stan DeRuggiero, Jr. is awarded the Silver Star for personal heroism during intense close combat near Bao Loc, Vietnam. Directed to withdraw after C Company violently assaulted a Viet Cong Main Force Battalion Basecamp, the wounded Fire Team Leader elected to collect, administer first aid, personally guard and evacuate three badly wounded paratroopers from no man's land between the lines of combat. With total disregard for his own life for more than five hours, Specialist Four DeRuggiero positioned himself in front of three wounded, fought off several Viet Cong flanking attacks

with hand grenades and well-aimed M-16 fire, provided care and assurance to the wounded and then shielded another Soldier who came out to help drag them to safety one by one. Specialist Four DeRuggiero maintained this guard position alone. Only when the third wounded paratrooper was safely inside the Platoon perimeter did Specialist Four DeRuggiero withdraw to safety. Specialist Four DeRuggiero's personal bravery and exceptional Gallantry in Action under intense enemy fire reflect great credit upon himself, his Airborne Unit and the United States Army."

[Sent in by Stan's buddy, Ken Lepore]

All the Way, Stan!



DOD Identifies Three Operation Freedom's Sentinel Casualties

Nov. 28, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the deaths of two soldiers and one airman who were supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

The service members died Nov. 27, 2018, from injuries sustained when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device in Andar, Ghazni Province, Afghanistan.

The soldiers were assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The airman was assigned to the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

The deceased are:



"COMMANDING OFFICER'S, HISTORICAL REPORT"

George M. Jones
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Origin: Headquarters,
503d REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM
Office of the Commanding Officer

TRANSCRIBE DOCUMENT REFERRAL –

Item: Historical Report, Corregidor Island Operation
(Operation No. 48)
To: CG, 6th Army
Precis: Historical Report, Corregidor
Author: GEORGE M. JONES
Colonel, Infantry Commanding

Document courtesy of Don Abbott & Jim Mullaney.



Colonel George M. Jones, Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
503D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM
Office of the Commanding Officer
APO 73

6 March 1945

SUBJECT: Historical Report,
Corregidor Island Operation.
(Operation No. 48).

TO: Commanding General, Sixth Army, APO 442.

1. The assault on enemy held Corregidor Island (Operation No. 48) was a combined parachute drop and amphibious landing by our ground troops supported by air and naval action.
2. The mission of the assault troops (Rock Force) was to seize and secure Corregidor Island and to destroy all enemy forces thereon as part of the greater mission of securing the Manila Bay area.
3. The forces involved in the operation included:
 - a. Ground Troops (Rock Force):
 - (1) 503d Regimental Combat Team:
 - (a) 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment.
 - (b) 462d Parachute Field Artillery Battalion.
 - (c) Co C, 161st Airborne Engineer Parachute Bn.
 - (2) Third Battalion, 34th Inf Regiment, reinforced by:
 - (a) 3d Platoon, AT Co, 34th Inf.
 - (b) 3d Platoon, Cannon Co, 34th Inf.
 - (3) Second Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment (Relieved 3d Battalion, 34th Infantry).
 - (4) Eighteenth Portable Surgical Hospital (reinf).
 - (5) 174th Ord Svc Detachment (Bomb Disposal-Squad).
 - (6) Detachment 592d EB and SR.
 - (7) Detachment 9801 Signal Battalion.
 - (8) Detachment 1st Platoon, 603d Tank Co.
 - (9) Detachment 592d JASCO
 - (10) Detachment 6th SAP.
 - b. Naval Forces: Detachments, Task Force 78.3.
 - c. Air Forces: Elem, 5th Air Force incl 317th Trp Car Wing
4. The 503d Regimental Combat Team was alerted on 3 February 1945 for the probable mission of seizing Nichols Field, Luzon, P.I. Preparations began immediately, which included checking and replacing combat equipment and detailed planning for the movement and mission. The mission was cancelled on 5 February; however, the next day the RCT was again alerted for the mission of seizing and securing Corregidor Island, PI, beginning 16 February.

(continued....)



Preparations continued with the substitution of details applicable to the new mission. During this preparatory phase, many officers made reconnaissance flights incidental to bombing raids on the target area. On 12 February, the RCT plans were completed and Field Order No. 9 was issued to the lower units. These plans were put into operation immediately, and the preparatory phase was closed when the 3d Battalion, 503d Inf., Btry "C", 462d FA Bn, Co "C" 161st A/B Engineers and elements of Regimental Headquarters Company enplaned at Elmore and Hill Airstrips, San Jose, Mindoro, P. I. at 0700 hour, 16 February.

The second lift left San Jose at 1100 hour 16 February. This lift was composed of the 2d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, Battery "B", 462d FA Bn, Service Co and elements of Regt'l Hq Co. The third lift left San Jose at 0700 hour 17 February. This was composed of the 1st Bn, 503d Parachute Infantry, Btry "A", 462d FA Bn and the remainder of Regt'l Hq Co. The fourth lift (Resupply) left San Jose at 1200 hour, 17 February.

Only one plane of the first two lifts failed to reach the target area. This plane contained the Demolition Section of the Third Battalion Combat Team, developed engine trouble and the plane load was forced to jump in the vicinity of Castillejos, Luzon. No casualties were sustained and the section was returned to Mindoro and arrived on Corregidor Island with the 1st Battalion the next day.

The first flight began dropping on Corregidor at 0833 hour.



Drop on The Rock

At 1000 hour, the jump fields were secured for the subsequent flights. Initial opposition on top of the Rock was light; however, a high wind swept many jumpers outside the intended jump area, some becoming casualties by the action of the enemy entrenched along the coast.



503d paratroopers can be seen here being blow away from the designated drop zone and over the cliffs along the coastline of Corregidor.

Forward elements were able to secure high ground overlooking the beach and support by fire the landing of the 3d Battalion, 34th infantry as it arrived on schedule. Naval support fire was called on to help silence the intense, automatic weapons fire which the 34th Infantry Battalion was subjected to. Land mines at the waters edge and on the beach destroyed several of our vehicles including tanks, jeeps, and a DUKW (Amphibious 2 1/2 Ton 6x6 Truck) containing essential radio equipment for communications with Corps Hqs. The second flight began dropping at 1240 hour. Again the high wind, the cratered condition and smallness of the jump fields caused considerable number of casualties. Nevertheless, the 2d Bn Combat team was able to immediately relieve the 3d Bn of its position of the perimeter. This drop successfully completed the second phase of the battle for Corregidor, the landing of the assault troops.

The plan for the destruction of the enemy of Corregidor was to contain that portion located on the eastern end of the Island with a block by the 3d Bn, 34th Inf at Malinta Hill while the 503d RCT destroyed his forces on the western end. This done, our troops would move to the eastern end and destroy the enemy there. This plan went into effect without delay.

Heavy fighting and constant vigilance were necessitated by the 3d Bn 34th Inf to accomplish this mission, especially in the Malinta area.

(continued....)



All enemy attempts to break through this blockade were repulsed. Meanwhile, on the western end of the Island, the 503d RCT took possession of the commanding ground against comparatively light opposition as the enemy had prepared most of its positions in anticipation of a waterborne attack and the pre-invasion bombing had destroyed much of his higher placed defenses. From the commanding ground thus taken, our forces began the systematic destruction of a far numerically superior enemy, well entrenched in innumerable inter-communicating caves, tunnels, and prepared positions in the cliffs along the coastline.

It was evident at once that the enemy plan of action was to allow our forces to attack while he fought from these formidable positions.

Meanwhile, the 1st Bn, 503d RCT landed by water on February 17, its scheduled drop having been cancelled because of the same extreme hazards that had been confronted (by) the previous drops. This landing, too, was the target of heavy automatic and sniper fire which pinned the Bn to the beach area for a while. Again naval fire assisted materially in the silencing of it.

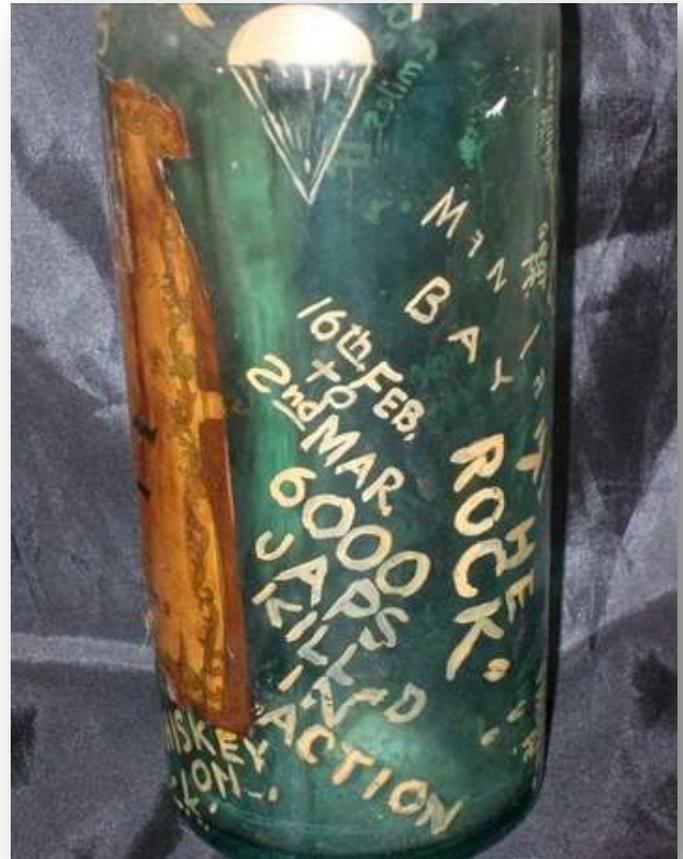
The Bn then proceeded quickly to take its assigned place in the perimeter on "Topside" and began assaulting enemy positions within its sector. During the period from 16 February through 22 February our systematic destruction of the enemy fell into a familiar and extremely effective pattern; direct fire of artillery used as assault weapons on enemy emplacements, naval and/or air bombardment followed by immediate ground attack.



503d's LTC Harold G. Moore, Jr. inspects enemy dead.

The entire western end of the island was divided into three Bn sectors of responsibility. In proportion

enemy casualties far exceeded ours. As it became apparent to the enemy that our tactics were fast destroying him, he became desperate and changed his own. At 0130 19 February he exploded one of his own arsenals, that were located under a building being used as a Company CP. Our casualties were heavy; however a prisoner later disclosed that the explosion had destroyed forty (40) of their own troops who had known that they had no chance of escape. Later the same day at 0530 hr, an organised attack in force was made against our perimeter. The battle that followed lasted until 0800 hr at which time the enemy withdrew.



A whiskey bottle from The Rock

A few of the enemy penetrated as far as two Bn CP's before being killed. We sustained numerous casualties although few in comparison to those inflicted. No other organised attack was made during the period on the western end of the Island. A few of the familiar "banzai" attacks were made, but in relatively small numbers. The enemy resorted to suicidal attacks of self-destruction always attempting to take as many of our troops as possible to death with them.

(continued....)



Arsenals and fuel dumps were fired upon our approach, and hand grenades are exploded in the close proximity of the throwers. The entire Island was rocked from an explosion emanating from the Malinta tunnel at 2130 hr 21 Feb. From prisoner statements and captured documents, the tunnel was known to contain high quantities of ammo and demolitions and, at one time, a minimum of two thousand personnel. It was later learned from prisoners that the blowing of this arsenal had for its purpose the destruction of troops blocking the western end of the Island (vicinity of Malinta Hill). An immediate attack was to be launched in force with the objective "Topside". The explosion did succeed in burying a few of our troops in a resulting landslide, but the same landslide completely blocked the only road around the south side of Malinta Hill.



Malinta Hill

The attack that started around the north side of the hill ran head long into the mortar concentration and heavy machine gun and tank fire of the firmly placed 3d Battalion of the 34th Infantry. The enemy withdrew after suffering extremely heavy casualties. As our assaults continued, the enemy suffered even more heavily. All the varied resources at our command were thrown at him in a very effective manner. Lucrative bombing targets were bombed by both demolition and Napalm bombs with devastating effect. Naval gun fire pinpointed his tunnels and caves and our artillery and mortar concentrations at night gave him no chance to organize. Most effective, however, was the action of our ground troops.

As the enemy was searched out in his caves, our flame throwers played havoc and our rockets, grenades, and demolition either blasted him out of existence or buried him alive. The number actually buried in this manner can never be counted, but it is known to be considerable. With no reinforcements whatever, the enemy's number dwindled rapidly in the western sector. Except for mopping up the relatively few enemy

still remaining in the caves in the western end, our troops were ready for the fourth phase - destruction of the enemy on the eastern end of Corregidor.

As the end of the campaign on the western sector became apparent, heavy air and naval bombardment began softening the eastern sector of the Island, preparatory for the ground assault. At 0830 hour, 24 February, this assault began, following the now very familiar pattern of close support from the air and naval bombardment, supplemented this time by rolling barrages, immediately preceding the ground troops, from the massed batteries of the artillery. The attack progressed swiftly as the enemy either retreated or was destroyed when he attempted delaying action. As he began to become pressed into the far eastern end of the Island, the enemy again resorted to his suicidal tactics.

At 0300 hour, 25 February he began an attack in force that ended disastrously for him. Three hundred (300) of an estimated six hundred (600) were killed when massed artillery fire on his expected concentration areas landed in the midst of the assembled attackers. Our small arms fire accounted for another one hundred and thirty-five (135). Here the enemy began to show even greater desperation, as many attempted to evacuate the island by swimming. Some of these were taken prisoner by the patrolling PT boats and the LCPs, some were destroyed by strafing planes and many were intercepted by allied troops operating on Bataan.

On 25 February, an important part of the Rock Force, the 3d Bn, 34th Infantry was relieved by the 2d Bn, 151st Infantry. The 34th Infantry Battalion's excellent participation in the campaign accounted for eight hundred and fifteen (815) enemy dead. The 151st Infantry Battalion was to prove equally effective. At 1110 hour, 26 February, the enemy committed his last great act of desperation.

As our troops approached the underground radio installations in the vicinity of Monkey Point, the enemy exploded another huge arsenal contained in the underground room and communicating tunnels of the radio installations. A ravine was created where a hill had been and as a result we suffered almost as many casualties as the enemy.

(continued....)



We had one hundred and ninety six (196) dead and wounded. This act eliminated the last concentration of enemy in force and led to the final phase of the campaign, mopping up the entire island.



General MacArthur and troops during raising of the American Flag on Corregidor.

A great number of enemy remained on the island as the final phase began on 27 February, but were in comparatively small groups hiding in the innumerable caves that ring the entire coast. Two Bn's were stationed in each sector of the island as our patrols began the task of searching out these caves. Where possible, aerial bombardment, naval and artillery gun fire and mortar concentrations, closely followed by ground assault destroyed the enemy and minimized our losses. When this was not practical, our patrols eliminated the enemy with hand grenades, small arms fire and flame throwers. Many were buried alive when our demolitionists sealed the caves, as enemy screams rang in their ears, and the Japs committed hari kari with hand grenades. Thus the enemy was destroyed and Corregidor was again ours.

On 2 March 1945 the operation was officially closed when the Rock Force Commander, Colonel George M. Jones, presented Fortress Corregidor to the Commander-in-Chief, General Douglas MacArthur. The Stars and Stripes were then raised to fly over the Rock.

5. Lessons learned and noteworthy data.

a. General Observations:

- (1) Surprise remains one of the chief weapons of warfare. Had the enemy forces considered a parachute landing feasible on the "Topside" and defended likely drop areas, the task of securing a foothold on the commanding ground would have been hardly possible by vertical envelopment.
- (2) All troops must be indoctrinated with the idea of pushing on while in the assault in order to provide safe movement of aid men to the wounded. This is much more to be desired than stopping and rendering personal assistance.
- (3) Troops should be trained in the use of all weapons whenever time permits.
- (4) Small unit Commanders should use any field expediency that can be improvised immediately when the exact type of weapon needed is unavailable for the reduction of an obstacle or the accomplishment of a mission.
- (5) W.P. grenades are unstable when left out of the carton and exposed to the sun's rays. An ammo dump was fired and destroyed and equipment was lost when this precaution was overlooked.

b. Observations applicable to Parachute Operations:

- (1) Parachutists can be dropped to advantage on seemingly impossible terrain if dropped in sufficiently small "sticks" to enable each jumper to effect a spot landing. The transport pilots must be thoroughly briefed and indoctrinated with their supreme importance of precision flying over the drop zone.

(continued....)



Both drop zones used in this mission were approximately 100 yds by 150 yds, cratered, covered with debris and snags, and surrounded by steep cliffs and wrecked buildings. In all cases the parachute commander must expect to take losses due to jump injuries in proportion to suitability of terrain as drop zone.

(2) A command plane that can control the flight of the dropping planes is considered vital to the success of a drop.

(3) "Control pattern" rigging is the most satisfactory method that can be employed in dropping 75mm howitzers by parachutes. The "daisy chain" made up of three door-bundles should be shortened to a minimum at minimum altitude of 600 feet.

(4) Artillery ammo dropped by parachute should have a rugged container similar to the wooden clover leaf crate to prevent damage to the ammunition when dropped on terrain covered with obstacles. The M8 and M9 are too cumbersome for the ammo carried by each.

(5) A definite plan should be made for the quick evacuation of personnel injured on the jump from the (illegible).



Air war over Corregidor

c. Tactical Observations:

(1) A change in the normal plan of operation, i.e., dawn attack, pre-dawn attack, night attack, etc. will often catch the enemy off guard. Generally our troops attack too late after dawn to get the maximum use of daylight. The enemy seems to not expect an attack until several hours after sunrise.

(2) Tanks and advancing infantry must supplement each other by fire in the assault.

(3) Advancing units must maintain lateral contact.

(4) Except where the complete destruction of caves and enemy emplacements are necessary for the security of the assault troops, engineer or specialized demolition troops should destroy them and thus preclude any delay in the assault.

(5) Fire discipline both during the day and especially at night cannot be overstressed.

(6) Assault unit Commanders should if possible personally check the organized ground of his unit and the emplacement of his automatic weapons when establishing a defensive perimeter for the night.

(7) Assault unit Commanders should request the establishment of a "barrage line" in close defense by FA sufficiently early to permit registration prior to darkness.

d. Observation applicable to Infantry Operations:

(1) The Japanese interpreter attached to ROT Headquarters enabled advance elements to be using very valuable information on enemy dispositions and weapons within two hours after the capture of prisoners. A Japanese interpreter should be attached and jump with Regt'l Hq group on every mission.

(2) Too great reliance should not be placed on G-2 estimates of enemy strength and disposition prior to actually verifying them in the objective area.

e. Observation applicable to Parachute Infantry Organizations:

(1) The advantage of having three, four-gun, light machine gun platoons in each Bn Hq Co instead of one eight-gun platoon was again confirmed. This provisional organization has been employed by this Regiment for fifteen months.

(2) An organization of three rifle platoons of three rifle squads each and a fourth platoon of three sixty mm mortars in each rifle company continued to prove a superior organization IP the present T.O. organization of three rifle platoons of two rifle squads and one sixty mm mortar squad each. This provisional organization has been employed in this Regiment for fifteen months.

f. Observation applicable to Field Artillery Operations:

(1) A five man artillery liaison party is believed to be more desirable than a three man party.

(2) Charges 2 & 3, regardless of type of shell being fired, when used as a direct assault weapon are believed to be the most practical to insure against excessive wear on 75mm howitzers.

(3) Where terrain is very hard, brush and logs should be used to cushion the gun trail while firing 75mm howitzers. This reduces the danger of bending the rear trail.

(4) Howitzers should be bore sighted as often as practicable prior to firing when in very close support of infantry and being used as assault weapons.

(continued....)



(5) It is believed that massed surprise artillery fire at night on likely areas of enemy troop concentrations is often more demoralizing and effective than harassing fire.

(6) 75 pack howitzers can be very effectively used as assault weapons in the reductions of enemy strong points. By employing two howitzers firing from different positions on one emplacement, the destructive effectiveness of the howitzers is increased.

g. Observations applicable to Supporting Arms:

(1) The most outstanding feature of the operations was the effective coordination of the supporting arms, naval gunfire, aerial bombardment and strafing, and field artillery. Naval, air, and artillery forward observers all working together with assault elements were able to

recommend the type of supporting fire most suitable for the reduction of any specific emplacement. Forward observers from all supporting arms should be with the assault elements.

(2) Dive bombing with five hundred pound bombs can be very accurate and effective.

Assaulting ground troops taking advantage of the shock effect produced by bombardment can easily destroy enemy in emplacements not materially damaged by aerial bombardment itself.

(3) Supporting specialized weapons, such as rocket launchers, flame throwers, and demolitions should be far enough forward to be available to an assault unit commander on very short notice.

h. Observation applicable to weapons:

(1) The operating spring on the M1 rifle is invariably weakened by continued firing of rifle grenades. This weakened condition of the spring causes the weapon to fail to feed.

(2) W.P. grenades, W.P. mortar, and W.P. artillery shells are invaluable in effective reduction of enemy strong points.

i. Observations applicable to Communications:

Operating conditions were ideal for maximum performance of radio equipment. SCR E36, SCR 300, SCR 694, and SCR 610 all gave excellent performance.

j. Observation Applicable to Supply

(1) Where practicable no one type of transportation should be relied upon entirely for resupply of parachute troops; overland, overwater, and aerial resupply should all be employed.

(2) An initial aerial resupply of communication

equipment and batteries should always be included in the plan of operation.

3) In order to insure availability of automatic weapons, a 10 or 15 per cent additional supply of mortars, machine guns, rocket launcher, BARS and 75 mm pack howitzers should be dropped on the initial resupply at earliest practicable time after the jump.

GEORGE M. JONES

Colonel, Infantry, Commanding

[Reprinted courtesy of Paul Whitman, from his 503rd Heritage Battalion website. Web photos added]

Honor One...Honor All



A SILENT HERO

“Emery B. Graham is pictured from left to right as an S2 scout assigned to Rhq. 503rd paratroopers in Noemfoor; at the end of Negros campaign on R and R; In Japan attached as (Sgt-mg) to 187th Paratroopers in Korea (with his wife) and finally at Fort Huachuca for Military intelligence ceremony 1996.

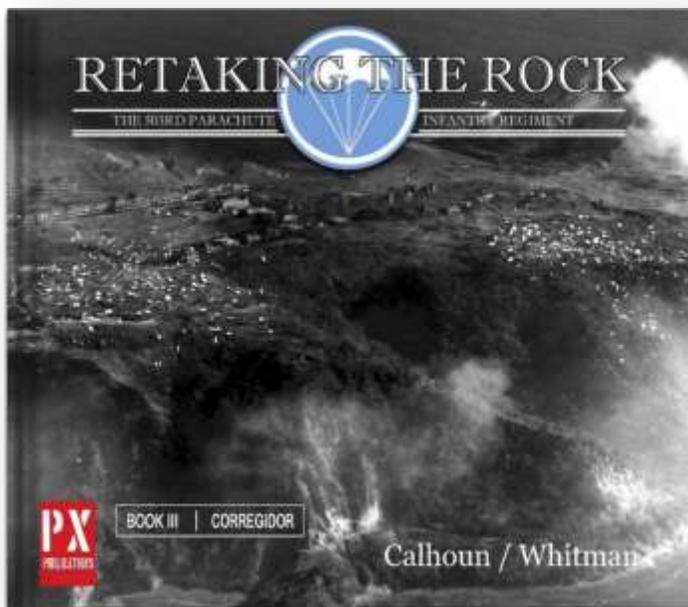
Graham was one of two scouts who walked ahead of TD (commanded by Hartman) clearing road mines, from South beach to topside on Corregidor. He is typical of paratroopers who served as ‘lifers’ and retired unceremoniously after 23 years. He is a real hero.”



NEW RELEASE!

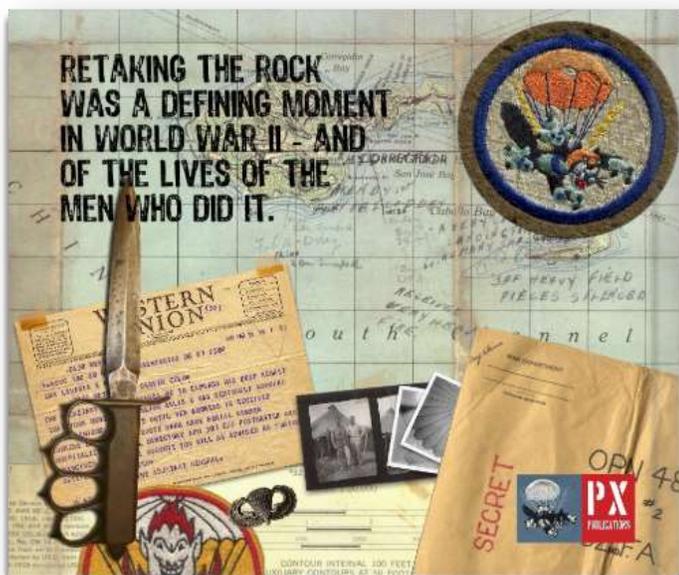
VA Benefits Chief: "Every Single Veteran Will Be Made Whole"

November 29, 2018



BLESS 'EM ALL – RETAKING THE ROCK – The book is presented in full color 'Large Landscape' 13 x 11 inch (33 x 28 cm) format. 440 pages, and with more than 600 images. It weights approx. 4 lbs.

As an education resource, it presents the most comprehensive collection of images of the retaking of Corregidor in 1945 generally available.



For complete details, visit:

http://corregidor.org/exo/VIII_RELEASE.html

From Paul Whitman, webmaster
503rd Heritage Battalion website

Today, during a hearing before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, VA Under Secretary for Benefits Paul Lawrence delivered the following statement:

"Before I get into my opening statement on the subject of this morning's hearing, I want to address a misleading NBC news story from late yesterday that gives the false impression that some Veterans on the GI Bill will not be made whole with respect to their housing payments based on an announcement VA made yesterday.



**Under Secretary
Paul Lawrence**

Nothing could be further from the truth. Each and every Veteran on the post-9/11 GI Bill will be made 100 percent whole -- retroactively if need be -- for their housing benefits for this academic year based on the current uncapped DoD rates, and, beginning in spring 2020, we will be in a position to provide Veterans with the new rates where applicable to meet the law known as the Forever GI Bill.

Once again – each and every, and I mean **every single Veteran**, will be made whole for their housing benefits this year. As we announced yesterday, the rates we are providing are the current academic year uncapped DoD Basic Allowance for Housing rates based on the location of a school's main campus, rather than the physical location of the student.

For many students, this DoD BAH rate will be equal to or higher than their current payment. If a student was overpaid due to the changes in law or because of VBA's challenges in implementing the law, the student will not be held liable for the debt.

And, starting in the Spring term of 2020, VA will have solved its current technology difficulties so that the department is in a position to provide post-9/11 GI Bill Veterans the new rates, where applicable, to comply with the Forever GI Bill."

Source: Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

Dr. Lawrence served in the U.S. Army attaining the rank of Captain. He graduated from the Army's Airborne School and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. He earned a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Economics from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



More Suited to Carry a D-Handle Than a PRC25

By Lew "Smitty" Smith, RTO, HHC/2/503, '65/'66
Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

It was during Basic at Ft. Polk in early '65 when they shuffled a gaggle of us into a room staged with long tables adorned with radio headsets. It was one of a number of aptitude tests we underwent, this one to determine which of us was best suited to carry a PRC25 in combat or a D-handle shovel. Waiting there before each of us was a writing tablet along with a sharpened pencil. We were given instructions to record three Morse Code letters transmitted to us over the headsets in ever-changing order; the letters were possibly S ... A _ and R _ . *Piece of cake!*

As the three letters began to come across the wire, we had little problem recording the corresponding letter to paper; but then, the speed sped up, until the point the three transmitted letters became a monotone none or few of us if any could discern. I saw guys next to me frustrated with the irritating sound (the future shovel carriers) throwing down their pencils on the table....this private, however, continued to record letters to paper from the monotone, filling the entire page with random scribbles of S, A and R.

Sometime later a young corporal no doubt was given the task of grading the results of each G.I. who underwent the test. It later became apparent he must not have studied mine too carefully but instead saw a complete page filled with the three letters, when he must have thought, "*Hey, here's a radio guy!*" After Basic they sent me to radio operator school at Ft. Ord. I thought, so *this* is how one becomes a General?

After being well-trained in radio procedures, Morse Code, which I could actually read at that point (and used once in the jungle of Vietnam due to enemy jamming), and teletype ops (never used), they later captured me from the 101st at Campbell and sent my radio operator ass to Vietnam. *Vietnam? Where's Vietnam??*

Arriving the Repo Depot at Tan Son Nhut Airport, names of a few of us were called out and informed we were being sent to the 173d in Bien Hoa. *Wait a minute! I'm a Screaming Eagle, I'm not going to a goddamn Leg unit!!* We soon learned it was indeed a paratrooper outfit and they called themselves *Sky Soldiers*. Well, o.k., I guess.

What was unknown at the time was each combat battalion required a minimum of two school-trained radio operators to be assigned to their headquarters company, and such an opening had just recently occurred with the 2/503 – luck of the draw.

Even more good fortune was visited upon this FNG when they assigned this former puking buzzard to fill the RTO slot for the battalion XO, at the time Maj. Bob Carmichael (LTC Ret), a man whom years later would become a lifelong dear friend until he left us in 2016.



Good buddy Maj. Bob Carmichael with his new radio guy.

A few of us didn't get along particularly well with one 1Sgt in HHC. Later that year he was fired by Bn CO LTC Bob Sigholtz (COL ret) and sent to 1st Bat with our good wishes. The 1Sgt made the war so unpleasant for us a buddy and I requested transfer to Alpha Company, which, to punish us no doubt, he refused to accept our requests. Today, I'd kiss the sonofabitch!

But back to Bob. He would later become Bn CO when LTC George Dexter (COL Ret), was severely wounded in combat in February '66, making this RTO the carrier of the Bn's No. 1 radio for a spell. Being the bright lad he was, it didn't take Bob long to realize his Morse Code test-cheating radio guy was probably better suited to carrying a D-handle shovel.



L-R back to front: RTO Wayne Hoitt, Maj. Dick Terry, RTO Smith with his D-Handle, and Bob Carmichael, sometime, somewhere in Vietnam. .. _ _ _ .. _ _



ITMFA

It's The Military's
Finest Airborne!



*“If You Don't Write It Down,
It Never Happened.”*

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

Sky Soldiers and 503d troopers from all units are invited to send in their war stories to rt0173@att.net to be shared with your buddies in future issues of our newsletter -- related photos are always welcome. It needn't be about blood and guts, but it can be, or an amusing tale or a story to honor a buddy. Your grandkids and their grandkids will one day be grateful you recorded some of your memories from when you were young and brave and a paratrooper. If needed, we'll fix any spelling and touch up the grammar the best we can, but only if you want us to. Ed

D/2/503 History....

Trooper Picks Off NVA Chow

BONG SON – Shades of William Tell, but with a bowl of rice rather than an apple.

As the story goes, Private First Class **Ronald W. Westbrook** was on patrol in the Tiger Mountains near Bong Son with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry when he shot a bowl of rice from an enemy soldier's hands.

The NVA, in crisp green khakis, wasn't expecting paratroopers to join him for lunch. He and three other enemy were enjoying their meal when Westbrook and members of his squad surprised them.

“Westbrook's first shot blew a bowl of rice right out of the NVA's hands,” reported Private First Class **Joe N. Priester**.

The NVA were guarding the entrance to a well-concealed enemy hospital when Westbrook and the others caught them and sent them scurrying up the hillside. One of the enemy was killed.

The hospital was the second uncovered by the 2nd Battalion troopers during Operation Cochise.

Source: *Fire Base 173*, 15 June 1968

Too Late to Repent You Evil Bastard

Rudolf Höss, 25 November 1901 – 16 April 1947, was a German SS functionary during the Nazi era who was the longest-serving commandant of Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. He tested and carried into effect various methods to accelerate Hitler's plan to systematically exterminate the Jewish population of Nazi-occupied Europe, known as the "Final Solution". On the initiative of one of his subordinates, Karl Fritzsche, Höss introduced pesticide Zyklon B containing hydrogen cyanide to the killing process.

“I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total of about 3,000,000 dead.” Rudolf Höss

Wisdom spoken by evil

In a farewell letter to his children Höss told his oldest son:

“Keep your good heart. Become a person who lets himself be guided primarily by warmth and humanity. Learn to think and judge for yourself, responsibly. Don't accept everything without criticism and as absolutely true... The biggest mistake of my life was that I believed everything faithfully which came from the top, and I didn't dare to have the least bit of doubt about the truth of that which was presented to me. In all your undertakings, don't just let your mind speak, but listen above all to the voice in your heart.”



Höss on the gallows, immediately before his execution.
Death to a monster.



An Amazing Photo



We can't believe it, but that dog looks like a cross between an Irish Setter and a Dachshund. *Amazing!*

Army beats Navy...again

The Army Knights defeated the Navy Midshipmen 17-10 winning the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy in the 119th Army-Navy game. This was the third win in a row for Army, tho Navy holds a 60-52-7 record against the Knights.



(Web image....and a good image at that)

HOW DIFFERENT BRANCHES AVOID IEDS



503rd PIR in WWII



Paratroopers of the US Airborne establish a stronghold on the Japanese-built Kamiri Airfield on Noemfoor Island.

(U.S. Army photo)

As part of the greater battle of Noemfoor in Dutch New Guinea on the 3rd and 4th of July 1944, the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 503rd PIR conducted a combat jump to reinforce American positions and to secure the Kamiri airfield. Due to poor jump conditions that led to excessive casualties, the drop of the 2nd Battalion was scratched and they were landed by sea instead. (web photo and caption)





Casper Aviation Platoon Casper Platoon Story

Casper 721 Is Down

By: **Cliff White, Pilot Casper 721**
Copyright 1998



Casper 721

December 11, 1968 began early with a flight from LZ English to LZ Uplift where we were to fly Command and Control for the Battalion Commander 1/503, 173rd ABN. CW2 Walton Henderson (Sugar Bear) was the aircraft Commander and myself, 1st Lt. Clifford White, with only three months in country was flying PP. Neither one of us were supposed to be flying this mission, however Walt lost a coin toss, and I wanted more stick time than I had been getting.

Walt was one of those AC's that was good to fly with, he would give you all the stick time he could, and try to teach you something in the process. The Crew Chief was SP5 Ned Costa and the Door Gunner was SP4 John Steen, and Casper 67-17721 was a new ship with a little over 200 hours. We were members of Casper flight platoon HHC 173rd Abn. Brigade Sep.

At the briefing we received specific flight routes and altitudes to avoid artillery firing from English, An Khe, LZ Uplift, & LZ Fox. Elements of the 1/503rd were to be inserted by the 61st AHC about 20K Northeast of An Khe Pass at the north end of "Happy Valley". This area was known to be an enemy strong hold. At the briefing no one had said anything about weapons. Since Walt had not flown in the area for the preceding three months, he asked if there was any 51's or heavier anti-air craft in the area. We were advised that there were no heavy weapons in this area, and that was the reason that the Battalion was being lifted into this end of the valley.

We were shot down later that morning, and Walt was trapped for over seven hours before being freed. He spent 2 and 1/2 years in the hospital prior to returning to flight status. I only spent 3 months at Camp Zama in Japan returning to active duty with the 29th Infantry in Hawaii, and to Viet Nam in 1971 with the 61st AHC. The crew chief and the door gunner returned to Casper after a month at the Evac. hospital in Qui Nhon.

For 30 years some pieces of what happened that day have been unclear to both Walt and myself. Because of the seriousness of the injuries neither of us were able to be debriefed or talk with each other. We finally found each other at the 1998 Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) reunion in Ft. Worth. Walt had been to the reunion several times prior, but this was my first. I did not know there were reunions happening and only found out on the Internet.

What follows is from what both of us are able to remember, and from what others that were there have told us.

Our first mission was to lift a 4.2 mortar crew to a mountaintop overlooking the AO. This went without any problems. The only interesting point was that on the first lift while on short final to the top of a mountain that looked like no man had ever been there the grass parted and the LZ was leveled with sandbags and a large 1st Cav. patch painted in the middle. We were surprised and disappointed that we weren't first.

After the mortar crew was in place we returned to LZ Uplift, refueled and picked up the Battalion Commander 1/503, the Artillery FO, and the radio operator and five PRC 25's. At 10 hundred hours we were back in the AO. The Colonel asked us to over fly the LZ so they could get a look. The low cloud cover and flight restrictions, due to the different gun target lines, kept us below 1500 ft., which was causing Walt a great deal of concern. On the first pass the LZ was on the Colonel's side and he wanted a second pass so the FO could see the LZ. On the second pass I was flying and Walt was turned talking to the Colonel trying to convince him our repeated action was not the best plan, and that a third pass the Colonel wanted to make was not going to happen.

(continued....)



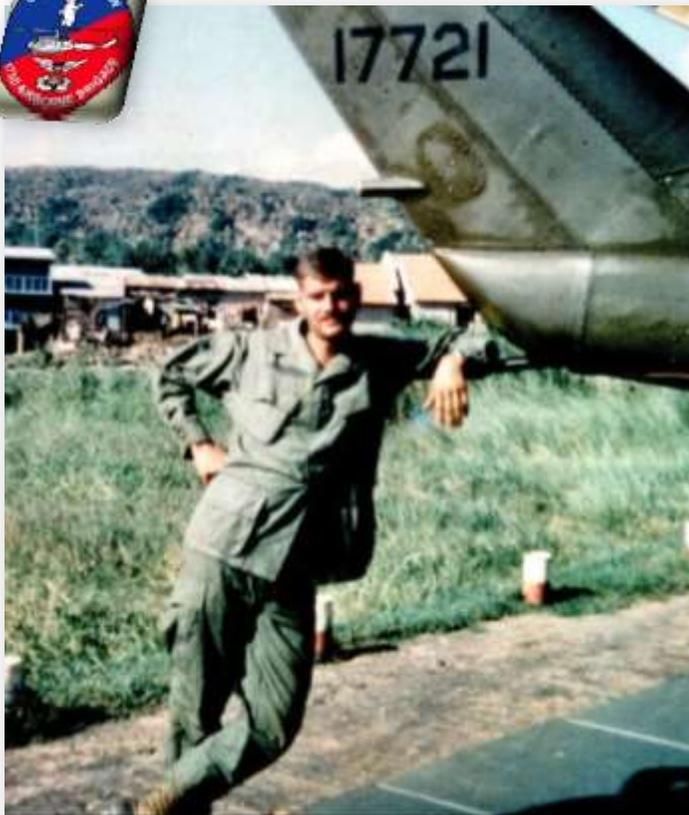


Photo of Casper Crew Chief SP5 Ned Costa standing next to his ship in Nha Trang. This photo was taken just a few days before the crash.

Walt had been varying our flight path as much as he could and varied our altitude as much as possible to make it difficult for any NVA gunners who might be tracking us. As we crossed the LZ the second time the mortar crew advised the FO they were ready to fire. Walt turned to take the aircraft, all discussion was over we had to get clear.

During the time when Walt was talking to the Colonel and I was looking down at the LZ neither one of us was looking forward and never saw the initial shell burst. As Walt turned to take the controls and I looked up from tracking the LZ we both saw the long smoke immediately at our twelve o'clock and slightly higher. From our perspective it looked like a large bird with his wings outstretched riding the updraft, about the size of the turkey vultures we saw in Texas. At the reunion in Ft. Worth Walt said that at that moment he was real upset at me for flying us into the bird's flight path. Walt took the controls and started an evasive maneuver down and to the left.

I remember watching what we still thought was a large bird as we went under it, and feeling like crap for making a FNG mistake, and putting us in jeopardy. Not a second later there was a series of loud bangs, the Huey acted like a truck with no springs going over several speed bumps at high speed.

We began flying out of trim with the nose about ten degrees to the right and the helicopter rolled about fifteen to twenty degrees to the left. At this point a lot happened and it all happened at the same time.

The FO was yelling cease-fire; so I shut off the FM and his added noise. We already knew the obvious but the crew chief yelled in the intercom that we had lost the tail rotor.

Walt said we were going in and he needed the coordinates. I looked at the map but was too excited to quickly find our exact location, in the same moment Walt asked me to get on the controls with him. He then put out the first mayday call that we had a bird strike and Casper 721 was going down. I said something I had remembered from one of my flight instructors, *"that as long as we were still flying try to keep it flying."* More a prayer than anything of substance.

There was a Special Forces base about 10k to our Southwest and Walt said he was going to try to make it there. The Huey was so out of trim that we had to look through the green house (above the pilots are two green colored windows) to see where we were going. A Huey is real hard to fly when she wants to roll over. Walt remembers me reading the instruments to him, repeating the air speed; we had to stay above 70 Knots. Walt was trying to nurse the aircraft through a turn that would head us back down the valley and down to the treetops. All this happened in only seconds, but it seemed like minutes.

As we passed through 1000 ft. Walt remembers a bright flash but no noise, I never saw the flash and only remember a loud explosion. Before the sound of the explosion had gone the Huey began a violent spin. I could not discern the sky from the ground, and don't know how many times we went around. I remember both of us rolling the throttle off so hard it broke the idle stop switch. We came out of the spin nose down.

Walt began a series of mayday calls, and both of us were going through shut down, fuel and battery. Walt says he remembers looking for the best place in the trees to crash, and planning a controlled autorotation, however all I remember is a very rapid descent to the top of the trees. Both of us remember that the mountains were behind us and our autorotation was down slope, and not back into the mountain. Both of us were on the controls, I was following every move Walt made, the Huey was not responding, there was little if any cyclic control.

(continued....)





Photo of Casper 721 laying on its left side after sliding down the mountain. The tail boom was broken in half, the rotor blades and landing skids were ripped off.

The loud noise had been a round taking out our controls; the bright flash Walt saw was a flak round exploding somewhere to his left front ... close enough to be *"the one you don't hear is the one that gets you"*. Walt told me the doctors removed parts of a fuse of a 37-mm anti-aircraft from his leg. There had never been a large bird. Both of us remember full aft cyclic and no flair, tried twice and still no flair. We pulled all the collective there was with no response. The air speed and rate of descent when we hit the trees was 70 knots, and 700 ft. /m. We ran out of air before reaching the valley floor, and the last thing Walt and I remember was hitting the top of a large dead tree head on.

When I came to after the crash I could hear the engine winding down, and reached for the fuel switch only to find some grass and dirt, everything was gone. The nose from in front of the pilot's seats to the green house was gone and there was a strong smell of fuel. We were standing on our nose on a very steep slope, I was down slope and Walt was up slope. I found a small hole and with fuel running down my back was motivated to crawl out. Walt was pinned in the ground with the ship on his back. The door gunner was pinned in his seat by a 6" dia. branch pushing against his "chicken plate", which that morning Walt had to order him wear. The crew chief had freed himself and between the two of us we freed the door gunner.

The door gunner didn't appear to have any other injuries, but later found several wounds and had a very sore chest. The crew chief said he thought he had a broken leg, plus had the carbon steel core of an armored piercing round in his arm, which he took out --

my first indication that we had taken fire. Only later did Ned realize that he had been hit several times and had several other injuries from the crash. I crawled back into the Huey looking for Walt, there was not a lot of room, the green house was caved in to the top of the seats, the transmission had broken loose and had come forward. The toolbox, a case of "C's", & the Col.'s radios were on top of the back of Walt's seat. After clearing this mess I still hadn't found Walt when I heard him say to get the ---- off his back. I could only see part of his face, and was able to clear the dirt, and grass from his mouth, but other than that there was nothing I could do.

I tried to use the little 12" cutting tool with rings on each end, which was worthless against metal. Ned joined me and the both of us could not move the seat. (The front seats are armored plated and weight 400lbs.) The Col. was trapped with his leg under the left side of the Huey, his shoulder was dislocated, and he was covered in fuel. He was in a great deal of pain and would not let anyone approach him. The radio operator was unconscious with serious face and head injuries. I found the Artillery Lt. about 25 ft. from the crash site wrapped in branches with only his eyes visible, however he was conscious. It appeared that he had left the Huey prior to it coming through the trees. My left knee was severely damaged, and my right leg had several cuts and holes. Everyone was alive.

I couldn't do anything more to help the injured and began to look for weapons, the SOI and the operations Map. I think they taught this either at Inf. Basic or flight school, however all I can remember is I felt I had to do something. The crew chief had pulled the pins and kicked his M-60 and ammo over prior to hitting the trees. I remember being really upset at him for getting rid of the M-60. But when I talked to Ned this summer he explained this was what he had been taught at school and in hind sight the mount and the M-60 would of pinned him in the ship and probably killed him.

The door gunner's M-60 and M-16' were broken. I could not get to the Col.'s Car-15, he wasn't letting anyone near him. That left a couple of 45's, and an M-16. The SOI and survival radio was buried under Walt in the pocket of his "chicken plate" and the map was next to the Col. I recovered the map and before burying it I had a good look at it, There were several "hot spots" marked on the map that were heavy gun emplacements. The ones that we were told weren't there.

(continued....)



Later it was confirmed we had crashed in the middle of an NVA Regiment. With a 37mm and three 51 emplacements set up in a triangle they had to be protecting something big. We later found out it was a Division size hospital dug into the mountains. It was still there in '71 when I returned to the same AO.

I tried to find a radio that would work. All the Col.'s PRC 25's were broken except one and with that only the headset was working. The frequency was set to the mortar crew, and as I listened I could only hear one side of the conversation, so I don't know whom they were talking to, but they were telling them that there were no survivors.

We carried a case of smoke and I passed a smoke to each of the crew and asked them to throw a smoke in different directions, and far enough from the helicopter so as not to ignite the fuel. The smokes were thrown at the same time hoping the four deuce crew would know more than one person was alive. We proceeded to set up what security we could, Ned said there were rounds being fired at us so he had us huddle next to a large tree. I don't remember any of that, how much time passed, or much else for a while. Ned told me the smoke stayed in the trees and he heard rocket fire and AK-47's. I was told that one of the Casper ships was the first to find us and had hovered over us and seen us moving around, but I don't remember that. They started drawing fire from the ground below them and from the same positions that had hit us and took too many hits to stay. This year I found out that was CW2 Larry Kahila.

I remember the next thing that happened had surprised me. A Huey was hovering at tree top level trying to find a way down to us. There was an old bomb crater about 50 feet down slope from us and the Huey had to cut its way through the tree limbs. You can't imagine the racket that makes until you are underneath trying not to get hit by flying limbs. With no radio it was important to get someone on the Huey and tell them we needed equipment to free Walt. I told the door gunner to get in the Huey. He said he couldn't, and the Crew chief was in bad shape and didn't think he could make it. The Huey seemed to be hovering forever, all the time cutting branches. They must of thought we were nuts because no one was moving to get in the ship.

The crew chief was waving for us to get in, and with what appeared to be no other choice I went. The Huey could not get down and I had to crawl out on a tree that laid across the crater, the crew chief hooked his seat belts together making a rope so I could climb up and get to the skids. As I got to the skids our crew chief joined me. Ned told me later that the ship had taken small

arms hits the whole time he was hovering waiting for us, plus hits from the 51's on the way in and out.

I always thought the slick was from the 1st Cav. However this year I found out it was a Ghost rider and the gunships were Avengers. This year we located the pilot of that ship. He was CW2 Donald Wittke, with the 189th Ghostriders. On the way to Phu Cat I told him we



needed cutting tools and a fireman to get the pilot out. He made the radio call starting the Air Force response. Mr. Wittke told me he had been crossing An Khe Pass and heard the mayday, knew the area, so came to see if he could be of some help. He heard a mayday call about a bird strike, I am sure the green tracers he ran into really surprised him.

The mortar crew on the mountain watched as we went in, made their own radio calls for assistance. Their reports were how I learned that we were spinning vertical (tail up and nose down), and that after we hit the trees we cart wheeled over the top of the trees till we slowed down enough to go into the trees. The 61st slicks and guns were 10 minutes behind us with the first lift, and were able to get troops on the ground to provide security, and get the other wounded out leaving only Walt. We have heard a couple of different versions of who the troops were and how they were brought in. If anyone can help on this please contact us.

Walt found out later that the Casper ship flown by CWO Larry Kahila was setting on the Crap table at LZ English waiting for a Col. and some Red Cross ("Donut Dollies") ladies and heard the 1st mayday call. Larry had an Artillery Lt. and a Major already on board waiting for the Col. and the "Donut Dollies". The Major would not get out of the Huey, saying it was the Col.'s helicopter. Obviously he did not understand the urgency of the situation and possibly did not hear Larry when he told him there was an aircraft down, and to get out. In the excitement of the moment the crew chief grabbed the Major and tossed him out of the Huey into the arms of the Col. just as the Huey came to a hover and departed. This misunderstanding must have been cleared up later. The Artillery Lt. (a friend of Walt's) stayed on board.

(continued....)



Larry knew the mission and the general area where we were. He flew into the valley from the West expecting to find us on the lower valley floor. He found our crash site by parts of the rotor blades on top of the trees. We were on the North side of the valley on a 60-degree slope in 150ft. trees. As Larry hovered over the crash site the Artillery Lt. said he saw three survivors. Larry couldn't see any way to get into us plus the longer he hovered the more hits he was taking. One of the 51's was above him shooting down through his rotor blades, and the others were shooting from across the valley. He was receiving small arms fire from beneath and not far from where the crash site was. Larry said he felt the pedals go stiff and had to leave or join us. He called LZ Uplift and told them there were survivors, changing a recovery operation to a rescue operation. Sometime during the rescue operation "Red Baron" took over the Command & Control of the rescue operation.

I registered with the Society of the 173rd Abn Association on the Internet. An engine maintenance Tech. Specialist who was with Casper in 1968 found me and filled in more of the information. He said that Casper operations hearing one of their ships was down and that a pilot was trapped sent an additional ship with the Flight Surgeon, himself, and another crew chief to the crash site. They could not find a place to land near the crash site so the pilot dropped them off in a bamboo thicket at the bottom of the hill leaving the three of them to find their way up the slope. He said they used a visible trail, and when stopping to rest could hear all sorts of movement in the jungle. He doesn't know why they weren't hit.

At the crash site they found the 173rd had already secured the crash site and everyone except Mr. Henderson had been evacuated. They tried to get him free, but did not have the right equipment. The doctor gave Walt shots of Morphine, but could not get any closer to his wounds to help. It was getting dark and the flight surgeon said they couldn't stay and to get Walt out they were going to amputate his legs. The timing is not clear here, if the Air Force recovery was there or had just returned but an Air Force Sergeant with the required cutting tools went to work and in a matter of minutes had freed Walt, and had him in a stretcher. He and the others were lifted into the Pedro and flown directly to Qui Nhon. (A note needs to be added here.) It was strongly recommended to the flight surgeon by Gen. Allen commanding 173rd ABN that he should not come in after Walt. The flight surgeon not only knew and was a friend to all the pilots and crews, but had the integrity to stand by his own decision to do what at the time he knew had to be done.



General Allen, Commanding

The "Stars and Stripes" had an article on their front page saying the Air Force was calling this the largest air rescue operation of the war. (We were before Bat 21). According to the Air Force three Pedro helicopters rigged for rescue of down crews were dispatched from Phu Cat air base. They were turned back by heavy anti-aircraft fire, with two Pedros' being damaged and returning to Phu Cat. F-100's were sent out from Phu Cat, and along with Army gunships suppressed the fire so the Pedros' were able to get to the downed crew. The "Stars & Strips" credited an Air Force Tech. Specialist who repelled in with cutting tools designed to cut out trapped aircrew, for freeing Walt. My E-mail communication with the Tech. Specialist from Casper who came in to help confirms everything the paper said about the Air Force Sergeant.

This summer I also found out from Larry Kahila that the pilot from the first Pedro that was shot up and had to return to Phu Cat flew the third Pedro that finally was able to reach the crash site.

We don't know if this was the largest air rescue, because there were many other rescue efforts by aircrews from all branches to get their downed crews out. We do know there was a great deal of effort and commitment by everyone in getting us all out, and the crew of 721 would like to find and thank all those involved.

(continued....)



Our search continues for the pilots and crew from the Pedros, from the Ghostriders and Avengers, the Air Force fireman Robert Rager, the Flight Surgeon from the 173rd, Bill Dyer, the crew chief that came in with the Flight Surgeon let us know. We would even like to talk with the Battalion Commander 1/503rd there still are some questions we would like answers to.

It wasn't till later that Walt found out, and only this year when we met, that I found out that there was an investigation by the 173rd looking to fault Walt, believing he had flown into our own artillery. The rounds and shrapnel in the ship and crew stopped any further efforts in this direction. The cease-fire orders from the FO had stopped any artillery action and no friendly rounds were ever fired.

It wasn't until 2016 that I received an email from Stu Steinberg, the EOD team leader who told me that they totally destroyed Casper 721 with C4 and Thermite on the day after the crash because of sensitive information that may have been left behind, along with the aircraft's radio and any guns or ammunition the NVA may discover.

Clifford E. White Class 68-12

Walton A. Henderson (Sugar Bear) Class 68-501

Ned Costa, Crew Chief

John Steen, Door Gunner

Updated Information

The Huey that Pilot CWO Larry Kahila was flying was Casper 031. Also aboard was Crew Chief SP5 Terry Gallagher. Besides the Brigade Flight Surgeon on the ground were: Casper Platoon Sergeant Robert Lee Page, SGT Richard Canning, SSG Vernon Taylor, among others that helped in this rescue mission.

Time Marches On

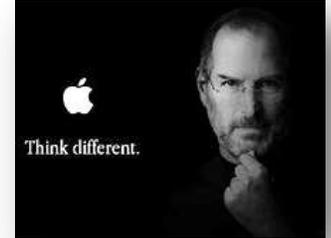


It was 36 years later when the Casper 721 crew members were back together once again. This photo was taken at the 2004 Casper Aviation Platoon Organization reunion that was held at the New Frontier Hotel & Resort in Las Vegas. L-R are: Cliff White, Walt Henderson, John Steen & Ned Costa.

Thanks to Ned and his buddies for sharing their story with us. *ATW Caspers! Ed*

Healthy Words of Wisdom

"I hope you realize, when you have mates, buddies and old friends, brothers and sisters, who you chat with, laugh with, talk with, have sing songs with, talk about north-south-east-west or heaven and earth, that is true happiness!



Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy. So when they grow up they will know the value of things and not the price. Eat your food as your medicine, otherwise you have to eat medicine as your food.

The One who loves you will never leave you for another because, even if there are 100 reasons to give up, he or she will find a reason to hold on. There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few really understand it.

You are loved when you are born. You will be loved when you die. In between, you have to manage!

The best six doctors in the world are sunlight, rest, exercise, diet, self-confidence and friends. Maintain them in all states and enjoy a healthy life."

Steve Jobs

24 Feb '55 - 05 Oct '11

(Excerpt from his remarks, sent in by the wise, healthy and happy Sky Soldier, Bob Warfield, B/2/503)



'Sky Soldier' jumps from cliff to save man from drowning on Father's Day

By Capt. Joseph Legros
173rd Airborne Brigade
June 27, 2018



Lieutenant Colonel John Hall of the 173rd Airborne Brigade takes a moment to fulfill a request for a photo with two French boys dressed as Soldiers in Sainte-Mere-Eglise, France. Hall is with the American Paratroopers who are participating in the D-Day commemoration. These boys were playing as guards at a campground near the American Airborne forces. (Photo from Lt. Col. John Hall)

VICENZA, Italy – It was a beautiful Father's Day in Contra Pria. Families enjoyed a picnic together, and the refreshing water served as a welcome refuge from the heat and humidity of the last weekend leading into summer. This peaceful scene completely changed in the blink of an eye.

"This weekend I was with my family at a local swimming hole (Contra Pria). A local national jumped into the frigid water from a cliff and it quickly became apparent he could not swim. All of a sudden, a fully clothed Sky Soldier jumped into the water from an adjacent cliff and saved the man by swimming him to the shore," stated 2-503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Jim Keirse in a message to 173rd Airborne Brigade Commander Col. James Bartholomees. "That Sky Soldier was Lt. Col. John Hall."

Upon learning of Lt. Col. Hall's actions that day, Col. Bartholomees stated, "John's selfless service does not cease when he takes off the uniform. As a professional National Guard officer serving on active duty in our brigade combat team, John embodies our Army Values 24/7 and his heroic actions at Contra Pria are proof positive of his strong commitment."

That commitment was on full display in the quiet mountain village of Contra Pria.

This tiny hamlet is made up of a few houses that appear lost in the foothills of the Dolomite Mountains of northern Italy. The half-dozen houses follow the course of the Astico, a small river created by the melting snow of the mountains that flow down into the rocky valley creating deep chasms with frigid still waters that invite adventure seekers escaping the summer heat.

"It was forecast to be a warm Italian summer day, so we decided to take the family to a local swimming area in the Dolomite Mountains recommended by a friend. My grandsons were visiting for a few weeks and were eager to play in the shallow areas of the stream where the rocky cliffs fade into a shallow river bed. While there were a few visitors swimming and jumping from the cliffs, I decided it would be best if I stay out of the water because of knee surgery just seven weeks ago, not wanting to risk a good recovery," said Lt. Col. John Hall.

When Hall and his family arrived early Sunday morning, they were surprisingly greeted by another Paratrooper, Lt. Col. Keirse and his family, who were picnicking and swimming with some family friends in the remote swimming area. They introduced their children to each other who then played in the beach areas together.

"The rock cliffs and crystal-clear river below with the Dolomite Mountains in the background on a sunny day made this Italian 'swimming hole' a small paradise," stated John's wife, Laura Hall. "We noticed a few people jumping from the 20-30 foot-cliffs that formed a small canyon along the stream. Jumpers would often pause for scuba divers in wet suits exploring the glacial waters that feed into the chasm below."

"The boys were taking a break from the cold water when I decided I would climb up on the cliff to see what the divers were exploring," said John Hall. "Just as they swam away, four Italian men, probably somewhere in their twenties, appeared above the river on the opposite cliff. They seemed to be daring each other to jump. Two immediately jumped and then challenged their friends. One chose not to jump at all, while the other hesitated, but after a few minutes I saw him falling through the air."

Hall describes that when the man hit the deep frigid water, he began to thrash about, yelling for his friends to help as he repeatedly went under water.

(continued...)





Cliff jumpers in Contra Pria. (web photo added)

The two men who jumped in earlier leapt from the cliff to attempt a rescue, but as they swam up to him the scene turned into what appeared to be a fight or wrestling match in the water.

As the scene developed, Hall could see from his vantage point on the opposite cliff that the struggling man was drowning, and would possibly drown his companions, as they all began to go under water together. “

I jumped from the cliff,” Hall shares.

“I swam over to the three men, firmly wrapped my arm around the chin of the drowning man and pulled him onto my hip. The other men briefly continued pulling at us and one another. Once we broke free, I swam the man to the cliff, pulled him around, and placed his hands on the rocks.”

One of the man’s friends swam over to help Hall hold him in place while he caught his breath. Hall shares that they spoke to each other to make sure the man was ok. They all paused for a moment at the water’s edge.

“Then he reached over to shake my hand, thanking me for saving his friend’s life,” says Hall.

But the group was still in deep water without a foothold. Exhausted and in shock, the man was unable to work his way along the rocky face to reach the shallow waters. As they both clung to the rock face, Hall indicated to him that he would help him climb and push him up to safety.

“Once he was safe, I swam over to a rocky outcropping and climbed to verify that he was ok,” shared Hall.

“Still shaking from the experience, the man turned and gave me a hug.”

“John Hall will claim he was just in the right place at the right time to save that guy’s life, and that may be

partially true,” said Keirse. “But it really takes the right person to recognize somebody is in jeopardy and then have the courage to do something about it.”

“Lt. Col. Hall jumped, fully clothed, from a cliff to save a drowning local national. That’s good stuff.”

Laura Hall related the events as she saw them, “When I saw John climb up the cliff, I pointed him out to our grandsons. I knew he was interested in the divers and seemed to be casually watching them. Then I could tell from his posture that he was looking into the water more intently. I could tell from his stance that he was about to jump, even though he was fully clothed with shoes on.”

“He jumped.”

“At first, I thought he was just jumping to amuse our grandsons who were watching. When I saw him swim into a group of splashing men and pull one out, it was then that I realized that he was saving the man.”

Staff Sgt. Alexander Henninger, NCOIC of 173rd Airborne Brigade Public Affairs said, “This is what we are trained to do, to assess difficult situations and make them better. We emphasize to our Paratroopers the need to take leader initiative, to be agile and disciplined in our responses to any situation. It is about living the Army values every day. I know any of our Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, or Servicemembers from across the Armed Forces, will help any person in need if they have the opportunity. This is who we are as American Soldiers.”

“I was surprised that someone who couldn’t swim well would jump into those waters, but I wasn’t surprised that John helped him,” said Laura with pride. “That’s just John.”

Lt. Col. John Hall has been working in Vicenza, Italy, on the senior staff of the 173rd Airborne Brigade since August 2017. In the past year he has supported combat training throughout Europe. He is a school teacher from Flint, Michigan who is proudly serving a one-year tour of duty as a Sky Soldier with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He will return to his classroom teaching English, history and theater for the fall semester. He is also an officer in the Michigan National Guard. Both of his daughters serve in the U.S. Army as well as all three of his brothers and his son-in-law.

John Hall concludes, “I am just so glad that someone was there to help him. After it was over, I couldn’t help thinking it was Father’s Day. No man should lose his son on Father’s Day.”

Source: www.dvidshub.net/news/282430/sky-soldier-jumps-cliff-save-man-drowning-fathers-day



E-Troop, Pic from the Past



“TROOP E, 17th CAV., a month before we deployed to Vietnam on 5 May 1965.” From Ron Thomas, 173d LRRP.

A/2/503 History....

NVA Sniper Tips Off A/2/503 To Big Cache

BONG SON -- Two days of search of a suspected NVA Divisional Headquarters northeast of An Khe recently by paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade have resulted in a significant cache – to include a printing press, battle maps documents, propaganda leaflets, 700 pounds of rice, stoves and weapons.

“NVA don’t usually show themselves on ridges,” said Alpha’s company commander, Captain **Frederick Peters** of Toledo, Ohio. “So I thought they might be trail watchers and I was on to something big.”

Members of Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry were alerted to the possible prize when they received sniper fire while moving along a ridgeline.

The paratroopers saw the snipers flee into an adjacent valley and followed. CPT Peters then called an airstrike into the valley and sent a platoon to check it out.

Complex Found

Two hundred meters into the valley they found the entrances to the first cave complex. A pair of “tunnel rats,” PFC **Miguel L. Ybarra** of Brownsville, Tex., and PFC

Carl W. Young of Salisbury, N.C., were the first to go in. The enemy had fled, leaving behind in the three level complex, three cases of type-written documents, a large printing press with propaganda leaflets printed in Korean and Vietnamese, a collection of battle and aerial photography maps and camera equipment.

Withdrawing for the night, the company returned to search the area again in the morning.

More Discovered

It was then that two more complexes were discovered by Alpha’s second platoon under the direction of First Lieutenant **Michael Jennings** of Richmond, Va.

1LT Jennings found a Russian and North Vietnamese flag and numerous documents while other members of his platoon located three mess halls, 700 pounds of rice, a 100 pound block of salt, a variety of cooking gear, and some weapons including a French submachine gun found by PFC **Charles W. Scudder III** of Kansas City, Mo.

The paratroopers were part of a reconnaissance in force mission in Operation Cochise being conducted by the 173d Airborne Brigade along South Vietnam’s central coast between Qi Nhon and Bong Son.

Source: *Fire Base 173*, June 15, 1968



173d Operations, January-February '66-'71, RVN

MARAUDER 1-8 January 1966

Hua Nghia Province

The new year began with the 1/503d and the 1/RAR being airlifted into adjacent positions along the Oriental River in the Plain of Reeds area of the Mekong Delta. The next morning, the 2/503d fought through a series of fortified enemy positions using air, artillery and tear gas to rout the VC. 326 VC suspects were rounded up along with large numbers killed in the actions decimating the VC 267th battalion.



2/503 Trooper examine captured enemy weapons and materiel during Operation Marauder.

CRIMP 8-14 January 1966

Binh Buong, West of the Hobo Woods

The Australians made contact first, and after heavy fighting, the RAR and the 173d unmasked an extensive set of underground tunnels, captured several 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns, killing over 128 VC and capturing another 91 while detaining 509 suspects. Operation CRIMP began on January 7, 1966 with the 1st Infantry Division being airlifted southwest of the "Iron Triangle" to Phu Loi. The mission was to destroy the Viet Cong Military Region political-military headquarters. In January the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment deployed as the lead element of the 173d Airborne Brigade and quickly made contact with the enemy and captured many weapons including four new 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns. The 173d Airborne Brigade operation in the Ho Bo Woods resulted in close to 130 VC killed, 90 captured and well over 500 suspects detained. A major operation, Crimp, the biggest American assault of the Vietnam conflict, had discovered what the French and Vietnamese knew years ago and could do nothing about - modern catacombs that took years to build.



2/503d Bn CO LTC George Dexter stands near abandoned house in the Ho Bo Woods during Operation Crimp.

Paratroopers and infantrymen pushing about 25 miles north of Saigon failed to entrap Viet Cong insurgents who have lived there in comparative comfort and safety underground but they did find what one soldier described as the New York subway.

"As we moved forward, we saw one trench and tunnel after another. Some of the trenches were at least 112 feet deep. Some of the tunnels were 1,640 feet long. There were side tunnels leading from the main ones. There were enough holes in the ground to house a division. The soil is hard clay, real hard. It just about puts a granite roof on the tunnel complex. The whole thing runs northwest toward the Cambodia border, probably stretching 35 or 40 miles. It was empty. Tear gas attacks only brought out some women and children and an old man.

The complex is so built that it is easy to imagine the Viet Cong moving a lot of people a long distance without ever being exposed to attack for very long. We could see the Viet Cong from time to time but they couldn't be caught. They leaped into ordinary holes but the holes always had a corridor to a main tunnel and an exit. It's like trying to catch moles that have human intelligence and a safe exit."

(continued....)



To destroy the entire complex would take a month and enough explosives to dynamite a mountain. But that's what the American force is determined to do. This operation revealed the extensive tunnel complex in the Iron Triangle and the Cu Chi area. Cu Chi in Hau Nghia Province west of the Iron Triangle is one of the most heavily fortified enemy redoubts in the Saigon area.



2/503 Troopers with captured enemy weapons in Cu Chi during Operation Crimp.

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

**ON GUARD 17-21 January 1966
Di An, Phu Loi**



2/503 Troopers inspect enemy trenches in Phu Loi.

PHOENIX 26 February - 22 March 1966

Binh Duong & Bien Hoa Province

"In February 1966, VC in III Corps introduced the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, to their new way of avoiding U.S. firepower – the 'hugging tactic.'"

Tom Faley



**L-R: C Company's Wilson, Capt. Faley & RTO Connelly
During Operation Phoenix**

**CANARY/ DUCK 7 December 1966 - 5 January 1967
Phu My to Bear Cat**

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

**NIAGARA/ CEDAR FALLS 5-25 January 1967
Cau Dinh Jungle & Iron Triangle**

With most of the other units occupying blocking positions, the 173d's three infantry battalions swept and cleared the Iron Triangle - locating and destroying small troop concentrations and tunnel systems. The 51st Chemical Detachment, 173d Engineer Company, as well as infantry volunteer "tunnel rat" teams, fearlessly explored the VC tunnels, bringing out large caches of weapons and supplies and VC captives. The combined effort resulted in over 1,000 tons of rice and 200 crew-served and individual weapons captured. Sixty-five enemy were taken prisoner of war; many were routed out of the extensive tunnel and bunker systems. The Brigade left 85 enemy dead in the rice paddies and jungle of the Triangle - "E" Troop of the 17th Cavalry alone accounted for 73 VC killed in action.



**Sky Soldier George Pappas,
PFC, B/1/503, prepares to
enter tunnel system in '65.**

(continued....)



BIG SPRINGS 30 January - 16 February 1967

War Zone "D"

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



A/2/503 Troopers in "D" Zone jungle.

JUNCTION CITY 22 February - 15 March 1967

Tay Ninh Province

At 0900 Hours the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry along with A Battery, 319th Artillery led by Brigadier General John R. Deane, 'Jr. made the only (mass) combat parachute jump of the war in War Zone "C".

The overall operation employed a large contingent of forces: The 1st and 25th Divisions, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, elements of the 4th and 9th Infantry Divisions, South Vietnamese units and the 173d Airborne Brigade.



173d Combat Blast in Vietnam

Operation Junction City's objective was to locate and destroy the Central Office South Vietnam (COSVN), the supreme headquarters of the Viet Cong in the Republic of Vietnam. The accomplishments of Phase I were significant: 266 VC killed, 4 captured. The complete destruction of the COSVN Public Information Office for Psychological Propaganda and a COSVN Signal site dealt a heavy blow to the enemy propaganda effort.

BOLLING 19 September 1967 - 31 January 1968

Tuy Hoa / Phu Hiep

The 2/503rd along with A/3/319th returned to the coastal area to regroup and refit its units with men and equipment while conducting patrols in their TAO.

WALKER 16 January 1968 - 31 January 1969

An Khe

COCHISE 30 March 1968 - 31 January 1969

Bong Son

Elements of the 173d Airborne Brigade left the Central Highlands and moved to Coastal Region around Bong Son to conduct its 45th operation, Operation Cochise. The brigade was joined by the 1st Battalion, 50th Mechanized Infantry and elements of 1st Battalion, 69th Armor for the operation.



Troopers of the 1/50th Mech, RVN

DARBY CREST 1 February - 15 April 1969

The Crescent of Hoai An District

The 173d Airborne Brigade conducted its 46th operation, Operation Darby Crest, in the Crescent Valley of Hoai An District.

DARBY TRAIL 1 - 16 February 1969

Bong Son

(continued....)



DARBY MARCH 1 February - 6 March 1969

Tuy Hoa

WASHINGTON GREEN 15 April '69 - 1 January '71 Binh Dinh Province



LZ Uplift

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

GREENE LIGHTNING 1 January 1971 - 21 April 1971 Binh Dinh Province

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

GREENE STORM 5 February - 15 March 1971 Binh Dinh Province

April, 1971. By Spring 1971 most American military units had been withdrawn from South Vietnam. Beginning in April 1971 the 173d started redeploying back to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. By August 25 the movement was complete. With more than six years in the war zone the 173d held the record for service in South Vietnam. During that time 1,748 Sky Soldiers gave their lives supporting America's policy in South Vietnam; more than 8,700 were wounded. The numbers that of many divisions that served in the war.

Source:

www.skysoldier17.com/BDE%20History.htm

(Photos added)

DOD Identifies Army Casualty

Dec. 14, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Pfc. **Joshua Mikeasky**, 19, from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, died Dec. 13, 2018, at Bagram Airfield, Bagram District, Parwan Province, Afghanistan, from a non-combat related incident. The incident is under investigation.

Pfc. Mikeasky was assigned to 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York.

For more information regarding Pfc. Mikeasky, media may contact Maj. Harold Huff, deputy public affairs officer, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York, at 315-772-5924 or by email at harold.huff16.mil@mail.mil



About the tragedy of war....

"In popular and also in totalitarian imagery, the enemy is usually portrayed as a fierce-looking, unshaven, foul-smelling, fanaticized evil being with blood-shot eyes. Were it so, one could feel almost good about coming out as the victor in a battle like the one we had just lived through. Alas, the tragedy of war is that both sides look alike. The soldiers we just killed – had to kill! – were young, good-looking, athletic youths just like us. In other circumstances we might have met in a sports competition, a students' program, played in the same band, become friends! That is why, even though I am sincerely glad to have survived, I cannot rejoice; the price for my being alive today will forever be posted on my mind's eye."

Herbert Murhammer

"B" Co., 2/503d, RVN '65/'66

Source: From *The Battle at Bau San*, Operation Silver City.



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A 173rd Airborne Jungle School Legend!

Webmaster's Introduction

One of the most critical parts to get right in any business is the effective orientation of new employees in the workplace. As prepared as people could be for their assignment in Vietnam, and as a Ranger who had already commanded two platoons and two companies in Germany, I figured that I was well-prepared, the total experience still came as a shock for most. Vietnam was seldom what you expected

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Jungle School was designed to serve as an orientation to conditions in Vietnam. It introduced us to the enemy and to their weapons and tactics, to booby traps, to the terrain and the heat, and to critical lessons learned, often at great cost. It also was a refresher on U.S. tactics, weapons, demolitions and other combat skills as practiced by Sky Soldiers. We were still FNGs when we left Jungle School, but we were somewhat wiser, more wary, and we had learned to sweat. We had started to acclimatize to Vietnam - to the conditions that we would be living in for the next year.

But Jungle School was never intended to blood us... and certainly not against the tough Republic of Korea soldiers with whom we shared a common fence at the Qui Nhon Air Force Base in May 1969, where the Jungle School had relocated after several years in An Khe. Jungle School lasted for one week, and we then joined our respective battalions.

The highlight of the five day program was a night patrol, where we left the relative safety of the wire and ventured around at night, practicing - no, using - the skills we had been taught. The basic idea was to patrol for six or seven hours somewhere outside and around the base and scuttlebutt was that some other training patrols in the past had made contacts, so we were a bit pumped. Little did we know that our patrol would make heavy contact, and that despite all of us surviving, our patrol was about to make Jungle School history.

The course had gone routinely. As a senior first lieutenant (if there is such a thing), I was designated the patrol leader and set out organizing the platoon-sized unit for the patrol. The Ranger School's five-paragraph field order rolled easily and naturally off my lips. As a group, we had bonded well enough so squads and fire teams were sorted out pretty quickly, and we focused on personal and buddy preparations, keen to apply the tricks of the trade we'd been taught. We were ready to hump - and hump we soon did.

Some people learned that they simply weren't cut out to carry heavy radios or M60 machine guns, and everybody gained a better appreciation of the lean, mean look we'd all seen on Vietnam combat veterans. Compared to them, we still had baby fat, but most of us started finding a groove. Jungle School was working.

Our patrol had us ridge running, and I kept our route below the military crest because we didn't want to show on the skyline. Now we were tired. Some were close to exhaustion. I saw plenty of much more rugged terrain in II Corps later, but the brush covered rolling hills outside Qui Nhon that we were traversing seemed plenty big enough to me then.

As patrol leader, I hadn't had any problems - my leaders were doing their jobs. Sure, some water had to be reapportioned, but in the relative darkness of evening nautical twilight things were running smoothly. Then we came under fire... accurate aimed fire... heavy weapons fire.

Everyone hit the ground and looked to me. But I knew little more than they did. My map and compass only showed where we were going, and I could see the hilltop about 500 meters away where the rounds, which sounded like 50 caliber fire, were coming from. And the rounds keep coming close... way too close! Thank God we were on the military crest, because the machine gun was slightly higher than we were and had just spotted our movement silhouetted against the night sky but lost us as we hit the dirt, but we were being spattered with dirt and rocks. I gave the only order I could think of in the situation, to move lower down the crest to get further away from the beaten zone.

Fortunately it wasn't completely up to me that night. The instructors were immediately on the radio to base, screaming at them to tell the Korean outpost to cease fire. In a short time, they did, and we resumed our patrol, which couldn't end soon enough.

The post mortem was quickly over for us. We were interviewed and graduated, and then sent on to our units. Within a few days, I was with A Company on the Bong Son Plains and had been in my second contact, third, fourth and the counting soon stopped. They say that you never forget your first contact - and I'd say that they were right - even if it happened in Jungle School.

By Ray Sarlin, webmaster of the 1st Bn (Mech) 50th Infantry website www.ichiban1.org

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Thanks to Ray for sharing his story with us. Ed



Bravo Bulls Annual Veterans Day Ceremonies

On November 9, 2018, veterans from the 1960's B Company, 2/503, (Bravo Bulls) Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) teamed up with recent veterans of Battle Company, 2/503 PIR, for early morning ceremonies, at Arlington National Ceremonies. Restrictions, at Arlington National Cemetery abound and limit how memorial ceremonies are conducted. We were able to conduct the ceremony by liaising with the Reuben Tucker Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association. Three 173d sites were selected:

- **SSG Rougles** gravesite, amidst fifteen other Afghanistan KIAs.
- **MG Ellis Williamson's and his wife's** grave site (section 60 383), the 173d Airborne Brigade's first commander.
- **173d Airborne Brigade Memorial** site, where B/2-503d KIAs and deceased are remembered.

After the ceremonies, most of the participants assembled at the Sequoia Restaurant in Washington DC, where as guests of **Walter Raush**, they were feted to a grand banquet before heading home in the driving rain.

Chapter members included **Roy Lombardo, Ed Anthony, Jackie Lofton, Ryan Shipley, SFC Taffoya, and Joe Flesch**

Roy Lombardo



Second from left: Jackie Lofton; Second from right: LTC Ryan Shipley; Far right: SFC Christopher Taffoya

Source: Sigholtz Chapter Newsletter *The Herd Word*

Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump

Edward Hamilton, Ball,
Port Chester, NY
September 1, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Richard "Dick" Childs, Jr., 75
Melbourne, FL
10/2/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN

James Elvy Clark, Sr., 82
Hope Mills, NC
10/5/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Kevin Deon Connor, 24
Vincenza, Italy,
10/1/18
173d ABCT

Dennis E. Huff, 68
Lower Pottsgrove, PA
7/19/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Joel Lamar Parish, II, 76
Austin, TX
10/19/18
E Troop, 17th Cav, RVN

Michael Switzer
Tampa, FL
11/12/18
3/503, RVN

John Linwood Virden, 69
Greensboro, NC
9/18/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Kenneth Wayne Warren, 71
Broken Bow, OK
11/17/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Robert Clay Wiseman, 71
Newland, NC
10/25/18
173d Abn Bde, RVN, RLTW

Rest Easy Boys

