



May-June 2020, Issue 92
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http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

George E. Dexter, Col.

1924 ~ 2020

Battalion Commander 2/503d, Okinawa/Vietnam



George E. Dexter

Col. Abn Inf (Ret)

1924 ~ 2020

2/503 Battalion Commander, Okinawa/Vietnam

George Ellis Dexter, Col. US Army, ret., devoted husband and loving father, passed away on June 4th after a long and adventurous life that took him around the globe, first as a child and later as an Army officer. He was 95.

George was born into a military family on June 13, 1924, in Washington DC. He wrote in his memoirs that hearing buglers play "Reveille" and "Taps" to begin and end each day on the various Army posts where he lived as a child convinced him he wanted to be a soldier. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY, in 1945 and served for 30 years in the United States Army.

After graduation, George was shipped to the Philippines to serve in the final months of World War II and for two years following the war's end. It was there, in 1946, that George had a tropical romance with Kathleen (Katy) Marie Laumer, an Army nurse from Wausau, Wisconsin. They were married on May 1st, 1948, and enjoyed sixty-three years together, traveling around the world wherever the Army sent him and raising their eight children together. Katy and the children accompanied George on all of his Army assignments except those to Korea and Vietnam.

His service in the United States included tours of duty at Sandia Army Post (now Kirtland Air Force Base), Albuquerque, NM; Ft. Benning, GA; Fort Leavenworth, KS; West Point, NY; Fort Bragg, NC; Carlisle Barracks, PA; two tours at the Pentagon in Washington, DC; and a tour with the ROTC at the University of Texas at Austin. Overseas duties included assignments to the Philippines, Korea, Okinawa, the Panama Canal Zone, and two tours in Vietnam. Midway through his military career, he completed a master's degree in psychology at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA.

While at Fort Bragg, he completed "jump school" to become a paratrooper and later commanded an airborne infantry battalion during his first tour in Vietnam. In 1966 he was wounded and was evacuated back to Albuquerque, where Katy and the children were living while he was overseas.

George retired from the Army in 1975 as a colonel and moved with his family to Albuquerque in 1976. He designed and personally built a passive solar adobe

home in the Sandia Heights area, where he and Katy lived for twenty-five years. During this time, he served as a docent with the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology for 25 years and was active for 25 years in the St. Vincent de Paul Society within the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. In 2004 George and Katy moved into La Vida Llena Retirement Center in Albuquerque, where Katy died in May of 2011.

He will be remembered as the very personification of honor, duty, and faithfulness. He was also tremendously good-natured and perhaps the most organized man who ever lived. This combination of qualities invariably placed him in a position of leadership in each organization in which he served, and he led well.

George is survived by his eight children and their families. He is also survived by 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

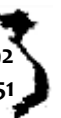
Rosary and memorial were held on Wednesday, June 17th, in Albuquerque. A funeral Mass was held on June 20th. Interment and reception will be announced at a later time.

Donations in George's name can be made to the St. Vincent DePaul Society.



George with Katy, the love of his life.

Rest Easy, Colonel. All The Way, Sir!





In Memory of "The Old Man" Colonel George E. Dexter



Ready to blast with his men on Okinawa



Arrival Bien Hoa AFB, Vietnam, May 1965



In the jungle of Phuoc Tuy, July '65



Than Duc, December '65



Mekong Delta, January '66



Captured flag, Op Marauder Jan '66

Rest easy with Your fellow warriors, Colonel. You served your men and your country well, Sir.



FOR COL GEORGE E. DEXTER, USMA 1945, CO, 2/503d Infantry, 173d ICBT (A)



L-R: Battalion Executive Officer Major Bill White and Bn Cmdr LTC George Dexter on porch of pagoda in Di An, 10/65.

Supplementing official reports during our deployment year, COL Dexter (CO, 2/503) probably kept a personal journal, private notes and memos to chink the gathered stones of event and memory together with his journalist's eye for a good photo. What they might disclose would likely fill a book or several, between the Philippines, Korea and our shared service in Vietnam.

One of those I recall, about midway through that formative year, followed his return from a secret briefing at brigade, where an odd attachment of specialists, keen about photo imagery, had setup shop under a GP tent to stare themselves blue through stereographic lenses at endless rolls of aerial photography. Keen they were to identify, beneath all that double, triple canopy, "right angles" shadowing dim certainty of activity below: boxed ammo perhaps, a weapons cache, and there, where these trails converge, surely something suspicious by its irregular presence lurked.

Returning to battalion base, COL Dexter reviewed lift assets, insertion LZ, coordinates, comms and supporting notes, then called his company commanders together for what seemed the usual warning order and preparatory briefing. Yet some tension gave an edge to his alert and noticeably the peculiar posture of his hand, fingers pressed on palm, appeared to enclose something small, winged and eager to escape.

We huddled close, MAJ White, XO, left of COL Dexter, with his map marked and spread before young lions in for the hunt, their units standing by. Target lists compiled, priorities assigned, the obvious need of on-the-ground assessment summoned battalion commanders to brigade for insight of the next American notch in escalation. Though details remained vague, the odd business attached to brigade HQ, obvious to a point, was now disclosed. And lest it remained news for anyone present, as we met, the flight lines on Guam were long since cleared with execution on the way.

The time had come. MAJ White leaned toward COL Dexter as he moved the guarded hand to open and release his secret moth, bold in blue ball point, to the XO's privileged eye and to no one else revealed: "ARCLIGHT" - as a squadron of B-52s aligned to vector for the war's first strike upon the hapless foe. And we, from Snake Pit to picnic, sent as one to survey result: all those smashed "right angles," and suspicions sure to find, but found not one; for such is war, and certainty.

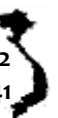
This inaugural strike, as I recall was at frightful cost: batting zero with an aircraft lost, and crew, though not by hostile action. Someone else may confirm such record. Our record, for each of us, variously fortunate or not, continued under COL Dexter, who we grew to increasingly appreciate and admire, for his professional attention, knowledgeable command and innovative encouragement among the officers and men that he led and inspired. It was a defining year for all of us. We shall not forget.

Airborne,

Bob Warfield
B/2/503, RVN



Young commanders in '65. Fred Henschell & Bob Warfield.





We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory and Honor of Colonel George E. Dexter, and the Young Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units We Lost 50 Years Ago In the Months of May and June 1970



"They are more than a name inscribed in marble on a wall. They were the sons and brothers and fathers and uncles and friends and lovers of those whom to this day long after hold them dear to their hearts. As LT Eder said about his friend lost to that war, they have gone to 'where only the brave can go.'" Ed

Alan William Ahearn, 25
SGT, 8RAR, 5/14/70

"Sergeant Alan William Ahearn, 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment Age 25 from Sydney NSW. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam. Sergeant Ahern died 14th May 1970 at 24th US Evacuation Hospital of wounds from a land mine explosion."



Information from Find a Grave Memorial

Carl Taylor Barnett, 24
SSG, C/1/503, 5/18/70
(Virtual Wall states E/17th Cav)

12/22/11: "Lost Memories: How do you share a remembrance of someone, with no memories to share? I'd often thought of what we would of had. What we would of done. Where would we be today." Sean K. Barnett



"The Army informed Mrs. Yvonne Barnett, 23, of Murray Wednesday that her husband, Staff Sgt. Carl Barnett, 24, had been a non-battle casualty in the Republic of Vietnam...Barnett was in an aircraft landing zone May 18 when a round of fire from a tank strayed and accidently landed near him and exploded...It was the soldier's second tour of duty in Vietnam. He served in the war-torn area for 18 months in 1966-67 and returned in January of this year." Local Newspaper

Charles Edward Batchelor, 19
CPL, B/1/503, 5/25/70

9/9/18: "We Remember. CPL Charles E. Batchelor is buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery, 300 E Forest Avenue, Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee, USA." Daniel Cogne'



George Alfred Birdwell, 19
SP4, C/3/503, 5/25/70

5/31/99: "Miss you Al. Miss you 'little brother. I think of you often. Wish you were here. What a loss for this world that you couldn't grow up to be all you could have." Ed Birdwell



Allen Lewis Boney, 22
SSG, C/1/503, 5/14/70

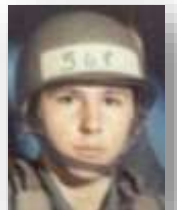
14 May 2003: "Today, May 14th 2003, marks 33 years of your untimely death at the age of 22 in Viet Nam. No words can ever say how much you are missed every day, and not a day goes by that I do not think of you. I hope someday to meet someone who knew you, mom and dad did, but I live in New Jersey with my husband and three children. Every time I go back to North Carolina I visit your grave, I say a prayer for you every night. You were a dear dear brother, I will always remember your face and taking you to the airport for your third tour of duty in Viet Nam. God Bless your soul, Dear Sweet Brother, you are my guardian angel always. My son - your nephew and name sake, Allen - reminds me so much of you. Love eternally," Victoria Boney Merlino



7/5/16: "I was with Alan when he died. We were based out of LZ Uplift in Bong Son. He was a little older than the rest of us and we looked up to him. Great guy and brave as hell. He even killed a VC with the VC's own rifle. Some memories just don't leave you." Denny Huff

Peter Norbert Bruyere, 19
SP4, B/1/503, 5/25/70

5/22/02: "You Will Never Be Forgotten. When you died for our country, I was on my way to Vietnam. Although I did not get to serve and fight with you, I always had you on my mind while I did my time. God was on my side and he allowed me to return home safely. I think of you often and I wonder about the stories that we would have shared about Vietnam. Rest in Peace my Brother, you will never be far from my thoughts and prayers." Frank Bruyere



(continued...)



John Alan Capasso, 20

SGT, D/2/503, 5/7/70

5/29/20: "Never forgotten! I brought you home 49 years ago. My life has never been the same. I was the last to talk with you that day. Your concern was for everyone else. I returned to VN and many of our buddies were also gone. Knowing you has caused me to excel throughout my life. I give all credit to God for putting you in my life. Not one day has gone by that your spirit hasn't touched me. I will see you in the near future. I have always known to be out of the body is to be with the Lord. Thank you for being in my life all these years. Damon your escort home." **Damon Herd**



find him in a chopper monitoring operations. He was always near the action. Because of his outstanding performance of duty and future potential, the brigade commanding general selected him to command one of the brigade's battalions. He was in his command chopper directing a battalion operation when he was killed. He was at the front and where he wanted to be. His loss was tragic and ended the career of a bright officer. JJ Clark was not only a fine officer, but a true leader and mentor. He did his duty and served his country well. He is remembered."

James C. Hardin, COL (RET), USA

Gary Owen Cashion, 20

PTE, 7RAR, 6/16/70

"The evening of the 16th June was, in the words of Private Merv Hains, 'one of the worst nights I have ever experienced'. There were frequent and violent lightning strikes during a stormy evening. About 500m north of Lo Voi, in one of those unfortunate freaks of nature, one bolt struck an armoured personnel carrier antenna which Private Gary Cashion of D Company was leaning against. Private Cashion died that evening as a result of his injuries. His grave is within the Cornelian Bay Cemetery in Tasmania and is located in Section CL (Grave 179) in the Church of England area".



Information from 7 RAR Association website

Tommy Makin Clayton, 22

PVT, B/1/503, 5/25/70

(Virtual Wall states 3/503)

3/15/13: "We Remember. Tommy is buried at Los Angeles National Cemetery, Los Angeles, CA." **Robert Sage**



**POSTED ON 4.7.2019
GROUND CASUALTY**

Landing Zone Uplift was a U.S. Army base located on Highway 1, five miles north of Phu My in Binh Dinh Province, RVN. The base was established in 1966 by the 1st Cavalry Division. On the early morning of May 25, 1970, before chow was served, a single enemy 140mm rocket was launched at the base. The projectile went through the tin roof of a hooch where about 20 members of 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry were still asleep in their cots and bunkbeds. Three troopers were killed in the blast: typist SP4 Curtis Smith from HHC, infantryman PVT Tommy M. Clayton from A Company, and mortarman SP4 George A. Birdwell from C Company. Several others were injured. [Taken from coffeltdatabase.org and information provided by Dana Castle (April 2019)]

Posted by W. Killian

John James Clark, 37

LTC, HHC/3/503, 6/2/70

11/17/99: "SOLDIER, LEADER, MENTOR, FRIEND. JJ Clark and I served on the staff of the 173d Airborne Brigade during 1969 and 1970. He was the operations officer and I was the assistant intelligence officer. We worked closely together for a time when I served as the senior intelligence officer. Every morning for about two months we met in his tent to review the special intelligence reports. He was usually just finishing his morning shave. I can still recall his slightly freckled face, reddish hair, penetrating blue eyes and commanding voice. He was a tremendous help to me and greatly assisted me in doing my job. He was a superb mentor. Without question he was an outstanding operations officer. No matter what was happening regarding brigade operations he was on top of it. You could see and feel his presence in the brigade operations center when he was there. At other times you might



(continued...)



Harold Eugene Cowan, 19

CPL, B/3/503, 6/23/70

7/3/18: "Tribute to Sky Soldier. On behalf of his fellow paratroopers from the 173rd "Herd" Airborne Brigade, including myself and brothers who also served in RVN, I offer regrets and respect for your sacrifice. May you and your fellow fallen comrades never be forgotten." **Mike Switzer**

[See a buddy's memories of Gene on Page 19]



Noel Valentine Crouch, 22

PTE, 7RAR, 5/21/70

"Private Noel Valentine Crouch was born in Katanning, West Australia, on the 23rd September 1947. He was a 14th intake National Serviceman. Private Noel Crouch 'marched in' to 7RAR's Finschhafen Lines at Holsworthy around mid January of 1969. Fresh from Christmas leave which had followed recruit training he was about to commence Corps training within 7RAR, followed by specialty training and training exercises, Canungra and then overseas service in Vietnam. He served in Vietnam with the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, from the 16th February 1970 until his death on the 21st May 1970. 'We were lucky people as we were all in some way wounded, some seriously. In many respects we were extra lucky, as when we assaulted the position we were confronted by bunkers which we didn't use for cover for some reason, because of a sixth sense. I have since reasoned that we didn't use them because they were unoccupied by the VC. We found later that these bunkers were rigged with trip wires and instantaneous grenades'. The Australian force withdrew to evacuate its casualties. As this was occurring, 3 platoon and A Company Headquarters, led by Major Chris Thomson, were moved by armoured personnel carriers from the Horseshoe to the contact area. When they arrived, Major Thomson called for helicopter gunship support. Three Australian Bushranger helicopters pinned down the estimated 50 man Viet Cong force in bunkers within 100m of the company until the A Company group re-assaulted the position. During the battle the Hoi Chanh shouted out to his mates in the bunkers, waited for them to appear and very happily blazed away at them. The entire position was secured by 1600 hours. The enemy casualties were five killed and three prisoners of war. A large quantity of food, documents and stores were captured. A Company suffered one soldier, Private Noel Crouch, killed in action. When Corporal Powell saw that Private Crouch had been killed, in a retaliatory act of bravery, he charged the bunkers and was wounded



himself. There were twelve Australian soldiers wounded in this action."

Information from Find a Grave Memorial

Stephen Warwick Dickson, 21

PTE, 7RAR, 6/6/70

"Wallsend, NSW, was killed in a mine explosion in Vietnam in Phuoc Tuy Province on June 6, 1970. He was a member of C Company, 7RAR."



James Edwin Dolan, 23

SP4, B/1/503, 5/25/70

6/11/08: "Got a medal of his own.

I came back from Vietnam in June of 1969 and was sent to Fort Bragg, NC. A lot of the guys just out of jump school thought we were crazy, we didn't listen to orders very well, we never shined our boots or marched in step, and we walked around most of the time wondering why we had to 'play soldier' after being soldiers.

One of the 'cherries' who looked up to us and our medals and our combat experience (I think they called it 'VietNam Syndrome') was James Dolan. Redheaded as all getout and from North Scituate, Massachusetts. We became friends in Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 325th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division.

He began asking me to try to get him orders to go to VietNam. I told him he was crazy. He finally talked me into writing a letter to the Sergeant Major of the Army (of the whole army!) to explain why he didn't feel he was serving his country stateside and all of that.

Well, one day orders for VietNam came down and he went home and got married in his jump boots, I remember him showing us the picture. What a trooper!

I got out about six or seven months later and just before I got out someone rotated back from VietNam and told us that Dolan had been killed in action. While wounded assaulting an enemy machine bunker he dove between an enemy grenade and his two comrades. He was posthumously awarded the DSC (Distinguished Service Cross) for his heroism. There is only one medal higher and that is the Congressional Medal of Honor.

(continued...)



He was right, he did indeed serve his country just like the letter I wrote saying how much he wanted to. I will miss his red hair, his thick Boston accent and his humor and I will also feel uneasy and proud at the same time that I helped him become one of our highest regarded heroes.


Rest well, soldier, Airborne all the way...and then some!" **Dan Pomeroy**

[See Jim's DSC citation on Page 30]

Philip Earle, 23
PTE, 8RAR, 5/1/70

"Private Phillip Earle Age 23 8th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Earle was killed accidentally, dying of gunshot wounds at 2am 1st May 1970 Phuoc Tuy." **Information from Find a Grave Memorial**



 **Billy Ferrell, 19**
SP4, HHC/3/503, 5/29/70
(Virtual Wall states B/1/503)

5/18/18: "You are never forgotten. Bill. Not a day goes by that I don't think about the morning of May 29 when our Hawk Team was ambushed and the frantic efforts by the medics at LZ Uplift to save your life and the other two of us who were hit. I am proud to have served with you. Amigo. **Franklin Massey**



Cecil Richard Fisk, 24
LCPL, RNZIR, 6/18/70

"Died of wounds, 18 June 1970 – command detonated mine."



Ramon Flores, Jr., 20
CPL, B/1/503, 5/25/70

2/9/18: "You will never be forgotten my Vietnam Brother! Ramon was with me in our bunker before I got hurt and sent to the rear. We both were from Ohio. I am from Smithfield, Ohio. We helped each other through tuff times while in the field. We laughed and cried to help each other tough times. I think of him and the others who lost their lives that day. Many tears and pain. It was the day before my birthday so it is a reminder of all of our loses." **Terry Fabry**



Steen Bruce Foster, 22
SSG, 173d LRRP, 5/14/70
(Virtual Wall states C/75th Rgrs)



Final Mission of SSG Steen B. Foster

"SSG Steen B. Foster and PFC James L. Liosel were U.S. Army Rangers, airborne-qualified infantrymen serving with C Company, 75th Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. Ranger companies were composed of small, heavily armed long-range reconnaissance teams that patrolled deep in enemy-held territory. Operating in six-man team, the Rangers were tasked with setting ambushes on trails likely to be used by the enemy. The objective was to trigger these ambushes on small enemy elements, kill as many as possible, scare others away, and collect weapons for destruction and ruck sacks for information about enemy plans and movements.

On the morning of May 14, 1970, SSG Foster was leader of Team 4/4, a six-man team including PFC Liosel on a search and destroy mission about 30 miles inside Cambodia. While waiting in an ambush position, ten or more enemy soldiers walked into the kill zone. The Rangers opened fire, killing several of the enemy combatants. Foster ordered a cease fire, and he and their indigenous scout began to check the bodies and retrieve weapons and rucksacks. It was believed all enemy had been killed. Upon return to the center of the ambush position, Foster ordered the team to pack up and head to their extraction point. Suddenly, the team began to receive heavy fire. The barrage, later estimated as a force of over 100 enemy soldiers, steadily raked the Americans' position. The Rangers returned fire and began to take casualties. The RTO was wounded, then his radio disabled. The exchange continued at a high pitch for fifteen minutes as the besieged Rangers' situation looked increasingly desperate. It was unclear to them whether their plea for help got through before the radio was knocked out. The situation turned critical when Foster, Liosel, and their scout were fatally wounded. A reactionary force did arrive, and they successfully evacuated the three remaining Rangers, including the seriously wounded RTO, along with the bodies of their fallen comrades. All were brought to the 71st Evacuation Hospital at Pleiku."

[Taken from coffeldatabase.org and information provided by Nate Allsopp (April 2019), RTO, Team 4/4]

(continued...)



Floyd Edward Fuller, Jr., 20
CPL, A/1/503, 5/19/70

5/27/15: "In Honor Of My Friend. Eddie was the first person to befriend me when I arrived in country and though I only knew him a few weeks I think of him often. I was on the hill above when Eddie got killed and have always felt a personal loss." **Robert Brown**



Joseph Michael Giusta, 18
CPL, C/3/503, 6/2/70

12/18/04: "We Remember. Joseph is buried at Arlington Nat Cem." **Robert Sage**



Harvey Gene Graham, 25
SP4, E/17th Cav, 5/18/70

4/18/11: "We Remember. Harvey is buried at Hayes Cemetery, Monroe County, AR." **Robert Sage**



Misadventure (Friendly fire)

SSGT Carl T. Barnett and SP4 Harvey G. Graham were paratroopers serving with E Troop, 17th Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. On May 18, 1970, SSGT Barnett and SP4 Graham were in an aircraft landing zone when a round fired from by a friendly tank strayed near their position and exploded. Both paratroopers suffered fatal injuries in the incident.

[Taken from coffeltdatabase.org and "Sgt. Carl Barnett Killed By Tank Fire in Vietnam." The Bluffton News-Banner (Bluffton, IN), May 22, 1970, courtesy of Alice Curry, Genealogy Clerk, Wells County Public Library, Bluffton, IN]

John Louis Gurnick, 21
PTE, RNZIR, 5/29/70

"Killed in action, 29 May 1970 – grenade booby trap."



Donald Dale Hall, 19
CPL, C/1/503, 6/7/70

11/6/14: "Remembering Don and Kiser Lake. Steve Wright- You put a smile on my face. Kiser Lake is where I met Don, Bruce M and Mike Y. In 1968. Don and I became a couple until he was killed. We spent many days at Kiser Lake. I lived near Lima and he came to my home many times as well. He was killed on my graduation day from high school. Very disturbing for me. Sat Nov 8 is his birthday. He was a soldier and felt honored to fight for our great country; he had great courage. I am blessed to have known him. So much respect for him & also many regrets. I still have his gold cross he wore while in the Army as well as his dog tags. I will always remember him and forever be grateful to him. Don, until we meet again on the golden streets of Heaven. It will be a glorious day. **Donna Briggs**



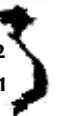
"Giusta is second from the left in this picture, we had just been resupplied and the guys were having some fun with the shaving cream out of the SP package." **Gregg Corbin**

Phillip Raymond Goody, 22
L/CPL, 8RAR, 5/1/70

"He was a railway worker, fruit picker and cane cutter before called up in October, 1968. A member of 8 RAR, he was shot accidentally during night ambush operations on May 1, 1970 in Phuoc Tuy Province. Monto Cemetery, Qld."



(continued...)



William Leon Hudnall, 20

PFC, C/2/503, 6/29/70

9/19/13: "We Remember. William is buried at Shiloh Baptist Church Cemetery, Reedville, Northumberland County, VA." **Robert Sage**



Edward Jackson, Jr., 33

SFC, D/4/503, 5/1/70

5/2/14: "Sky Soldier Honored. We both served in the 173rd Herd... different units and different times, but both hit in Binh Dinh province. I was able to come home and now we who survived offer our respects to you and condolences for your family. You are remembered." **Mike Switzer**



Leonard Cyril Jones, 23

PTE, RNZIR, 6/18/70

"Killed in action, 18 Juned 1970 – command detonated mine."

Michael Robert Kernan, 20

SGT, C/3/503, 5/25/70

(Virtual Wall states A/3/503)

1/22/16: "Kathy, Michael & Heinz Alhmayer. I remember when Heinz was killed and I went to high school with Kathy, Mike's sister. I don't think anyone knew the pain Mike's family went through but as I get older I'm ashamed I didn't. This was a time when their phone would ring and on the other end of the receiver was some despicable human being saying I'm glad your son is dead. I have not seen Kathy in 44 years. I pray Mike's soul flies free and strong over her." **Unsigned**



John Richard Knaus, 20

SGT, 173d LRRP, 5/7/70

(Virtual Wall states N75 Rgr)

10/8/03: "John in Team B / I was in Team F. John, we trained together and went to Nam with the 75th Rangers together. You and I were the best of friends. We were to go home together. You were killed with just over two weeks to go. I was wounded shortly after. Do you remember Ramos? He was killed or died the day after you were hit.... John I miss you...Most everyone you and I know lost their lives over there...I can't understand why I made it back. I should have gone with my team. As you recall 3 were killed instantly / two others seriously wounded by an 155mm artillery shell (booby-trapped)...John -you are in my thoughts nearly EVERY DAY..I wouldn't have it any



other way...I still have not been able to locate your family but I will keep trying... Goodbye my friend from Brazil, South America and New Jersey.

Sgt. Ron Combs

173rd Airborne, 75th Rangers. This is a picture of my brother with some of his fellow soldiers. Johnny is the one on the right. If you recognize one or more of the other soldiers in this picture, please contact me.



Mark Knaus, MKNAUS1952@aol.com Posted 4/28/05



Kenneth Howard Lamborn, 20

SP4, 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

(KIA while on mission to rescue 173d troopers. See Ken's Distinguished Flying Cross report on Page 26)



6/10/03: "A Friend. Today is the 33rd anniversary of the death of the best friend I ever had. I'll only call him by his last name, as that is all I ever called him by when I knew him. I became friends with him while he was just working as a mechanic in the Hangar, I was a Crew Chief on a Dustoff. He used to show me pictures of his daughter that was born after he came over. Unfortunately, stories I told of my flying adventures made him want to crew a ship too. I was getting short, so as I trained him in crewing. I kind of viewed him as my replacement. I finally felt I had taught him everything I thought I could, and turned him loose with his own ship. Within a week he was shot down and killed. I have carried much guilt over these last 33 years, that I got him into danger, and that my teaching was inadequate. Immediately after his death, I extended my tour, swearing no one would die in my place. I eventually spent 27 months there. I have tried for 20 years to find his family, especially the daughter he never saw, without success. It wasn't till I saw a remembrance posted by his Aircraft Commander that I got some closure. Lamborn was a special person in life, and died an unsung hero. I will carry him in my heart always. I never made a friend over there after that." **Terry Boese**

(continued...)



Stanely Gordon Larsson, 23

PTE, 7RAR, 6/6/70

“Adelaide SA, was a fitter and turner when called up on January 30, 1969. The rifleman private with 7RAR was killed in an enemy explosion in Phuoc Tuy Province on June 6, 1970.”



man whom I could always count on. You knew that Steen Foster was new as T-L and went with him into a hostile Cambodian A.O. on only a moments notice. Now you, Foster, and Hoa are where only the brave can go. I'll never forget your sacrifice, Loisel. Rangers Lead the way.”

Your L-T, John Eder

Billy Everett Lawrence, 20

CPL, B/1/503, 5/25/70

1/20/09: “A man of honor. You are the uncle my son never knew, that he is named after. He is about to have his first child, and lives in peace and freedom that you fought and died for. Thank You for the legacy.” **Leslie**



John Arthur McGinn, 20

SGT, C/4/503, 6/28/70

8/8/02: “Jack McGinn was my friend.

I remember the day I found out that I'd lost one of my closest college friends. Jack McGinn was a tow-headed kid from Chevy Chase, Maryland, who had a warm, winning smile and an easy manner. Jack and I had met and gone through fraternity rush together at the beginning of our freshman year. Jack pledged Sigma Pi Fraternity and tried like hell to get me to do the same. I really wanted to, but I knew that I would have been the only Jewish guy in the house; I wimped out.



We each ended up running for office and being elected to the Freshman Senate from different dorms, then working together as two of that body's commissioners for the next class of freshmen at the beginning of our sophomore year. That activity continued through the winter.

We saw less of each other during our junior year. I got involved with a girl and we decided to get engaged. Jack decided not to return to college for his senior year and enlisted in the Army instead.

Following completion of basic and advanced infantry training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, he left for Vietnam as a rifle squad leader. A few weeks later, he was dead. I'll never forget the day I found out. Dean Brodie, a bear of a man who was the advisor to the Freshman Senate, spotted me in a hallway of the student union and motioned me into his office. He closed the door. An inveterate kidder, he was strangely serious and gracious that day, asking me to take a seat on a couch as he sat opposite me on the edge of his desk.

‘I have some sad news,’ he said. ‘Jack McGinn died.’

(continued...)

 **Michael James Le Leaux, 18**

SP4, A/3/503, 6/14/70

11/7/14: “My friend, my brother. Mike and I joined the Army on the buddy plan in Trinity Texas. He wanted to make changes in his life, to return and show all that he was a man of quality and dignity. After we shared boot camp in Ft Bliss he went home for a leave before heading to Nam... I didn't get to go, I was sent straight to AIT..... He spent some time with my mom and dad, they loved him because he loved me... I pray that God has blessed you Mike... you walked point for many of us long before we knew what it was...” **Jerry Joe Cox**



Grady Rudolph Lester, Jr., 21

SSG, A/1/503, 5/2/70

3/26/09: “I Miss You. I was engaged to Rudy when he was killed in Viet Nam. It was a horrible time in my life. I was 19 and he had turned 21 the previous February. My Dad had to hold me up during his burial. He was intelligent, witty, funny, loving, a wonderful man. I still miss him and think about him almost every day especially when I hear a song he liked. He made me laugh and feel loved and secure. I still miss him.” **Beth Carlton**



James Lee Loisel, 19

CPL, 173d LRRP, 5/14/70

(Virtual Wall states C/75th Inf)

12/5/01: “Always a Volunteer. Loisel, when I needed another man for Team 4-4, you stepped up and volunteered. You were a fine young



It hit me hard. I felt my throat tighten, a knot in my gut, my eyes water. My eyes and fingers fixated on the tight weave of the thick black fabric of his couch. Dean Brodie told me what he knew, then came over and put his hand on my shoulder.

'You liked him a lot, didn't you?'

I nodded, unable to speak for a few minutes.

'He was a good friend,' was about all that I could say. I cried for a few minutes, then thanked him for telling me. With an arm around my shoulders, he slowly walked me out of his office. 'You were a good friend, too,' he said.

My own Army service started a year or so later, but I never went to Vietnam.

I went to the wall try to find Jack's name in 1981, but I was not successful. I tried again in '82 and found it, and took a rubbing. That felt like the goodbye we never had that summer eleven years before.

I never met Jack's folks. If they should happen to read this, I want them to know what a great son they had, and how many friends back at Ohio State were affected by his loss.

I hope to honor his memory and his service by never forgetting him." Steven Hirsch

Daniel Jackson McMahan, 20
SGT, B/1/503, 6/9/70

6/26/15: *"Our Point Man. Donald was one of our point men. Our platoon was named by the NVA as "Satan's Platoon", for obvious reasons. Only the bravest and best could walk point – and he was! His daughter was 7 months old when he was killed. Don lives on to this day in the hearts and minds of those of us who knew him. May God bless Don and his family. RIP Sky Soldier. Airborne all the Way Donald!!" 1LT Steve McNew*



Note: We believe the LT meant to say Daniel. Ed
[See Narrative of Dan McMahan's Final Moments by Bill Perkins on Page 23]

Charles Richard McNulty, 22
SSG, D/2/503, 5/16/70

3/16/09: *"You are Not Forgotten. You were a good soldier. I remember how quiet you were when you first joined my squad. You were steady and dependable. We lost so many to booby traps and you were one as well. I held you in my arms as you died and I remember how helpless I felt not being able to save you. Your sacrifice was great but your contribution was equally as great."*



Gary Ross

David Ernest Meade, 21
1LT, D/2/503, 5/15/70

9/11/02: *"A Big brother sends his love. I can't begin to tell you in words how much your physical presence is missed. We think of you all the time and speak of you warmly. We remember how hard you worked getting the things you wanted. Your wife, Sally, was kind to share some of your letters from Vietnam with me. It made me feel closer to you. I could feel the deep concern you had for the safety of your men under your command. I often try to imagine how close we and our families would have been had your life not ended so suddenly. I hope you feel my love and respect for you. I miss you brother! Sleep well until we reunite! Your brother," Leon ("Squeak")*



John Leslie Morgan, 21
PTE, 2 AOD, 6/1/70

"Melbourne, Victoria, was an apprentice printer when he was called up on January 29, 1969. The private storeman technician with 2 Advanced Ordnance Depot of the RAAOC died in an accident at 1ALSG, Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy, on June 1, 1970."

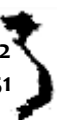


Lester Neal Moulton, 28
1LT, B/1/503, 5/25/70

1/25/19: *"A Johnson Platoon Member. LT. Moulton Sir, You would remember me as Porky. My nickname. I served with you just a short time as I DEROSed March 8 1970. I knew you long enough to hear the stories of a proud Husband and Father. I also heard that you were a legend in your OCS class. We may have been the only fathers of 2 there at that point. You will Never be Forgotten Sir. Your men, those who were wounded and those who survive assure that your name and Sacrifice is remembered in the Highest Respect and Honor. You are recognized at the reunions of your Platoon every year since the first 2 members reunited in 1972. May God Bless you and Your Family and May You Rest In Peace. All The Way Sir." David R. Dyess*



(continued...)



Donald Wayne Myers, 20

SGT, B/1/503, 5/27/70
(Virtual Wall states B/4/503)

4/30/14: "I wish I could have met you, one day I will. I am Donald Wayne Myers II, named in your honor. You and my dad were college friends and served together. You didn't make it home but trust I think of you often. When I make heaven, in Christ's name, I trust you will be one of the saints there to greet me. Thank you for your service, I'm a patriot in your honor." **Donald Wayne Myers II**



Philip Morey Overbeck, 22

1LT, B/4/503, 6/10/70

12/7/13: "I was by your side. I was surprised to see you take second in line behind point that fateful day as we left the compound. I wondered how could the platoon leader choose such a dangerous position. I did not know you too well but remember talking with you briefly on the beach shortly before that day. All I remember from our conversation was that we were talking about leadership or something of that nature. What you had said that day was 'it was not as important whether you make a right decision or wrong decision...rather it was to make a decision at all'. You were respected by those who really knew you and by us who knew you so briefly as well. After that blast I was the first to find you and could see that your fate was quick. I could only wonder how long it would take for your loved ones in the states to learn of what I had just witnessed and how unfair it was for all. I was in shock to see how indiscriminate death was in such a place as rank had no privilege in harms way. Lt Overbeck just may have sacrificed himself quite possibly for me or another who should have been second in line that very day. Such is where the 'honor' lies in an otherwise useless war fought by our young. Actions can be deemed honorable ...maybe even the intentions of war ...but certainly not war itself". **Unsigned**



Paul John Navarre, 21

PTE, 7RAR, 6/6/70

"Terang, Victoria, was a clerk with the Victorian Railways when called up on April 23, 1969. The rifleman private from 7RAR was one of 2,500 National Servicemen sent to Vietnam in 1967. Wounded in action by an enemy mine in Phuoc Tuy province, he died on June 6, 1970 in 1 Australian Field Hospital, Vung Tau."



Dennis William Neal, 22

PTE, 2RAR, 5/25/70

"Gympie, Queensland, was a motor mechanic when called up in 1969. He was posted to 2RAR and went to Vietnam on May 17, 1970. He was returning from the section's first operation when a booby trap detonated, killing Private Dennis and another soldier on 25 May 1970."



Rafael Olivo, 19

SP4, B/1/503, 5/25/70

3/1/04: "We Remember. Rafael is buried at Puerto Rico Nat Cem, Bayamon, PR. His stone Co B, 1 INF, 503 INF, 173 ABN BDE." **Robert Sage**



Charles Donald Plumb, Jr., 21

SSG, B/4/503, 5/7/70

1/9/05: "Brothers in arms. Dear Charlie, My Brother Johnny died in Nam on the same day and province that you did. Maybe you were together. I'm deeply sorry but I want all of you to know that you have not been forgotten and that we all miss you very much and that you will always be in our thoughts and prayers. You are still part of our lives. Take care, my friend." **Mark Knaus**



 **Donald Warren Ollila, 21**

SGT, B/3/503, 6/8/70

2/16/19: "Forever Young. Took my Oath with Don and Basic Training at Ft. Lewis (B-4-2). Most of our Basic Platoon were young men from South Dakota and we were very close knit. 50 years later I still visit Don and leave a coin on his headstone. Rest in Peace my Brother." **Eric Braband**



(continued...)





Stephen Kealoha Ramos, 19

PFC, 173d LRRP, 6/30/70

(Virtual Wall states N/75 Rgr)

6/27/02: "Brothers. Steve and I

went to AIT and airborne school together and later wound up in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He served in November Rangers and, after a stint as a grunt in the 2/503, I served in Casper Flight Platoon as a doorgunner. One of my close buddies was Ed Liptrap: a crewchief. During a night extraction Steve could not get on Ed's helicopter. He leaped and Ed held on to him. Steve slipped from Ed's grasp and fell to his death. I grieved for Steve as I comforted my friend. Ed and I stayed up the rest of the night. I'll never forget the sun coming up that morning. Ed and I went to breakfast and then flew our missions. For over thirty years I have searched for Ed. I hope I find him." **John Potts**



Richard Rodrigues, 18

CPL, B/1/503, 5/25/70

(Virtual Wall states 173d Eng)

4/6/16: "Reconnected because of

your Sacrifice. Dear Richard, It's because of writing on your Remembrance Wall page that your sister and I have had a chance to reconnect after all these years. We were such good friends in High School. I hope everyone you were friends with find this page (Wall of Faces) where they can share their memories of you. It's very comforting when we come and read the comments friends write, seems to bring us all together again. After all these years you are never going to be forgotten, not by me, or your Sisters, or your friends. You sacrificed your life for this country and others, so there might be freedom, peace and security for others, and that sacrifice will never be forgotten. I hope you have had the chance to meet my brother, as I'm sure you and he are looking down on Kathy and I and hope we have made you proud of us, with the accomplishments and lives we have lived. Remembering you, and always in my prayers."



Joanne Rago

Michael Wayne Ray, 21

SP5, C/Spt Bn, 5/12/70

2/20/03: "Ike was a good friend. I

went to high school with Ike. He was a year ahead of me but I'm proud to call him friend. He was the kind of person that would do anything for you. After graduation I joined the USMC and served a tour in Nam. I never pass a memorial or observe Veterans Day without thinking of my friend 'IKE RAY'. I know he is now safely guarding the gates of Heaven. We miss you Ike." **Acarob**



Ian Neil Scott, 21

SPR, 1 Fd Sqn, 6/14/70

"Killed in Action (land mine), South Vietnam, 14 June 1970, aged 21 years. Charleville General Cemetery, Qld."



John Calvin Sherman, 19

SSG, E/1/503, 5/2/70

11/21/17: "John was a friend to all. I remember John as being one of the most friendly guys a person would ever meet. He would not hesitate to help a fellow soldier and would not ask someone to do a dangerous assignment that he would not do himself. I was at LZ Uplift when word came in about John. None of his fellow soldiers could believe what had happened. I do remember John extended his tour in Vietnam 6 months and was able to go home before coming back. I have been to the mobile wall twice and each time I cried because he was such a great and trusted friend to all of those in Echo Company. Hope to see you again someday John. George."



George M. Weekley



John Robinson, 22

CPL, D/1/503, 6/8/70

5/25/15: "Devoted daughter.

Daddy there are not enough words to express what losing you has done to me. I remember you and love you always! Proud of you daddy and miss you every day.. Sleep in Peace. Your daughter Stacey."



Stacey Robinson



(continued...)



Curtis Smith, 19

SP4, C/3/503, 5/25/70

(Virtual Wall states HHC/3/503)

10/30/04: *"We Remember. Curtis is buried at Ft Sheridan Nat Cem."*
Robert Sage



Desmond John Tully, 21

PTE, 2RAR, 5/29/70

"Lismore NSW, was a bank clerk when called up on April 23, 1969. After training at Townsville, he arrived in Vietnam in May 1969 with 8 Platoon, C Company, of 2RAR. He was killed by an enemy mine on May 29, 1970."



Steven Ray Stoltz, 20

SGT, A/4/503, 6/18/70

11/13/01: *"To A Friend. Steve this is the least I could do for a friend, fellow soldier and the fact that I miss you. Lest we forget. Damn it Steve, I came home, why didn't you?"*



David J. Peters

(Photo of Steve posted by his friend)

David John Waldock, 30

SGT, 24 Const Sqn, 6/26/70

"Died illness, Repatriation General Hospital, Springbank, Adelaide, South Australia. Centennial Park Cemetery, South Australia."



Thomas Edward Watson, 20

PFC, A/4/503, 6/24/70

10/29/04: *"Hi Buddy. Tom, I remember our training at Ft. Gordon and Airborne school together. I recall the night we went AWOL for the night to party. We had a great time. We were delighted that we were going to the 173rd Airborne. No way did we want to go to a leg unit! I was a door gunner with Casper Platoon when you were killed. It is now 2004 and you still come into my mind. I will always remember you. AIRBORNE. Your Buddy,"* **John Potts**



Victor "Doc" Arnaldo Tafoya, 18

CPL, B/1/503, 6/7/70

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/503)



8/8/09: *"A short while....Our moms worked together at the A&W in Tooele, your brother Michael & I went to school together, you used to take me home to the Depot....I went to your funeral :(think of you often...sad you are gone. Rest in peace."*



Sue Morie

John Frederick Tillou, Jr., 20

CPL, B/1/503, 6/4/70

3/26/06: *"My friend & soldier. T, It has been 36 years since we served together in Vietnam. I have always remembered all you taught me. You are always in the thoughts of the Satan pl members who had the honor to serve with you."*



Sgt. Ken Gaudet

Michael Patrick Tomsic, 19

SP5, D/3/503, 6/9/70

(Virtual Wall states 173d Spt Bn)

2/17/01: *"Mickey Tomsic. Mickey was a very young boy when he left for Vietnam. We never saw him alive again. He was a good son and a good friend to our family. We have missed him ever since he died. I don't think we will ever forget him!!"*



Frances D. Olson

James Christopher Wheeler, 20

SP4, D/2/503, 5/20/70

5/29/07: *"Remembering a young man who never even got the chance to vote in any election. James, to say thank you for your service and sacrifice does not seem to come even close to saying enough. You went to Vietnam, came home, then went back again. I so much regret that you ever had to do that, and that you did not have the chance to spend more time with your family and friends. You are remembered, and appreciated. RIP Sincerely, one of your many OHS Classmates of 1968, Linda M W."* **L. Mongillo**



Bogdan K. Wojcik,

AB, RAN, 6/21/70





INCOMING!!!



A Fallen Buddy

Thanks! Was always wondering what happened to our friend **Ralph Santos**, a combat photographer with 46th PIO (Issue 91, Page 9, KIA 4/12/70).

My First Sgt was his uncle, my brother who was with 3rd Batt knew Ralph. My brother passed 11 years ago from complications of Agent Orange.

Herd Strong!

Jess Palomo
B/2/503



Ralph
46th PIO

The True Meaning of Memorial Day Defined by One Photo



Roger Dick, C/2/503 of Dak To fame, his bride Kathy and their grandson Tanner on this Memorial Day.

Buddy Looking for Buddy

Wayne Bowers of C/2/503 is looking to hookup with and/or find information about **SGT Bronson** who served several tours, '67-'68 with C/2/503 and also D/2/503. Please contact Wayne at bowway@aol.com if you can help. Thanks!

Bravo Bull LT Reflects on Long Binh Post

Currently working through *VIETNAM WAR* by The Smithsonian, a large "coffee table" book. I came across a chapter detailing what I've said when folks have asked me about the war.

I've said "most guys that served in Vietnam never saw combat. Additionally, many lived better in country than they did at home."

"Over the course of the war the United States built hundreds of bases across Vietnam.

Some were rugged outpost perched on mountaintops, or hidden deep in the jungle. While others were just as well developed as any stateside base.

One - Long Binh Post - was so large that it had a commuter bus service."

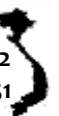
Only the fortunate few got to crawl around in the mud, feed the leeches, cry and bleed.

Jim Robinson
B/2/503



Long Binh Post

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



In The Rear With The Gear

“IN AUGUST 1970, the *Army Reporter* newspaper profiled some fun-loving clerks of the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Working far from the fighting, these men would never earn a medal for valor, so they created their own: the Silver Paper Clip. In a ceremony brimming with irony, they bestowed the honor on one of their brethren, along with this citation:

Specialist Howard distinguished himself with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life when he single-handedly answered over 200 telephone calls and processed in fifteen new men, exposing himself to a hail of questions. He moved from the relative safety of his desk to the P.X. where he repeatedly bought cases of soda. He organized and led his section as they swept out their hootch. Ignoring the personnel NCO, he cleaned his typewriter, picked up the mail, petted four dogs, ran off three stencils and took his malaria pill....’

One colonel joked, ‘If we ever really got attacked, the V.C. would have to use the scheduled bus service to get around the base.’”

Excerpt from “*Easing Living in a Hard War: Behind the Lines in Vietnam*” by Meredith H. Lair

I Wanted To Kiss The Sonofabitch!

I offered this little tale before, but, it seems appropriate to repeat it here.

Many years ago at a time when I was not wearing ‘The Hat’, I found myself in the ladies’ shoe section at Macy’s in Melbourne, FL doing the typical husband’s job of standing around while the wife, Reggie, had to personally inspect every pair of shoes in the joint, not leaving one pair uninspected.

A few steps away was a man doing his own standing around while wearing The Hat and that leather jacket we’ve all seen (previously on sale in downtown Bien Hoa for a reasonable amount of P’s), bestowed with countless VN war patches, pins and buttons and bangles plus the statement about having been to hell. I tapped him on his shoulder.

“You look like one of them Vietnam vets I’ve heard so much about,” I kiddingly said to him.

Asking him when and with which unit he served, the man replied, “I was a clerk typist in Saigon.” No shit! There was no, ‘I won the war single-handedly’ from this honest dude.

I wanted to kiss the sonofabitch!

**Lew “Smitty” Smith
HHC/2/503**



Lest we forget...



DUE TO A COMPUTER SYSTEM FAILURE A NUMBER OF EMAILS AND ADDRESSES WERE LOST SINCE OUR APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER. IF YOU EMAILED A SUBMISSION FOR OUR NEWSLETTER SINCE THEN BUT DON’T SEE IT IN THIS ISSUE, PLEASE RESEND TO RTO173@ATT.NET

ALSO, PLEASE FORWARD THIS ISSUE TO ALL 2/503 TROOPERS ON YOUR EMAIL LIST. ANYONE WHO DIDN’T RECEIVE IT FROM ME, PLEASE SEND A NOTE TO BE RE-ADDED TO THE CIRCULATION LIST. THANKS! Ed

(INCOMING!!! continued...)



**In honor of George Taylor, 1/503
1950 ~ 2020**

Sky Soldier George Taylor reduced the number of homeless veterans in Brevard County, Florida from over 1800 to less than 200.

His legacy and mission lives on! Support the organization he founded **National Veterans Homeless Support** <https://nvhs.org/>

**Scott "Doc" Fairchild, Psy.D
LTC (Ret), 82nd Abn Div**



"Outstanding Military Service" award winner George Taylor during the first annual Space Coast Public Service Awards & Hall of Fame Induction Gala at the King Center on September 24, 2016. The Space Coast Daily Awards Committee reviewed an incredible list of nominations and recognized more than 100 extraordinary Space Coast Public Servants during this very special event. (Steve Wilson image)

Note: Doc Scott to many Sky Soldiers is known as the "PTSD Guru", having conducted much of the early research on and diagnosis of the illness for the army at Walter Reed. If you or someone you know is in need of treatment, we highly recommend you contact him at Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, FL. Ed

2/503 RVN Photos & Docs

Gentlemen:

Over the years I've compiled countless VN era photos and documents from troopers of the 2/503 RVN. I've given instructions to my bride and sons to, upon my demise, forward all these pictures and records to the 173d in Vincenza. In the meantime, as many as possible will continue to be included in our newsletter.

If you have photos and docs of and about our battalion with no plans for their long-term future, please consider sending them or copies to me. They'll be included in the trove of material to be presented one day to the active 173d ABCT. ATW!

**Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503 '65/'66
rto173@att.net
801 Maple Ridge Drive
Merritt Island, FL 32952**

**KIA SKY SOLDIER PHOTOS WHICH
REMAIN MISSING FOR
THE WALL OF FACES**



1-503d Infantry Battalion

TOLLIVER, Samuel S.

Feb 12, 1947-8 Nov 1965

Richmond, VA

A/1-503

Fort Harrison National Cemetery, VA

2-503d Infantry Battalion

WILSON, Herbert Jr.

Aug 26, 1947 - Mar 3, 1967

New York, NY

C/2-503

Long Island National Cemetery, NY

3-503 Infantry Battalion

ZIMMERMAN, Terry

Sep 9, 1948 - Mar 16, 1968

New York, NY

D/3-503

Long Island National Cemetery, NY

4-503d Infantry Battalion

C/75th, N/75th

LARACUENTE, Ernesto Luis

Feb 22, 1948 - Nov 4, 1969

New York, NY

C /75

St. Raymond's Cemetery, Bronx, NY

FOUND – Awaiting Posting

If you are in possession of any of the missing photos, please email to Col. Ken Smith, kvsmith173@gmail.com



A VIEW FROM THE RIDGE

23 June, 1970

We were always in the "Suai Ca" or the "506" Valley when we lost someone or took a casualty. On this trip to the valley we had split the platoon up and our squad was laagered on the crest of a long ridge running parallel to route 506, a red dirt road that ran the length of the valley. We could watch the entire valley from there and had a sense of being able to see everything that happened. It was an illusion, of course, but the view from the ridge was broad and peaceful. The slopes leading down to the valley floor were covered with scrub brush and at places a hard scabble that caused us to slip and slide whenever we had to run a patrol down to the floor for recon or ambush. It seems like we were camped in that location for days.

On this trip, our squad was made up of Staff Sergeant Bill King, Sp/4's Luke Lohman, Willy "Popcorn" Wright, Pat Sheeley, Dave Greene and a couple of other guys along with myself, giving us nearly the strength of a complete squad. We occupied the ridge with the platoon headquarters section. Lt. Mathers was our Platoon Leader and still in the field with us at that point. The LT was from Virginia Beach, near my home in Newport News. He was always relaxed, displaying a confidence that should have come from a previous tour but this was his first trip in country - like most of the rest of us. SFC Via was with us, so was Pennathy, Canary, and others...

One of the platoon's other squads was positioned on the valley floor. We knew approximately where they were, based on map coordinates. We could almost see the exact area in the valley where they were positioned but couldn't see them individually. They were pretty good at hiding out!

We had positioned OP's on our flanks on the ridge and the rest of us were spending the days concealed but relaxing - not doing long, tiring patrols. We were also traveling with a sniper team on this trip - two more guys like us - but armed with better weapons! The sniper team was armed with a match grade M14 rifle and were outfitted with a variety of scopes, range finders and starlight technology. Their training and equipment was the source of a lot of long conversation and speculation on what they could hit and how far away they could hit it.

x

Early in the afternoon a few days after beginning this particular mission, the position of Gene's squad on the valley floor was suddenly revealed by an eruption of automatic rifle fire echoing up from the valley. It was instantly answered by the return fire of his squad members as they grabbed their weapons and tried to recover from the surprise encounter with the enemy. The fire exchange didn't last too long - tapering off quickly, as if a cease-fire had been called. Up on the ridge overlooking the valley, Lt. Mathers quickly got their squad leader on the horn - I don't remember his name, he was a "senior" staff sergeant, with experience in the field - for a situation report. It seemed that a couple of enemy soldiers had quietly and accidentally stumbled onto our guys. The enemy's surprise was probably as great as theirs. They got off the first volley - it was enough - Gene Cowan went down - caught in the face by the sprayed fire of the enemy AK-47. Gene was gone from us as quickly as the enemy's fire had erupted. Gene's squad returned fire and sought the quickly disappearing enemy - they mounted a four or five man chase team but could find no bodies to claim as evidence of having avenged Gene's death - only a blood trail that went on for some distance. The chase team quickly regrouped. Their squad leader called in a friendly KIA by roster line number that's when we knew that it was Gene who was gone.

I didn't know Gene - only a few of our guys did - he was a pretty quiet guy and had not been in-country very long.

I look for his name on "The Wall" whenever I'm there.

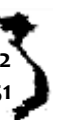
Days later, back at LZ Uplift, the Battalion Chaplain held a memorial service for Gene.

**Former Staff Sergeant Lee Wilkerson
"B" Co., 3rd Bn., 503rd Infantry
173d Airborne Brigade**

Source: *The Wall of Faces*
(Photo added)



**Gene Gowan in
the boonies**



From the archives....

Veteran Scout Dog Proves Indispensable 'Leg' to 173rd



Rikans, '67-'68

DAK TO, (173rd ABN-IO) A 3 ½-year-old veteran attached to the 173rd Airborne Brigade has once again proved himself indispensable even though he is a "leg".

The veteran is a black and white German shepherd named Satan, a member of the brigade's 39th Scout Dog Platoon.

Last June, while on point with 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry paratroopers, Satan was wounded five times by enemy fire. He was rushed to Tan Son Nhut Air Base Hospital where he lay in critical condition.

He was credited with saving the life of a seriously wounded paratrooper by dragging him past the black-bereted enemy soldiers.

A newly assigned scout dog handler, PFC Janis Rikans, was asked to nurse the wounded shepherd dog back to health.

The first few days Satan was wary of his new master. The handler took the dog to sick call daily, walked him, groomed him and soon won the confidence and affection of his charge.

Just three weeks after their initial meeting, dog and master were back in the field pursuing the enemy.

After a week in the highlands Satan developed a limp in his front leg. Dog and handler were returned to base camp where an examination revealed the dog to have acute arthritis. Several antibiotic injections proved successful in curing the ailment.

At Tluy Ho during Operation Rolling, the pair developed into a very effective scout element.

Satan gave early and accurate alerts on former enemy bunkers and camp sites. On one patrol with Company B, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, Janis and his dog unearthed a tunnel strung with comms wire containing valuable enemy communications equipment.

Returning here with the paratroopers, Janis and his dog were assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry.

As the paratroopers swept through the vacant bunkers, Satan continued to alert. At the crest of a hill, a strong warning from the German Shepherd indicated snipers in the trees. The warned paratroopers moved up on line where they met light enemy resistance.

After a brief skirmish, the Sky Soldiers pushed on to ascend Hill 882. With Satan and Rikans once again leading the way, the paratroopers were again warned of the lurking sniper ambush.

With their positions detected by the scout dog team, the Communists began to assault the paratroopers with small arms, mortar and rocket fire.

During the five-hour battle, the paratroopers killed 65 North Vietnamese soldiers by body count while suffering light casualties themselves.

Mike Voorhees, 39th Scout Dog Platoon, Sep. '66-May '67, with Satan

Source:
THE ARMY REPORTER
Long Binh, Vietnam,
January 6, 1968
(photos added)



Erline A. Anderson, May '67-June '67, another handler of Satan, was killed in action on June 22, 1967, during Operation Stillwell at Dak To in Kontum province.



Friends (something here for everyone)

Bob Warfield
B/2/503, '65/'66

Spent a productive day, many years back, at National Archives II, on New Hampshire Avenue in DC; found typed after action report on first air assault into Cu Chi, near Saigon. Guy named Willie J. Boyd, B/2/503, we guests with 5th ARVN, were lucky to make it, days 3 & 4 in country (8-9 May 1965, corresponding with our remembrance dates for Jaffrey).

Here's an after action pic that no one quite believes (found in a book of *VC photographers* at Cu Chi tourist draw, while visiting Saigon with couple of friends when off-route on a round the world bike trip in 2000.



Tiểu đoàn Quyết Thắng trưng bày chiến lợi phẩm trong trận tiêu diệt Trung đoàn địch tại Bàu Lách, Ninh Đức, Củ Chi (09-5-1965).

Quyết Thắng Battalion was displaying the booty seized in the battle wiping out a regiment of enemy at Bàu Lách, Nhuận Đức, Củ Chi (9-5-1965).

Le Bataillon Quyết Thắng faisait une exposition des trophées saisies dans une bataille mettant hors de combat d'un régiment ennemi à Bàu Lách, Nhuận Đức, Củ Chi (9.5.1965).

It was there at Cu Chi when SSG Boyd caught one waiting for Warfield in the middle of a rice paddy. He stayed behind as ARVN 9th Regt troops passed or fell across a 300 meter killing field, wondering whether I might show up, long past flight of the command group, MACV advisers and shot-down SF target spotters, toward safety of Trung Lap, as supporting artillery tubes cooled at the Ranger training base.

So my distinction, other than a gun fight and getting near-missed (a bunch), was to combat-dress the arm of the first Purple Heart in the 173d ABCT. Boyd completed his Army career as CSM.

Interestingly, Cu Chi was finally subdued by the 25th Infantry Division, commanded by none other than MG Ellis (Butch) Warner Williamson, who led the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) to Viet Nam 5 May 1965, following organization on Okinawa, June 1963. All that occurred before LTC Eyster (following) was fatally wounded. And following that, LTC Sang, ARVN commander at the Cu Chi fight (flight), was reinstated to regimental command in time to preside over near annihilation of his unit, himself included with the command group and all MACV advisers, amid the rubber trees of Michelin's fading colonial empire. Lest we forget, however "vulcanized" the world, natural latex is still important (around \$24B/2019), but Vietnamese tappers are producing college graduates, and colonial empires, together with all of their rapacious grief, are history.

GEORGE EYSTER



LTC George S. Eyster, Jr. (USMA 1945), Bn CO, 2/28 IR, 1st ID, right, is bandaged after being shot by a sniper in 1966 at Trung Lap (Tanh Hoa), near Saigon; died of wounds, 3d Surg Hosp (Bien Hoa), early AM, 14 Jan 1966. (AP Photo/Horst Faas)

COL George E. Dexter, our Bn CO, 2/503 IR (Abn), 173d ABCT, was a classmate. Recovering from wounds, ambulatory and about, I'm pretty sure that I was the last infantry soldier, maybe the last person, to see Eyster alive, sitting up in his bed, awake, lucid, hopeful, around midnight, 13-14 Jan.

Stay safe. In touch.

bob w

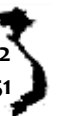


Sky Soldiers...Pic From The Past

Thanks to Don Phillips, Jr., Col. (Ret), son of the late Col. Don Phillips, HHC/S-3 & CO C/2/503, '66/'67. (Then) Captain Phillips is shown on the left of this photo wearing helmet while holding maps. Please let us know names of other troopers in the pic and we'll republish the photo with their names in a future issue. Ed



“On 10 November 1966, on Operation “Meridan” a search and destroy operation was conducted by the 2nd Bn., 503rd Abn Inf., 173rd Abn Bde., (Separate) approx. 46 miles northwest of Bien Hoa, near the Saigon River. Cpt Don Phillips (left) company commander, ‘C’ Co., briefs his Plt leaders their mission against a suspected Viet Cong position.” (Photo by SSG Howard C. Breedlove, USA Special Photo Det, Pacific)





SGT DANIEL McMAHAN

B/1/503, KIA 6/9/70

Narrative of His Final Moments
by Bill Perkins, 6.9.2015



Dan, B/1/503

I was a Warrant Officer pilot on unarmed 498th Medical Company (Helicopter Ambulance) Dustoff 11 or 13, UH-1H 68-16347 on June 9, 1970 when we were shot down in flames in Binh Dinh Province just outside of LZ Uplift and not far from Phu Cat AFB. We were attempting to save the life of gunshot wounded SGT Daniel McMahan of B/1/503 of 173rd Airborne (Herd) when the local 'friendly' VC opened up on us with everything and flamed us up in flight. We were on fire and crashed burning and managed to escape this burning inferno with only seconds to spare. Tragically our crew chief SP4 Kenneth H. Lamborn of Auburn, CA was killed seconds later outside the aircraft but within 10-12 feet of the aircraft when he was struck in the head by the still spinning rotor blade or cook offs from our small arms ammunition inside the aircraft.

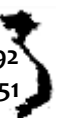
We had no time to retrieve our personal weapons as they were burning up. The 'Starblazer' gunships of 61st AHC out of LZ English were flying guncover for us but this did not save us as the ground troop gave the wrong location of where they received VC fire from. It is also possible that other VC lay in silence waiting, unknown to the ground troops, for the DUSTOFF to arrive. This was a common trick used by VC/NVA to ambush arriving rescue helicopters in Nam.

SGT McMahan died of his wounds in the LZ. A UH-1D from the 134th Demon AHC that was just passing by and saw our predicament landed immediately and took us with our dead crew chief back to LZ Uplift. Our brand new Dustoff bird was full of fuel and burned completely up in 20 to 30 minutes. I have color pictures taken of the remains by WO Charles Clapp later that day. SP4 Lamborn received the DFC. He was recommended for the DFC by the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

SP4 Ken Lamborn and SP4 Richard Doke, our medic, saved the lives of myself and WO Max Owens, the AC, when he and Doke remembered in those few critical seconds to pull our armored seat side plates to the rear so both of us pilots could quickly exit this raging inferno. If they had not done this critical deed then we pilots would have burned alive as there was no time to smash out the windows or do anything else as the flames were coming.



(continued...)



LZ Uplift, Jun 9, 1970 RVN

Submitted by Bill Perkins to the VHPA Dec 9 2002.

It is a typical sunny, humid day in Binh Dinh province and by mid morning a gentle coastal breeze is in effect as we are close to the coast and located on Hwy 1 halfway between Bong Song village to the north and Phu My/Phu Cat AFB to the south. Uplift is a good size base of the 173rd Airborne Brigade with their LRRP teams and other supporting elements including our UH-1H army medical evacuation (Dustoff) helicopter tail #68-16347 that is on constant 24 hour standby alert.

My fellow crew and I are halfway through a 10 day field standby and taking it easy in the shade of our hootch. Only a few feet and seconds away is our dustoff bird waiting for the inevitable call that always comes, sooner rather than later. Like your local fire department and EMS service we are there to provide rapid first response to the sick and injured or wounded, be they U.S. or allied soldiers or Vietnamese civilians suffering from road accidents, complicated childbirths or cook stove burns. Night poor weather conditions do not prevent us answering the urgent dustoff request.

Our unarmed aircraft are clearly marked with red and white crosses against a green background. We all hear the urgent dustoff request message coming into the RTO shack close by and immediately spring into action with Max Owens running to the RTO operator with his map board and the rest of racing to the medevac where we strap on our helmets and heavy armor chicken plates. While our crew chief and medic untie the rotor blades I strap into my seat and when the blades are clear begin an emergency engine start to rapidly bring the engine and rotor RPM up to full flight 6600RPM within less than the 2 minute minimum time to get airborne. Before I even reach full RPM, Owens is strapping into his seat and putting his helmet on with the map coordinates of the pickup zone (PZ/LZ) and details of the mission on his knee board. As I flip on the radios he takes control of the ac and we do a rapid dustoff departure from Uplift heading for the LZ.

On climb out to altitude Owens quickly briefs the rest of us that this is a hot LZ with a unit of the 173rd "The Herd" in contact with the enemy and a critical gunshot wounded U.S. casualty who is in need of urgent medevac to the 67th Evac hospital. We then switch radio channels to the FM frequency in use by the ground unit and overhead supporting UH-1C gunships of the 61st AHC with the call sign "Starblazers". A flight school buddy of mine, WO James McFadden, is flying pilot in one of these two gunships as I recognize his voice on the radio.



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ©

September/October 2003 Vol. 21, No. 5



WO Bill Perkins grips the controls of a hot LZ in his UH-1H medical evacuation helicopter at LZ Uplift in South Vietnam's Binh Dinh Province in the summer of 1970. The aircraft, on which Perkins was copilot, later would be shot down during a medevac mission near Uplift. Story on Page 21.

As soon as we are airborne we can see the circling gunships and ground smoke as the combat action is that close to Uplift. We are quickly told by the Starblazers and ground unit that the guns have just finished another gun run on the suspected VC ambush positions and all hostile fire has ceased. We are given the all clear signal to go in for the urgent dustoff pickup. Owens tells the ground unit to pop colored smoke to mark the exact spot of the wounded casualty who is located next to a tree line. As Max starts the approach into the hot LZ I place my hands and feet on the controls as is standard procedure in case he is killed or wounded by flying bullets and I place our intercom on hot mike so all of us crew can instantly communicate with each other. The medic and crew chief prepare to treat the wounded.

All is quiet as we descend to short final approach at 100-150 feet and then all holy hell breaks loose as the loudest noise I have ever heard and will ever hear (metal on metal) erupts as 100 or more armor piercing AK-47 and 37MM rounds hit us in the left rear side of the aircraft just behind the crew compartment and in the engine area.

(continued...)



This is even much worse than when I was severely shot up on a dustoff in Cambodia in May 1970 or on a hoist mission in February of 70. Instantly the engine area is on fire as we start losing rotor RPM with all red and yellow caution lights blinking. Max instinctively turns us away from the LZ and manages to glide us over a tree line away from the enemy fire by milking the collective and cyclic controls to retain minimum rpm for a crash landing. The gunship pilots are yelling on the radio that dustoff is on fire and to get it Down!! NOW!!!

Luckily, there is plenty of open flat dried rice paddies in front of us. At approximately 35-50 feet I yanked hard on my pilot's emergency door release handle and the door fell cleanly away. Unbeknown to me Doke and Lamborn had the presence of mind to retract our pilot's seat side armor plates to allow Max and myself to quickly exit this now flaming inferno on crash landing. The flames and smoke are now into their crew compartment area and they have moved up front and just behind our seats. Using what little control and non flying RPM he had left, Max sets us down in a soft plowed paddy with a slight slope. The skids sink in up to the belly and instantly we all bail out of the aircraft to the right side with Max on my heels and coming over my seat and through my door right behind me. The fire was just behind his seat. I banged my head hard on the upper doorpost and later found out I had cut my leg on the lower edge of instrument panel.

We fell to the soft sandy ground and as we stood up a muffled explosion from inside the aircraft knocked us down again. I knew at this time that we all had cleared the burning aircraft. Again we got up and I remember stepping up onto and over a 1 to 2 foot dike and then taking cover behind this dike in the prone position with my .38 pistol in my hand. With sickening realization I now saw Ken Lamborn, our crew chief, laying face down in the paddy and within 15-20 feet of the aircraft. Our medic, Richard Doke, was kneeling beside him and nodded his head to us that Lamborn was dead. He had died instantly. I was approximately another 15 feet from them and thought Lamborn had been killed by the same or other VC who had just shot us down.

The dustoff was now a total raging inferno with thick black smoke billowing out of it and continuous hissing, sizzling, popping and muffled sounds coming from it as our small arms ammunition cooked off and fire extinguishers and other items exploded and burned. I was totally sick and disgusted to death to know that Ken had escaped alive with us from the burning wreckage only to be killed seconds later by something of unknown origin, possibly enemy gunfire. With the guns circling over us we were in the prone position behind the dike,

with weapons drawn, and waiting for the VC to attack us or fire upon us from hidden cover. After only a few minutes at most I noticed a commotion behind me and turned to see that a UH-1D slick helicopter had landed just behind me and the crew were gesturing for us to haul ourselves aboard. We all returned to Uplift for treatment of our minor wounds and the body of our crew chief was immediately flown to the 67th Evac in Qui Nhon. We found out later that the crew who rescued us belonged to the 134th AHC called the "Demons" and they were simply passing by the area and saw us go down in flames and without hesitation proceeded to our location to save us from our predicament. For all they knew they could have been landing in the middle of a murderous firefight. I don't believe that they ever received the credit or recognition they so deserve for this heroic act. I do have the full names of all the crew on this Demon aircraft. The soldier we were attempting to medevac died in the hot LZ due to his wounds and a command and control (CC) helicopter was severely shot up with one crewman seriously wounded while trying to complete our dustoff.



Another photo of WO Perkins' crashed burned remains of his 498th UH-1H Medevac/Dustoff helicopter shot down on June 9, 1970 by local Viet Cong outside of LZ Uplift.

(continued...)



A rapid response infantry platoon from the 173rd was landed and the firefight raged on with 1 VC or NVA dead and a number of weapons captured. We were later told that Ken was killed by a blow to the back of his head from the still spinning rotor blade. Some of us believe he may have been killed by a cook-off from our small arms ammunitions or from exploding fire extinguisher. We will never know for sure and in this case it really doesn't matter. Combat dead is dead.

The 1st Air Cav lost a lot of helicopters and crewmen to the local VC in this same area of the Bong Son plain from 1966-67. I have color photos of the burned remains of our dustoff aircraft thanks to WO Charles Clapp who took the photos later that same day. Clapp and his crew replaced us on dustoff standby at Uplift.

Ken Lamborn, age 20, was one happy new father and bragged about his new baby girl that he held only a few times before leaving for Vietnam. We were all happy for him and remember the photos he constantly showed us of his baby girl and other items made for her that his wife had sent to him. He placed those photos and items up front in the cockpit between us pilots while we were on dustoff missions. Those photos of course burned with the helicopter. Max Owens and I would not be alive today except for the brave courageous actions and loyalty of Ken Lamborn and our medic, Richard Doke. With the flames and smoke in their cabin area they had the presence of mind to retract our side armor plates while we were still in the air and this made the difference between our life or death by fire. We will always remember the memory of Ken Lamborn and his family. Richard Doke is still with us today and he will never be forgotten.

Final Mission of SP4 Kenneth H. Lamborn by Bill Perkins, February 2003



Ken, KIA xxx

On June 9, 1970, a U.S. Army helicopter (UH-1H tail number 68-16347) from the 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) was attempting a "dustoff" (medical evacuation) of a critically wounded 173rd Airborne infantryman just outside of LZ Uplift in Binh Dinh Province, RVN. As the aircraft approached the pick-up zone, it was fired on by Viet Cong gunners, disabling the helicopter and engulfing the ship in flames. With a fire raging in the cargo area, the pilots were able to glide past the pick-up zone over a tree line and crash land in a rice paddy. The crew managed to escape, however, crew chief SP4 Kenneth H. Lamborn was fatally injured outside the burning wreck when he was struck in the back of the head, possibly by the still-turning main rotor. The gravely wounded patient they were attempting to evacuate, SGT Daniel J. McMahan, also expired in the pick-up zone. Within minutes, a UH-1D helicopter from the 134th Assault Helicopter Company ("Demons") landed and carried the injured crewmen and their deceased crew chief to LZ Uplift. The body was transferred to the 67th Evacuation Hospital in Qui Nhon where it was turned over to Graves Registration. The crashed dustoff aircraft continued burning and thirty minutes later was reduced to a smoldering hulk. Lamborn was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing the pilots from the burning helicopter moments before his death.



Distinguished Flying Cross

[Taken from coffeltdatabase.org and information provided by William C. Perkins (December 2002 and February 2003) at vhma.org]

Visit Bill's website at:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/CWOBillPerkins/posts/?ref=page_internal



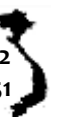
My Dad...1/503 Trooper PSGT Adam Bernosky

Here is a picture of Medics working on my dad....March 16, 1966. I believe it was war zone D. They pulled the 7.62 out of his lung when he passed in 1983. **Dave Bernosky, SGM (Ret)**



1/503 PSGT Adam A. Bernosky, wounded during Operation Silver City on 16 March 1966

Our reply: Thanks Dave. On that date during Operation Silver City your dad and his battalion were rushing thru the "D" Zone jungle to the aid of our 2/503 when we were surrounded by bad guys, running out of ammo and at serious risk of being overrun. It's possible or likely your dad was part of the 1/503 lead element which was ambushed enroute to us. 1/503 medic Al Rascon was later awarded the MOH for his heroic acts during that fight, possibly alongside your dad. I wrote a story about that operation, *The Battle at Bau San*, which includes some 1/503 recollections, and will email it to you if you like. Be well, Smitty



For all Sky Soldier baseball fans, but particularly ex pro ballplayer John Taylor, B/2/503, and still playing stickballers Larry Paladino, also B/2/503, and lefty Jerry Sopko, D/4/503. Ed

Dodgers Farmhands Served in Vietnam

JUNE 23, 2020 | BY DAVID VERGUN, DOD NEWS

Almost every sporting event in the United States has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an absence noted by the many service members who are ardent sports fans and enjoy playing sports. Because the games are mostly on hold, here's a look at two sports legends who also served in the military.

Roy Gleason and Donny Tidwell both have ties to Los Angeles Dodgers baseball and to military service in Vietnam. The difference is that one came home alive. One didn't.

Roy Gleason

Outfielder and switch-hitter Roy Gleason played just eight major league games for the Dodgers in 1963, though he had been with the Dodgers organization in the minor leagues since 1961. But 1963 was the year that the Dodgers swept the World Series over the New York Yankees, 4-0, making Gleason part of the team's legacy. In 1967, Gleason was drafted into the Army. He completed basic training at Fort Lewis, Washington, and advanced infantry training at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Shortly after completing his training, he was deployed to South Vietnam with the 39th Infantry Regiment and then the 9th Infantry Regiment. He was stationed at the old French fort called Fort Courage, near Saigon, beside the South China Sea.

Gleason had many close calls with death, which he recounted in his collaborative biography, "Lost in the Sun."

Fort Courage got mortared regularly, Gleason wrote, once taking a direct hit which killed five soldiers and took the leg off his company commander.



Roy Gleason

In March 1968, Gleason's platoon came under heavy fire in the Mekong Delta as they were crossing a rice paddy. Two soldiers were hit by enemy fire, and Gleason carried each to safety as incoming fire continued. As a result, Gleason was meritoriously promoted to sergeant in June, thereby making him the platoon sergeant.



Roy Gleason was promoted to sergeant in Vietnam in June 1968 at Bearcat Base near Bien Hoa in Dong Nai province, South Vietnam.

Shortly after his promotion, on July 24, 1968, while walking point, he and his men walked into an ambush. Almost immediately, he was wounded in the wrist and lower leg. After fashioning a tourniquet, he returned fire. Many of his buddies were wounded or killed that day. Eventually, they were evacuated by helicopter, and that ended Gleason's tour in Vietnam.

After his tour of duty, Gleason played in the Dodgers' farm system in 1969 and 1970, but his war wounds prevented him from returning to the major leagues. He went on to have a career in television and films, including starring in the TV series "Branded" alongside actor Chuck Connors, and portraying a race car driver in a "Batman" episode.

He makes his home in Melrose Park, Illinois. His father, Richard Roy Gleason, served as a Seabee during World War II.

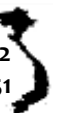
Donny Tidwell

Just about every rookie who gets drafted into the big leagues dreams of hometown glory. Donny Tidwell, most likely, had dreams, too.

"His decision to enter the Army took courage as he set aside his dream of playing baseball to serve his country."

Tommy Lasorda, Baseball Hall of Fame coach

(continued....)



The Dodgers selected pitcher Donny Tidwell in the 42nd round of the 1966 first-year player draft. In his only professional season at rookie-league level with the Ogden Dodgers, Tidwell went 4–3, with a 4.01 earned run average in 19 games, according to Mark Langill, L.A. Dodgers team historian and author of five Dodger-related books. Based in Ogden, Utah, The Ogden Dodgers were a minor league baseball team in the Pioneer League from 1966 to 1973.

It was future Baseball Hall of Fame coach Tommy Lasorda's second season as a minor league manager, and Ogden won the Pioneer League title with a 39–27 record, Langill said. Future major league players on that 1966 Ogden squad included then-outfielder Bill Russell and pitcher Charlie Hough. Tidwell's roommate at Ogden was infielder Justin Dedeaux, son of longtime University of Southern California baseball coach and former Brooklyn Dodgers shortstop Rod Dedeaux.

Tidwell, sensing a call to duty, enlisted in the Army in November 1966 for an expected three-year tour. He had been in Vietnam for only two months and 12 days when he was killed, at age 21, on April 12, 1968. Tidwell was a member of Bravo Company, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, Langill said.



Donny Tidwell, minor league pitcher for Ogden (Utah) Dodgers, and L.A. Dodgers farm team, is shown here in 1966.

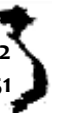
Lasorda, who later managed the major league Dodgers for 20 seasons and was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1997, sent a message to the Tidwell family in 2018, when Tidwell's high school in Diana, Texas, renamed its baseball field in his honor.

Hometown glory was just as sweet 50-plus years after that rookie season.

"I began my managerial career in the rookie leagues. It was an incredibly good feeling to take young, inexperienced players and mold them, build them into good players and winners," Lasorda wrote to Tidwell's family. *"Throughout my playing career, I knew there was only a small difference between the mediocre ballplayer and the very good ballplayer on the team, and that distance could be narrowed through hard work and determination."*

"My first championship team was the 1966 Ogden Dodgers," he continued.

"I'll always look at that roster and think of Donny Tidwell. Every player who starts out in pro ball has a dream of playing in the Majors. While several of his teammates eventually played in the Majors, Donny decided there was something bigger than baseball. His decision to enter the Army took courage as he set aside his dream of playing baseball to serve his country. The image of Donny eagerly taking the ball and pitching in a Dodger uniform during that summer of 1966 is something I've carried with me for more than 50 years. I am thankful the community of Diana, Texas, continues to honor a true hero and role model."



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96375, 22 September 1970

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 4594

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

TC 439. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.

DOLAN, JAMES E.

SPECIALIST FOUR

United States Army

**Company B, 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry Reg.,
173d Airborne Brigade**

Date of Action: 25 May 1970

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 25 July 1963.

Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Four Dolan distinguished himself while serving as lead man of a combat patrol in the Crescent Mountains. When his patrol encountered an enemy bunker complex, Specialist Dolan and his team leader assaulted the position. The enemy immediately countered with a barrage of fire which forced the two aggressors to withdraw. During the withdrawal, Specialist Dolan was seriously wounded by the enemy but continued to place suppressive fire on the enemy to cover his comrades. Suddenly, an enemy grenade landed between Specialist Dolan and two other team members. Shouting a warning to his companions, he threw himself toward the grenade and shielded them from the blast. Although quickly evacuated to nearby medical facilities, Specialist Dolan expired a short time later. Specialist Dolan's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



FOR THE COMMANDER:

CHARLES M. GETTYS

Major General, USA

Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

Paul T. Smith

Colonel, AGC

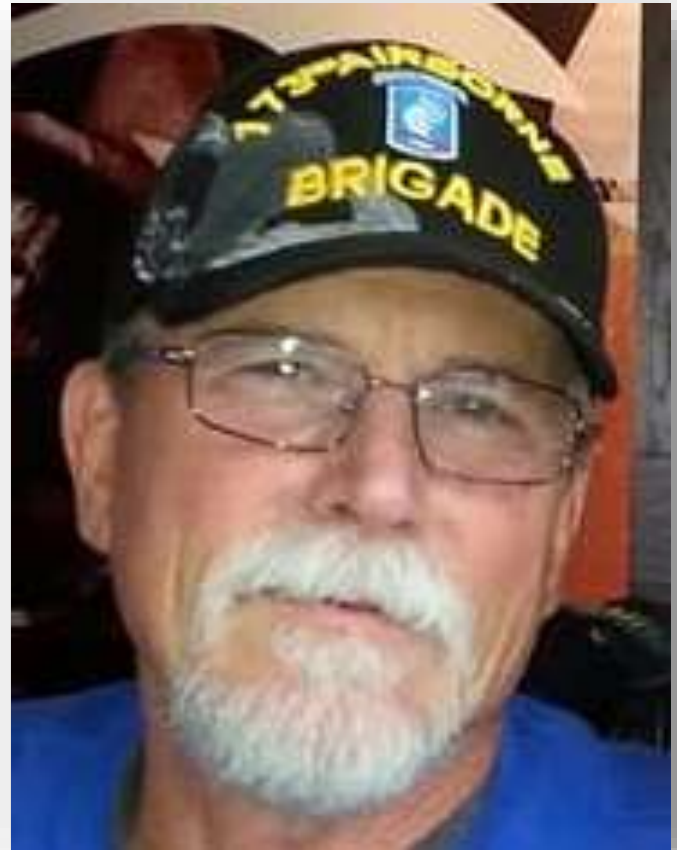
Adjutant General



Ray "Zac" Zaccone

C/2/503, RVN

Passes



Ray Zaccone, 71, of Halfway, Oregon died on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho with his family at his side.

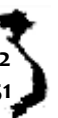
Ray served in Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) during the Vietnam war, and was a survivor of the battles at Dak To.

A Memorial Service - Celebration of Ray's Life with Military Honors was held on March 27, 2020 - at the Halfway Lions Hall in Halfway, Oregon.

For those who would like to make a memorial donation in memory of Ray, the family suggests the 173d Airborne Brigade or VFW Post #7847 through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Rest Easy, Zac, job well done Brother



From the archives....

LRRP Seizes Flag

DAK TO, (173rd ABN-IO) – A Viet Cong flag was displayed by a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol of the 173rd Airborne Brigade here as a result of a perfect recondo ambush netting five VC killed and the capture of five enemy weapons and supplies.

The LRRP team, led by Sp4 Donald G. Ward, was lifted into an area just vacated by a company of Sky Soldiers the previous day. The recondos hoped to catch the enemy by surprise if they decided to check out the paratroopers' night position.

The team's mission got off to a bad start.

"Our presence was detected by a group of villagers as soon as we climbed off the chopper," recalled Sp4 John Carson, who was experiencing his first mission as a recondo.

Ward moved his team into the thick brush to confuse the on-looking villagers. For the next few days, the paratroopers discovered many well-traveled trails but could not detect any enemy movement in the area. At dusk one day, the team stopped just off a freshly used trail and set up for the night.

In the dark protective shadows of the jungle, the well-hidden paratroopers silently waited for the enemy. They did not have to wait long before spotting a band of five armed VC moving down the trail towards their ambush.

The paratroopers let the enemy pointman walk well into the killing zone before assistant team leader Sp4 Irvin Moran detonated two claymore mines, instantly killing four of the Communist soldiers. The fifth VC ran through the recondos perimeter before he was cut down by PFC Wayne Harland, a radio telephone operator.

Early the next morning, the recondos made good their departure by helicopter.

Back at Dak To, the recondos proudly displayed two .45-cal grease guns, an M1 carbine, an automatic rifle and an old unknown French weapon, besides enemy documents, medical supplies and the flag.

Source:

THE ARMY REPORTER

Long Binh, Vietnam, January 6, 1968

Valor Awards of Men of the 2/503d RVN



Gentlemen & Surviving Family Members, hello:

We've begun the process of producing a publication honoring as many of our men as possible who served with our battalion in Vietnam and who are recipients of the **Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star w/V Device** or **Army Commendation Medal w/V Device** in recognition of their heroic acts during combat with the 2/503d RVN.

We will publish the highest valor award citation of each trooper, or the valor award specified by recipients, who were on the roster of the 2/503d or received a valor award while attached to our battalion for their acts while in combat with our battalion. If citations cannot be obtained, where possible, we will list the names of 2/503 troopers and the valor award they earned.

If you are the recipient of one of these valor awards while on the roster of or attached to the 2/503d in Vietnam, please email a copy of the official Army citation, and a VN era or current photo of yourself, to rto173@att.net Also, if you are in possession of a valor citation of a 2/503 buddy, please send that in too.

Once we believe we've compiled all the valor award citations and photos possible, we will email the completed document to you and all Sky Soldiers on our list for your keeping. Also, it will be provided to the 173d Association, the University of Florida's Military Digital Library, and the 503rd PRCT Historical Battalion websites for their permanent posting.

The next two pages include a sample of how this publication may appear, and it is produced for the purpose of creating a consolidated historical record for our men, their families and descendants, as well as researchers and educators. Kindly forward this to your 2/503 buddies.

We understand countless men of our battalion, particularly many of those who lost their lives, were never formally recognized for their heroic acts during combat. But, what we can do is create this lasting document in their honor and in honor of those Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d who were so recognized.

Honor one, honor all.

(continued...)





Valor Award Recipients Of The 2/503d RVN



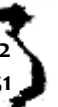
Photo of the hands of SFC Charles B. Morris, A/2/503, holding his Medal of Honor.

This publication will present citations of valor earned by numerous but not necessarily all of the men of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) who are recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star w/V Device or Army Commendation Medal w/V Device in recognition of their acts of heroism during combat in Vietnam. This will also be published in honor of the countless men who served in the 2/503d in Vietnam, particularly those men who lost their lives, yet were never formally recognized for their heroic acts during combat.

It is because of men like these, men like us are alive today.

Produced by Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d RVN

(continued....)



Valor Award Recipients of the 2/503d RVN

They Were Young and Brave and Paratroopers



Martin Terrance McDonald
HHC/2/503, '71

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Martin Terrance McDonald, Specialist Fourth Class, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Specialist Four McDonald distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 10 April 1971. On that date Specialist McDonald was serving as a medical aidman for a six man reconnaissance team on an offensive mission in Phu My District, when the team was taken under fire by an estimated platoon-sized enemy force. The enemy-initiated contact included rockets, machinegun and automatic small arms fire. In the initial hail of fire, the team leader was severely wounded, and the remainder of the team was halted a short distance away, leaving him in an open, vulnerable position. Specialist McDonald, although wounded himself during the initial contact, realized the extreme danger his team leader was in and, with total disregard for his personal safety, exposed himself to the intense enemy fire and ran to the aid of his fallen team leader. He then placed himself between the team leader and the enemy and began returning fire. An incoming rocket landed nearby, wounding him for the second time as the force of the explosion knocked him to the ground. He immediately recovered and rolled over on his team leader to protect him from the enemy fire. Realizing that further movement was impossible, Specialist McDonald stood up between the enemy and the severely wounded man and began placing accurate semi-automatic fire upon the enemy positions, until he was mortally wounded by an enemy rocket. Specialist Four McDonald's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



the bunker. He then ran forward and killed the remaining enemy in the bunker with his weapon. When the men received word to withdraw, Sergeant Shipman remained behind to provide covering fire for the with-drawing troopers. He then fought his way back to the company perimeter carrying a wounded trooper with him. When a helicopter dropped a desperately needed sling load of ammunition in front of the perimeter, Sergeant Shipman again exposed himself to enemy fire and advanced to within twenty meters of enemy positions in order to provide covering fire for the troopers who were trying to recover the ammunition. Sergeant Shipman's outstanding leadership and display of courage in the face of intense enemy fires were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Donald L. Smith, Jr.
HHC/2/503, '65/'66

For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Private First Class Smith distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 16 March 1966 while serving as an ammunition bearer during a combat mission near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam. On this date, Private First Class Smith's unit came under attack from an estimated regiment of Viet Cong. During the battle that raged for over five hours, the rifle companies found themselves running desperately low on ammunition and faced the possibility of expending all available supplies. Private First Class Smith, with complete disregard for his safety, scoured the rear area for any ammunition that could be spared and personally worked his way through heavy Viet Cong fire to the front line troopers and delivered the ammunition. On several occasions, the ammunition was dropped by the resupply helicopters forward of the front lines where incoming fire was very heavy and could not be retrieved by the line companies because of their engagements. Private First Class Smith volunteered to recover the ammunition by means of fire and maneuver and moved along the front line distributing it to his fellow soldiers. In addition, he administered first aid to the wounded and led them to a safe area. Through his courage, determination, and devotion to duty, he contributed immeasurably to the defeat of the Viet Cong force. The heroic actions of Private First Class Smith were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Frederick L. Shipman
D/2/503, '67/'68

Gallantry in action: Staff Sergeant Shipman distinguished himself by exceptional gallantry in the Republic of Vietnam on 19 November 1967, while serving as a squad leader in Company D, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). During the battle for Hill 875 on the above date, Sergeant Shipman's squad came under heavy automatic weapons fire from a bunker to their front. With complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Shipman crawled forward to within ten meters of the enemy position and threw hand grenades into



(continued...)



2/503 Valor Award Recipients Identified To Date

Thus far, we've compiled official army citations of valor and/or photos for the troopers named below, except as noted:

MOH – Medal of Honor

DSC – Distinguished Service Cross, SS – Silver Star

BSV – Bronze Star w/V Device

ACMV – Army Commendation Medal w/V Device

Thomas W. Aikey, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles A. Bell, B/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
James A. Bednarski, C/2/503, BSV
Jan Bobowski, A/2/503, BSV
Patrick Bowe, HHC/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Nathaniel Brown, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
R.L. Les Brownlee, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Karl L. Bullard, B/2/503, DSC
Robert B. Carmichael, HHC/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Carmen Cavezza, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
George S. Colson, II, B/2/503, BSV
Michael J. Cosmo, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Gary Cox, D/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Charles R. Crews, A/2/503, BSV
Eugene R. Davis, B/2/503, DSC
Michael Deeb, HHC/2/503 (citation needed)
Richard Eckert, B/2/503, BSV
Samuel A. Eidson, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Mile Le Roy Ellis, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Frederick W. Fassett, HHC/B/2/503, SS
Gerald N. Floyd, A/2/503, BSV
J.L. Frazier, Sr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Leslie A. Fuller, A/2/503, BSV
Amador B. Garcia, Jr., HHC/2/503, BSV
Pedro L. Garcia, HHC/2/503, SS
Robert P. Gipson, B/2/503, DSC
Michael J. Gladden, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert A. Gray, C/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Steven Haber, C/2/503, BSV
William T. Hagerty, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Phillip P. Hayden, C/2/503, DSC (photo needed)
Rudolph Hernandez, B/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Richard E. Hood, Jr., A/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Ross T. Hulslander, A/2/503, BSV (photo needed)
Vladimir Jakovenko, C/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Donald R. Judd, A/2/503, SS
Harold J. Kaufman, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Michael J. Kiley, A/2/503, SS
Richard N. Kimball, Jr., D/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles Knecht, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Kenneth M. Knudson, A/2/503, SS
Rodger M. Koefod, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Gregory S. Kowaleski, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Johnny H. Leake, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
John Leide, C/2/503, BSV
John L. Leppelman, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert R. Litwin, A/2/503, DSC
Richard Lock, B/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Carlos J. Lozada, A/2/503, MOH
Gregg P. Lyell, A/2/503, ACMV
William H. Marshall, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Martin T. McDonald, HHC/2/503, DSC

Daniel F. McIssac, E/2/503, BSV
Stephen Adam Mika, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
David A. Milton, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Willie C. Monroe, A/2/503, BSV
Charles B. Morris, A/2/503, MOH
Timothy J. Murphy, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Daniel L. Negro, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Michael D. O'Connor, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Milton L. Olive, III, B/2/503, MOH
Jerry L. O'Neal, C/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Charles E. Owens, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
William Palenske, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Freddie Parks, A/2/503, SS
Alfred J. Paul, III, C/2/503, BSV
Leo A. Pellerin, A/2/503, BSV
Elbert D. Poff, D/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Billy W. Ponder, Sr., C/2/503, DSC (photo needed)
George A. Poor, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles L. Raiford, Jr., C/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Jerry R. Rebits, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Donald A. Rice, HHC/2/503, BSV
Eric Ribitsch, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Edward L. Richardson, A/2/503, ACMV (citation needed)
James H. Robinson, B/2/503, ACMV
James P. Rogan, B/2/503, DSC
William A. Ross, D/2/503, BSV
John J. Schimpf, B/2/503, SS
Dale A. Schram, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
James C. Schultz, A/2/503, BSV
Peter J. Schutz, A/2/503, SS, (photo/citation needed)
John W. Searcy, HHC/2/503, BSV
Frederick L. Shipman, D/Recon/2/503, SS
Irwin W. Short, B/2/503, BSV (photo needed)
Donald L. Smith, Jr., HHC/2/503, BSV
Lewis B. Smith, D/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles H. Snow, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
John R. Stalter, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Arthur C. Stang, III, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Johnson A. Steidler, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert L. Steven, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert Sweeney, C/2/503, BSV
Truman R. Thomas, HHC/2/503, BSV
John R. Tighe, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert Toporek, B/2/503, BSV
William J. Tucker, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
William C. Vose, BSV, A/HHC/2/503
Conrad N. Walker, 2/503 (Attached), SS
Robert A. Warfield, B/2/503, SS
Charles J. Watters, 2/503 (Attached), MOH
Frank W. Webb, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Alexander C. Zsigo, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)

This project will likely take a number of months to complete.





REUNIONS OF THE AIRBORNE KIND



~ 2020 ~

Flags in Florida



After Memorial Day and their lowering, these flags in Florida are once again raised and saluting in constant remembrance.



173d Airborne OEF X Reunion 2020, Denver, CO.
As details become available we'll include them
weterry2@gmail.com



2020 All-Era 508th PIR Reunion, El Paso, TX,
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, El Paso Downtown
July 1-5, 2020. Contact: Treasurer@508PIR.org



74th Annual Convention 2020, 82nd Airborne Division, Houston Marriott Westchase, Houston, TX, August 5-9, 2020. **Contact web:**
<https://texaslonestar82.org/convention.html>



75th Annual Reunion, 101st Airborne Division Association, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI, August 12-15, 2020. **Contact web:**
<https://screamingeagle.org/annual-reunion-2020/>



2nd 502 Reunion, Grand Rapids, MI, August 12-16, 2020. **Contact web:** Randal Underhill,
931-431-0199, 101exec@screamingeagle.org



11th Special Forces, Youngstown, OH, August 11, 2020. **Contact:** Dave Nesline, 330-618-5855,
tndnesline@sbcglobal.net



101st Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans 26th Annual Reunion, Fort Bragg/Fayetteville, NC, August 26-30, 2020. **Contact:** Ron Long, 310-977-4253, Eml: ronlong71@msn.com

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.

We suspect all or most reunions have been postponed or cancelled. You'll want to check with the reunion contact person for details.

Airborne...All The Way!





Casper Aviation Platoon



Casper Platoon Story

Casper Platoon Packs Punch

Reprinted from: Fire Base 173 Newspaper 1968

BONG SON, RVN - On the northern edge of LZ English lays Ghost Town. Unlike most, it's not inhabited by spirits or wraiths but by the men of the Casper Aviation Platoon. The only separate aviation platoon in the Army, its primary mission is to provide command and control ships for the brigade and to fly reconnaissance and scout missions. In addition to its six Light Observation Helicopters (LOH) or "Loaches," Casper has been beefed up with eight "Huey-Slicks." However, since the platoon arrived in Vietnam with the Brigade in 1965, it has flown nearly every type of mission including medevacs, "Snoopy," Psyops, combat assault, resupply and "mad bomber" missions.

According to Captain Stanley H. Streicher of Cincinnati, the platoon commander, there are both advantages and disadvantages in being separate from any aviation brigade in the group.

"Set apart from the other aviation units," he said, "we pretty well have to stick together and cooperate to keep our ships flying. Of course, this makes us self-sufficient and closely-knit group with a very high morale."

"A lot of the enlisted men in the platoon keep on extending until their tour of service is over because they like it so well here. I, myself, extended because I like being with the 173d and having my own platoon to command," he continued. "I feel flying with Casper is an especially valuable experience for the aviator because of the great variety in our missions. It never really gets boring."

New Pilots fresh out of flight school coming into the platoon are paired off with an experienced pilot and familiarized with flying techniques in Vietnam. As one of them put it, *"They just don't have enough time to teach all you need to know in flight school. But you learn quickly over here out of necessity."*

A Standardization Instruction Pilot takes each new aviator up for a check ride when he first comes in-country to see how he performs. Then when he is considered ready and experienced enough to become an aircraft commander, he must pass another check ride.

There is an aircraft commander assigned to each helicopter in the platoon. He is responsible for the welfare of the crew and passengers and also makes sure that the craft is kept in the best possible condition at all times.



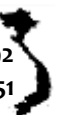
Captain Stanley H. Streicher
Commanding Officer of Casper Platoon
(Deceased April 5, 2020)

The crew chief, ho handles one of the M-60 machine guns, is personally responsible for insuring that the aircraft's necessary maintenance is performed. He tells the mechanics what work needs to be done and either supervises the work or does it himself, usually with help of his door gunner. He accompanies the chopper wherever it goes, whether it be to Lane Field outside of Qui Nhon for repairs, or opcon to another unit, as the six Loaches are at Phan Thiet.

"The crew chiefs usually start out as ground mechanics," said Specialist 4 Walter Perron of Barre, Mass., the Casper operations chief, who flew as door gunner and crew chief with the platoon for 18 months. *"They get experience working on the ships either at Lane Field or here. Then they are sent out on flights with veteran crew chiefs to learn their new duties. When a slot opens-up they are assigned to a ship until they leave the platoon,"* he continued.

Specialist 6 Darwin K. Russell of American Fall, Idaho, the Casper technical inspector, is on his second tour in Vietnam. During his last tour he was assigned to an aviation company which supported the brigade.....

Note - The rest of this story is missing. If anyone has a copy of it, please forward it to Ned Costa, Caspers, Casperned68@yahoo.com

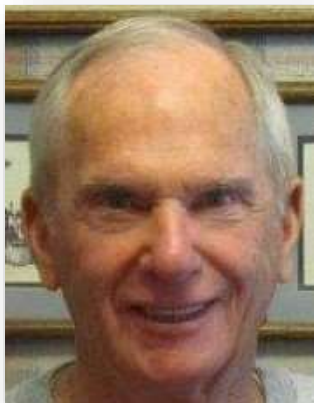


~ Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~

Wilbur Jones Wiman

173d Airborne Brigade, RVN, Among Others

MSG (ret) Wilbur Jones Wiman, 90, of Fayetteville, passed away, Saturday, May 2nd, 2020 at CFVMC. He dedicated his professional life in service to our great nation and dedicated his personal life caring and providing for his family.



MSG Wilbur Wiman

Wilbur was born March 30, 1930 in Graves County, Kentucky, to the late Wilson and Ethel Wiman. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 50 years, Ruell Wiman. He was a member of Village Baptist Church.

Wilbur joined the US Army at the earliest eligible age and proudly served his country for 22 years. During his service he was a part of three notable military campaigns in our Nation's history; the WWII Occupancy in Japan, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, as well as the 11th, 101st, and the 82nd Airborne Divisions. Other stations of duty include Fort Shafter, Hawaii, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Retiring as MSG, he was a master parachutist and had been a member of the Army's last glider training class. After his military service, he began a long career with Commercial Credit Corporation, retiring permanently in 1992.

Wilbur was an active Shriner in Fayetteville for many years and remained proud of the good works that came from his Club.

To say that he was an avid golfer, would be a major understatement. Back in the day, he had the "Wilbur Wiman Scramble" every weekend at Cypress Lakes Golf Course where he shot his only hole in one. He played golf for years until he wasn't physically able, but continued to watch the golf channel up to this last days, to the displeasure of visiting loved ones. Other interests include watching his favorite basketball teams, Duke and Kentucky.

In his later years he found great joy in spending time with all of his Hardees Coffee Club "buddies." Having been so active, for so long, in the Fayetteville community, he didn't go anywhere that he didn't know someone. The clerks at the grocery stores and restaurant staff all knew him by name and he even had his preferred waitresses whose sections he would always sit in.

He lived a very independent life up until his recent hospitalization. He took pride in his beloved Cadillac that he, and only he, continued to drive to shop and go out to eat up until the final weeks of his life.

He is survived by his brother, Charles Wiman, of Mayfield, Ky, his three daughters, Kay Wiman Drogos, of Raleigh, Nancy Wiman Causey (Steve), of Fayetteville, and Trish Wiman Mallard (Tony), of Carolina Beach, seven grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren, and several cousins that he cared for deeply.

In light of the current pandemic, the family has opted for a private funeral service at Jernigan-Warren Funeral Home. Following that service he will be laid to rest in the Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery alongside his wife Ruell who preceded him in death in 2001.

A public memorial service will be announced at a later date and will be followed by full military honors. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to:

Shriner's Hospital for Children
2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa FL 33607
Tel: 1-844-739-0849
Email: donorrelations@shrinenet.org
Web: <https://donate.lovetotherescue.org>

Online Condolences may be left
at <http://www.jerniganwarren.com>

We don't know with which 173d unit Wilbur served, but, it is our honor to honor him here. Clearly, he was one hellofa Airborne Trooper. All The Way, Wilbur!
Ed



Top Legal Officers Address Racial Disparity in Military Justice

JUNE 16, 2020 | DOD NEWS
BY TERRI MOON CRONK

Racial disparity in the military justice system exists, and much work remains to put an end to it, the services' top legal officers said on Capitol Hill.

Speaking to the House Armed Services Committee's military personnel subcommittee today were judge advocate leaders Army Lt. Gen. Charles N. Pede, Navy Vice Adm. John G. Hannink, Air Force Lt. Gen. Jeffrey A. Rockwell and Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel J. Lecce. *"Today our Army represents our country's best ideals more than ever,"* Pede said. *"And I also believe that like the country we serve, there is still much more that must be done."*

He noted the Uniform Code of Military Justice — a federal law enacted by Congress that governs the military justice system — was born out of a concern for fundamental fairness for those suspected of a crime. *"But as good as our justice system is, we can never take for granted its health or its fairness. It requires constant care,"* Pede said.

All four judge advocate general officers said a May 2019 General Accounting Office report found racial disparities in the military justice system. They agreed militarywide training and education is necessary to solve the issue.

"[The GAO] report raises difficult questions — questions that demand answers. Sitting here today, we do not have those answers. So our task is to ask the right questions and find the answers," Pede said.

"Only as a unified force that's free of discrimination, racial inequality and prejudice can we fully demonstrate our core values and serve as the elite warfighting organization America requires and expects us to be."

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel J. Lecce, staff judge advocate to the commandant of the Marine Corps

The Army JAG said he directed a comprehensive assessment with the provost marshal general *"to get left of the allegation, left of the disposition decision, to examine why the justice system is more likely to investigate certain soldiers in what investigations and command decisions tell us about the issue."*

Unlawful discrimination undermines a unit's ability to function effectively, and it cannot be tolerated, Hannink noted. *"We must overcome any bias or any stereotype that diminishes cohesiveness, camaraderie, or morale,"* he said.

The Navy can't be under any illusions about the fact that racism is alive and well in the country, the vice admiral said. *"And I can't be under any illusions that we don't have it in our Navy. ... So the Navy emphatically and unequivocally denounces racism."*

Rockwell said it's vital to eradicate racial disparity in the military justice system to ensure fairness, inclusion and diversity for all service members; and he added that an inclusive and diverse force is *"absolutely necessary to defend a diverse and inclusive nation."*



Army Maj. John P. Policastro, the regimental judge advocate general attorney for Regimental Support Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany, emails a flyer regarding changes to the Military Justice Act of 2016, Dec. 18, 2018. He attended a 15-hour training course on the changes, and would lead training to bring commanders, first sergeants and command sergeants major on the updates, which took effect Jan. 1, 2019.

While the Navy reviews specific cases to ensure there is not disparate treatment based on a protected class, *"we don't have clear answers or underlying reasons as to why the disparity exists,"* Rockwell said. As with all difficult issues the nation faces, solutions to address that disparity will require whole-of-government and societal approaches, he added.

"Only as a unified force that's free of discrimination, racial inequality and prejudice can we fully demonstrate our core values and serve as the elite warfighting organization America requires and expects us to be," Lecce said.

The Marine Corps' commitment and determination to ensuring equality among Marines "remain steadfast and enduring," he told the House panel.

Source:

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2222417/top-legal-officers-address-racial-disparity-in-military-justice/source/GovDelivery/>



Alan Herbert Champion HHC/2/503, RVN Passes

The time has come to say good-bye to Alan Herbert Champion. A hero of the Vietnam war in the 173rd "Skyriders" as an active paramedic for Operation Hump where he was shot three times attempting to save fellow soldiers; the third time was life threatening and ended his military career. After coming home and healing he married Carol (Amrine) Beck and became the father of two: daughter Taara Amrine and son Verne Champion. After experiences as a Forest Ranger, EMT, and Prison Guard in NV they divorced and he brought his children to MN. In 1991 he became a doting husband to LaDonna (Bowles) Champion and they spent their lives together in Greenfield, MN. Alan worked at the US Post Office in Golden Valley for 37 years. He spent every holiday season from November to December 24th making sure that every person he came across had a smile for Christmas and every child had a Beanie Baby of their own. The days he could spend out on a lake fishing with family were major highlights in his life. He was an active volunteer with multiple charities and devoted many hours volunteering to help people along his route and organizations such as Friends of the Kelly Farm. Alan leaves behind siblings Virginia Bellamy and Carrie Shiley. He was preceded in death by parents Harve and Frances (Sandford) Champion, his brother Harve Champion and sister Sue Bigus. In 1982 Alan was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and in his final days the Church gave him peace and serenity. Alan let go of this world on Sunday, March 22, 2020 after surviving a recurrent brain tumor that originated in 2017. He fought as hard to stay with his family as he did for strangers who needed him, or his country when it called. Agent Orange may have taken his body but only Alan knew when it was time to let go. He will be greatly missed by all those whose life he touched and loved. As he rides his Santa sleigh to his eternal life, we send our love to ride with him. July 1, 1945 - March 22, 2020.



James T. Quick B/2/503, RVN Passes



Jim, B Co., 1st Platoon, with his little buddies in Vietnam

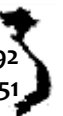
1st Sgt. James T. Quick, retired Army with 22 1/2 years, passed away on 12 Feb 2020 at the age of 88. He was known as "JT" or "Quick" by all who knew him. He was born to James A. Quick and Myrtle Diggers Quick on 21 September 1931.

James was predeceased by his parents and three brothers Roger, Roy, and Bobby. Two sisters Lucille, and Flora, one son Marc Quick. James is survived by his beloved wife, Julia Quick and two children, Diana Lynn & Scott Allen. James is survived by three children, Scott, Lisa, Brenda and their mother Betty.

James was an Airborne Soldier with units of the 173rd Airborne Bde (Sep), 187th, 82nd, 101st, 508th and the 327th. James was in the Korean Conflict, with two tours in VietNam. James received many medals during his Army time. Upon his retirement he drove a Tractor Trailer for 16 years and worked for Roads and Grounds on Fort Campbell for 15 years. James then just enjoyed working in his yard. James leaves extended family and friends.

James belonged to the 173rd Assoc., VFW 11160, American Legion Post 233 Fort Campbell in Oak Grove, Ky. He was a 46-year life member of the Fort Campbell Post # 233 of The American Legion.

James closes with Airborne All the Way! Memorial service at later date.



CHARGIN' CHARLIES PASSING IN REVIEW



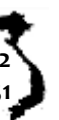
Company Commander Captain Don Phillips leads his men of C/2/503 during Saigon parade in November '66.
Don passed away on February 19, 2020.

(Photo provided by Don Phillips, Jr., Col. (Ret), son of the late Col. Don Phillips, C/HHC/2/503, '66/'67)

The Plain of Reeds



Photos from Ron Thomas, 173d LRRP



Patrick "Tad" Tadina *CSM (Ret)*

August 16, 1942 ~ May 29, 2020



Patrick Gavin Tadina, 77, passed away peacefully on Friday, May 29, 2020.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Esteban and Irene Tadina; sister, Nani Tadina; and brother, Stephen Tadina.

He is survived by his wife, Karen S. Tadina of the home; two daughters, Catherine Poeschl of Dale, TX and Alamea Banther of St. Pauls; four sons, Sterling Tadina of Dale, TX, Benjamin Wallace of St. Pauls, Dennis Tadina of Fayetteville, and Ryan Dalberg of Toma, WI; two sisters, Blossom Sullivan of Maxton, and Mailey Fraizer of Maui, HI; nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Patrick was well known as Command Sergeant Major Tadina. His service during the Vietnam era was one of extreme valor and service as a member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP), 74th Infantry Detachment Long Range Patrol (LRP) and Company N (Ranger), 75th Infantry. While serving as a team leader for five years, he never had one of his team killed. This was accomplished at the risk of his own life during the many times he was cited for valor (2 Silver Stars), 10 Bronze Stars (7 with V Device), 4 Army Commendation Medals (2 with V Device) and three Purple Hearts.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at Rogers & Breece Funeral Home on Saturday, August 8, 2020 at 11 AM. The family will receive friends prior to the service from 10 – 10:45 PM.

[See tribute to CSM Tadina in Issue 24,
of February 2011, on Page 35, of our newsletter]

Rest Easy Command Sergeant Major
You were the best of the best

IMMEDIATE RELEASE DOD Identifies Army Casualty - UPDATE

JUNE 24, 2020

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.

Spc. Nick Bravo-Regules, 20, from Largo, Florida, died June 23, 2020, in Jordan while supporting operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, from a non-combat-related incident. The incident is under investigation.

Bravo-Regules was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th ADA Brigade, Fort Bliss, Texas.

For more information regarding Spc. Bravo-Regules, media may contact Maj. Fred Hair, U.S. Army Central Public Affairs, at (803) 885-7321; (803) 885-8880, or email at fred.h.hair.mil@mail.mil



A U.S. Army carry team transfers the remains of Spc. Nick Bravo Regules of Largo, Florida, during a dignified transfer June 27, 2020, at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Bravo Regules was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Fort Bliss, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Eric M. Fisher)

*Note: We are providing this update to ensure Spc. Nick Bravo-Regules' name is accurately reflected in this release.



Sky Soldiers Havin' A Blast



Soldier Line: Army paratroopers board an aircraft for an airborne operation at Aviano Air Base, Italy, June 24, 2020.



Airborne Reup: Army Staff Sgt. O'Connor, a paratrooper Airborne Brigade reenlists while performing jumpmaster duties during an airborne operation at Aviano Air Base, Italy, June 24, 2020.



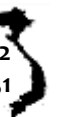
Airborne Ops: Army paratroopers exit an Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft over Rivolto Italian Air Force Base, Italy, June 24, 2020.



Pulling it In: An Army paratrooper secures equipment after an airborne operation at Rivolto Italian Air Force Base, Udine, Italy, June 24, 2020.

*He was just a rookie trooper and he surely shook with fright.
He checked all his equipment and made sure his pack was tight.
He had to sit and listen to those awful engines roar.
"You ain't gonna jump no more!"*

*Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.*



MHS mental health experts shed light on PTSD

By: Military Health System Communications Office

Post-traumatic stress disorder can be treated long after the triggering event occurs, three Military Health System mental health subject matter experts said Thursday. But all agree getting help as soon as possible avoids health issues that can occur as a result of living with PTSD. And effective psychotherapy treatments are available now, even if people can't meet with providers face to face because of pandemic restrictions.



The experts' comments came during a PTSD media roundtable by telephone. It was held to recognize June as PTSD Awareness Month, and to showcase MHS programs and resources connected to PTSD treatment. The three experts answering reporters' questions were David Riggs, Ph.D., executive director of the Center for Deployment Psychology at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland; Dr. Robert Ursano, director of USU's Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress; and Public Health Service Lt. Cmdr. Jorielle Houston, Ph.D., clinical psychologist with the Psychological Health Center of Excellence.

PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after exposure to traumatic events such as threat of injury or death, serious accident, combat, terrorist attack, sexual assault, physical assault, natural disaster, and childhood sexual or physical abuse.

Many individuals with PTSD repeatedly re-experience the traumatic event as flashback episodes, memories, nightmares, or frightening thoughts, especially when exposed to events that remind them of the trauma.

"Over a lifetime, nearly everybody is exposed to a traumatic event," Ursano said. However, not everyone develops PTSD. Variables that put people at risk for it include prior trauma history, lack of social support, suffering an injury as a result of the trauma, and pre-existing mental health issues.

"Mental health has common colds as well as cancers, and PTSD can be both," Ursano said, adding that "the vast number of people ...with PTSD are on a recovery trajectory."

The COVID-19 pandemic may be particularly challenging for people with PTSD, Ursano explained.

Patients may be feeling an increased sense of isolation, greater irritability, and more conflict with loved ones. With the challenges of doing face-to-face therapy during physical distancing, "I think it's important for folks to know that ... [effective psychotherapies] are able to be delivered using telehealth technologies," Riggs said.

He noted that during the past few months, Department of Defense clinics have seen a decrease in demand for PTSD treatment. This aligns with an overall decreased access to health care during the pandemic, he said. "When you delay care, you increase your risk" for more severe health issues, he said.

Houston noted that PHCoE seeks social media channels to highlight evidence-based practices including exposure, cognitive processing, and stress inoculation therapies.

Riggs said DoD clinics are "already planning and anticipating the potential increase" after physical distancing rules are lifted, and they expect telehealth use also will increase.

"Some of the clinics are finding that patients actually prefer that option to coming in," he said. "In terms of figuring out how to handle potential or possible increase in demand, it's figuring out how to balance the use of resources for in-person appointments as opposed to telehealth appointments."

In response to a question about whether the proper medical term should be PTSD or post traumatic stress, Houston said she was "more concerned about, how do we figure out what is going on with the symptoms, and the root of the symptoms, than ... the label. How do we get service members the help they need? How do we get the family members the help they need? How do we get providers the support they need?"

Houston mentioned DoD initiatives including the Real Warriors and Make the Connection campaigns, which encourage service members to ask for help and recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Resources for family members include Military OneSource and Military Kids Connect, which offers age-appropriate resources to support children dealing with the unique psychological challenges of military life.

"We want to continue to spread the message that those who suffer from the fallout of traumatic experiences ... are not alone," Houston said. And it doesn't matter if the trauma is related to combat, disease, domestic strife, or personal tragedy, she said.

"You do not need to suffer in silence. There is help. There is comfort. There is hope."



WHAT, ME A MEDIC?

By John Trotogott

When the U.S. Army mailed my draft notice in 1965, I dreamed of flying helicopters. However, that dream ended during my flight physical in Cleveland, Ohio, when the doctor diagnosed me with color blindness, disqualifying me for flight school. I attended Helicopter Crew Chief School instead, where I learned the workings of the H-34 Choctaw and then shipped off to Germany.

I watched "Saigon," an old 1948 movie starring Alan Ladd, many times and read everything about Saigon and Southeast Asia I could get my hands on. Our country was in the midst of an undeclared war in Vietnam. Being young, naive, and adventurous, I volunteered.

Orders assigned me to 335th Assault Helicopter Company. Upon my arrival, I discovered the Army gave the C-34, "my chopper," to the Korean Army and replaced it with a UH1 Huey, the latest and greatest helicopter. Not trained for the Huey, I didn't have a job.

For about a week I hung out in the orderly room, smoking my pipe, listening to incoming and outgoing helicopters on the radio, and chatting with fellow soldiers. On rare occasions, I filed records. One day I observed the medics loading stuff into a 3/4-ton truck and an ambulance.

Specialist Louis T. Jones, a huge Hawaiian guy and a medic from the 25th Medical Attachment, yelled at me, "Hey, don't just watch. Get over here and help me!" He wiped the sweat from his brow with a towel every few minutes. "Since you don't have a job, do ya wanna come along?"

"For what?" I asked.

"Gonna do some MEDCAP work." He grunted. "What is that?"

He explained that MEDCAP stands for Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP). Traveling to villages and refugee camps, they educated civilians about sanitation and midwifery, performed minor dental work, distributed tools and clothing, and offered aid to ill individuals.

Agreeing to help, I climbed into the truck and, after a 45-minute ride on a dusty, unimproved road, entered a world where poor people tried to survive the war and the destruction around them.

The next day Captain Owens, a flight surgeon with the U.S. Army Medical Corps (USAMC), walked into the

orderly room, thanked me for helping his team, and asked if I wanted to be a medic.

Though my background included some training in safety and health, first as a lifeguard and then as a safety representative with United Steel Workers, I never imagined myself as a medic. A helicopter pilot, yes; a medic, no.

For a few days, I thought over Captain Owens' offer.

He came to the orderly room and asked me again. When I told him, I was thinking about it, he said, "Don't wait too long."

That's strange. What's the rush?

He appeared to understand my confusion.

"Specialist Trotogott, because you don't have a job, your status is 'casual,' which means waiting for assignment. Many 'casuals' end up going to the States to attend combat/infantry jungle or airborne training." He paused. "So, I'll ask you again. Do you want to be a medic?"

Mmmmm, do I want to go to the swamps of North Carolina or Louisiana only to end up back here to live in the jungle and fight?

"Yes, sir, I'd love to be a medic."

I got caught up in a whirlwind of learning. I studied medical books, observed medics during "Sick Call," and spent three days at an Air Force hospital in Bien Hoa, assisting nurses and medics any way I could. Though I took first aid training as a lifeguard, nothing I learned prepared me for the depth of what I needed to know as a medic in the field, who dispensed shots, performed blood draws, and inserted peripheral IVs.

With great difficulty, I mastered keeping everything sterile, which necessitated a lot of attention since most procedures transpired in the dispensary tent or outside. Dust settled everywhere along with dirt, grease and oil. I swabbed the affected area with alcohol or iodine. At times, I did not have access to soap and water.

When we moved north, I continued to learn from my medical team and, whenever possible, assisted at hospitals. Approximately 17 EVAC hospitals were located in Viet Nam; no soldier was more than 40 minutes away from one. I took advantage of this intense "on-the-job training" whenever I could and learned to think and act quickly under adverse conditions. When in the field, my medical team (25th Medical Detachment) often split up into two or three different locales. At times our Flight Surgeon was busy trying to administer to all of our dispensaries, and we medics were on our own and needed to diagnose a patient's condition.

(continued....)



One time, after receiving enemy fire, a truck driver on a convoy rolled his rig off a hill and lost both hands. I assisted an experienced medic in applying tourniquets, inserting an IV, and pumping the trucker full of blood and normal saline. We didn't have time to worry about cleanliness.

Sometimes, we found ourselves riding in the "operations chopper" way overhead of an assault. The reasoning was as follows: in case of a medical need in the landing zone, we could swoop down and administer the needed care or evacuate the wounded. In addition to providing medical care, I learned how to operate a machine gun in case of an emergency and fly as a door gunner or a crew chief to give our guys a break.

I experienced many adventures in Vietnam. One such undertaking happened when some of us relocated to Kontum, where we discovered a nearby local hospital. Dr. Pat Smith, an amazing civilian doctor, ran the facility that cared for 20 to 30 Montagnard tribes of the Central Highlands. Most of them practiced the Catholic faith while all despised Communism and supported our military effort. The hospital, being both civilian and nonpolitical, lacked continued access to medical supplies, and because the locals used this facility for quality health care, these supplies depleted quickly. I remember flying to other camps/installations securing "needed" goods for the doctor, and she and her team appeared happy to see us coming.



Montagnard mother and children during 2/503 operation.
Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503

One evening Viet Cong attacked the hospital and abducted a German nurse who worked there. I think the move hurt them politically because she returned later. In fact, I wonder why the enemy would attack and harass this hospital, which served the locals, including leprosy patients. Some talk circulated about the "enemy" even going there for treatment. This doctor practiced there approximately 16 years. The hospital probably existed because the locals hid the staff whenever the enemy came.

During the Vietnam War Monika Schwinn, a German nurse, was held captive for three and a half years - at one time the only woman prisoner at the "Hanoi Hilton".

Photo of Monika in the Philippines after her release.



While the 335th was stationed at Phu Hiep on the South China Sea, we had a company carpenter, a civilian from a local village who repaired our buildings and built anything we needed. One night Viet Cong attacked our company compound. The carpenter, along with a few other bad guys, died trying to come through the perimeter the night of the attack. Later we learned he mapped out our company area for rocket and mortar attacks while he worked within our confines (each day civilians left the post at 5:00 p.m.) – an example of the dynamics of the civil war.

A few weeks earlier, I visited the carpenter's home. His young son had an infected cut and kept scratching it. Examining him, I noticed honey-colored crusts and red sores around his nose and mouth and diagnosed him with impetigo, a common and highly contagious skin infection. I attempted to explain to the family the importance of keeping the child's linens and clothes clean, a somewhat foreign concept to them. A chill traveled down my spine when I recalled that visit and realized I spent time in one of the enemy's homes.

(continued....)





Special Forces camp at Ben Het.

Another memorable event occurred when we began setting up our camp at a Special Forces area in Dak To. Some young Montagnard boys were helping us fill sand bags for our bunkers; one of them approached, his eyes full of excitement. *“Doctor, Doctor, there is a new baby coming. We didn’t have a doctor with us,”* and when I contacted the nearby 173d Airborne, I discovered they didn’t have one available either. *“It’s up to you ‘Sky Soldiers,”* one of the airborne guys said.

A few of us jumped in a jeep and headed out to the Montagnard village. Upon our arrival, we located the local chieftain’s wife, hugely pregnant with twins, lying in a dirty hammock with a hole cutout in the middle. The first baby, a female, arrived stillborn; the family glanced at her for a moment and then focused on the second male twin with coal black hair, no issues, and a loud, screeching voice. The birth appeared easy, but then what did I know about birthing babies?

Afterwards, several people who witnessed the birth ate a small portion of the placenta, and one of them gave the mother a taste.

What a great day for this family and what a unique experience for me and the other soldiers. A celebratory mood infected everyone. That night, however, I struggled to fall asleep: visions of the woman giving birth – the blood, the screams, the tension, the joy – filled my mind. I envisioned the marble-like face of the dead baby girl, the coal black hair of the hearty baby boy, and the people eating bloody pieces of the afterbirth. Shock, fear, and excitement coursed through my body.

Once, some of us medics were on convoy duty, the commander wanted one of us in every ten vehicles. As ordered, I rode through a village in a two-ton truck, with infantry troops who recently arrived in country, when an elderly Vietnamese papasan on a rickety bicycle began passing us. Without warning, one of these new guys reached out and knocked this old man off of his bike.

I jumped up and threw him to the bed of the truck and stood over him, yelling. *“We aren’t here to do things like this.”* He just glared at me. A second later, I noticed the angry looks from all his buds and reined in my anger. Sitting down with my back against the cab of the truck, I grasped my Dutch .380 pistol and kept my hand in my pocket. Fortunately, no one said anything for the rest of the journey.

During my second tour, I was assigned to the dispensary at the 17th Aviation Group Headquarters, which meant no more flying missions or flight pay. One day, a Korean doctor came into the dispensary and said, *“I understand you have flight experience.”* When I acknowledged I did, he asked me to join his company as a medic. I jumped at the opportunity and flew with the Koreans once or twice a month, keeping my “non-crew member” status along with extra pay, and enjoyed every minute.

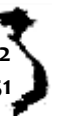
I participated in my own MEDCAP program, a larger one than I previously experienced. Two or three of us (including a Korean medic) cared for three orphanages: Buddhist, Christian, and nonsectarian facilities. In addition, a dentist worked in our dispensary, which meant we could provide more services than just pulling infected teeth.

When some civilians in the Nha Trang area asked if we’d distribute donations contributed to various U. S. non-profit agencies such as the Red Cross, we agreed. Most of the war-torn families wore virtual rags, which we replaced with clean, used T-shirts, shorts, blouses, and long pants. The villagers used World II vintage tools, broken and worn. I’ll never forget their looks of gratitude and smiles when we presented them with brand-new True Value hoes, shovels, and picks.

I believe things happen for a reason. There’s a plan for all of us. Because of the loss of “my chopper,” I became a U.S. Army Aero-Medical Specialist. I helped many people, both civilian and military, and probably saved some lives. Me a medic? Hell, yes, and proud of it!

Thank you, Captain Owens, USAMC, for believing in me. Also, I want to extend special thanks to all of the excellent Army doctors and medics who taught me to be the best medic I could be.

(Thanks to John for his story and service. Photos added. Ed)



Remarks by Commander in Chief at West Point Graduation



Thank you, General, and hello cadets. On behalf of our entire nation, let me say congratulations to the incredible West Point Class of 2020. Congratulations. Everyone have a good time, enjoy yourselves, because we are here to celebrate your achievements, and great achievements they are. Let us also recognize your remarkable Superintendent, General Darryl Williams, for his outstanding stewardship. General, thank you very much. Great job. Thank you.

Few words in the English language and few places in history have commanded as much awe and admiration as West Point. This premier military academy produces only the best of the best, the strongest of the strong, and the bravest of the brave. West Point is a universal symbol of American gallantry, loyalty, devotion, discipline, and great skill. There is no place on Earth I would rather be than right here with all of you. It's a great honor.

Across this hallowed plain have passed many of the greatest and most fearsome soldiers that ever lived. They were heroes who drove thundering columns of Sherman tanks into the heart of a wicked empire. They were legends who unleashed the fury of American artillery upon our enemies on remote islands and distant shores.

They were titans who strode through cannon blast and cavalry charge, and stared down our foes through gray clouds of smoke and shrapnel. They were the Army Rangers who led the way up jagged cliffs, the Airborne soldiers who rained down justice in the dark of night, the infantry whose very sight meant liberation was near, and the mighty forces who sent tyrants, terrorists, and sadistic monsters running scared through the gates of hell. No evil force on Earth can match the noble power and righteous glory of the American warrior.

I have no doubt that the young men and women before me today will add your names to this eternal chronicle of American heroes. You will go forth from this place adored by your countrymen, dreaded by your enemies, and respected by all throughout the world. Someday, generations of future West Point cadets will study your legacy. They will know your deeds, they will celebrate your triumphs, and they will proudly follow your example.

To the 1,107 who today become the newest officers in the most exceptional Army ever to take the field of battle, I am here to offer America's salute. Thank you for answering your nation's call.

On this special occasion, we are delighted to be joined by Congressman Steve Womack, Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, Assistant Secretary Casey Wardynski, and Army Chief of Staff General James McConville, an old grad from the class of 1981.

Let's also express our appreciation to General Curtis Buzzard, General Cindy Jebb, and all of the wonderful instructors, coaches, and faculty members who are continuing West Point's two-century tradition of unrivaled excellence.

To all of the parents, grandparents, and family members watching this ceremony from your beautiful home: Even though you could not be here today, we know this day could never have happened without you. Your love and sacrifice have given America these phenomenal men and women. Cadets, please join me in sending your parents and families the heartfelt thanks that they so richly deserved. They're all watching right now. Please. Thank you very much.

The depth and breadth of the U.S. Military's contributions to our society are an everlasting inspiration to us all. I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of America's Armed Forces in every branch — active duty, National Guard, and reserve — who stepped forward to help battle the invisible enemy — the new virus that came to our shores from a distant land called China. We will vanquish the virus. We will extinguish this plague.

I also want to thank the men and women of our National Guard who respond with precision to so many recent challenges, from hurricanes and natural disasters, to ensuring peace, safety, and the constitutional rule of law on our streets. We thank every citizen who wears a uniform in selfless service to our nation.

(continued....)



The members of this class have come from every state in our union. You have come from the farms and the cities, from states big and small, and from every race, religion, color, and creed. But when you entered these grounds, you became part of one team, one family, proudly serving one great American nation. You became brothers and sisters pledging allegiance to the same timeless principles, joined together in a common mission to protect our country, to defend our people, and to carry on the traditions of freedom, equality, and liberty that so many gave their lives to secure. You exemplify the power of shared national purpose to transcend all differences and achieve true unity. Today, you graduate as one class, and you embody one noble creed: Duty, Honor, Country.

Every graduate on this field could have gone to virtually any top-ranked university that you wanted. You chose to devote your life to the defense of America. You came to West Point because you know the truth: America is the greatest country in human history, and the United States Military is the greatest force for peace and justice the world has ever known.

The survival of America and the endurance of civilization itself depends on the men and women just like each of you. It depends on people who love their country with all their heart and energy and soul. It depends on citizens who build, sustain, nurture, and defend institutions like this one; that is how societies are made and how progress is advanced.

What has historically made America unique is the durability of its institutions against the passions and prejudices of the moment. When times are turbulent, when the road is rough, what matters most is that which is permanent, timeless, enduring, and eternal. It was on this soil that American patriots held the most vital fortress in our war for independence. It was this school that gave us the men who fought and won a bloody war to extinguish the evil of slavery within one lifetime of our founding. It was the graduates of West Point — towering figures like McArthur, Patton, Eisenhower, and Bradley — who led America to victory over the sinister Nazis and imperial fascists 75 years ago. It was under the leadership of West Point graduates like the legendary General Matthew Ridgway that the Army was at the forefront of ending the terrible injustice of segregation.

It was Army strength that held the line against the brutal opposition and oppression from Communism. And it has been thanks to patriots like you that America has climbed to new heights of human achievement and national endeavor.

This is your history. This is the legacy that each of you inherits. It is the legacy purchased with American

blood at the crest of Little Round Top, on the crimson beaches of Normandy, in the freezing mud of Bastogne, and the dense jungles of Vietnam. It is the legacy of courageous, selfless, faithful patriots who fought for every inch of dirt with every ounce of strength and every last scrap of heart and drive and grit they had. And they did it because they believed in the undying principles of our founding. They did it because they cherished their homes, their faith, their family, and their flag. And they did it because when they came to this school, they were taught to hold fast to their love of our country; to cherish our heritage, learn from it, and build upon it. That is what young Americans are taught here at West Point. That is the legacy that you carry forward as second lieutenants in the United States Army, and you must never forget it.

Through four long years, you have honed your skills, trained your mind and body, overcome every obstacle, and earned your place of pride in the Long Gray Line. You made it through the rigors of R-Day and Beast, the intensity of CLDT, and weeks of training in the blistering heat. You have pushed yourselves far beyond every limit imaginable.

Some of you have even pushed the limits a bit too much. So for any cadets who have not finished walking off their hours, as Commander-in-Chief, I hereby absolve all cadets on restriction for minor conduct offenses, and that is effective immediately.

Congratulations. That's a nice one, isn't it? Don't you feel better now?

Surviving the 47-month experience is never easy, but only the class of 2020 can say it survived 48 months. And when it comes to bragging rights, no one can boast louder than the class that brought Navy's 14-year football winning streak to a screeching halt. You did that. I happened to be there. I happened to be there. That's right. That was a big day. I was there. You beat Navy and brought the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy back to West Point for two straight years. So we say, "Go, Army, go."

This graduating class secured more than 1,000 victories for the Black Knights, including three bowl victories, 13 NCAA team appearances, and a Women's Rugby Championship with the help of somebody that I just met: 2019 MVP, Sam Sullivan. Fantastic job. Thank you. A fantastic job. Five cadets won national boxing championships, and Adaya Queen brought home two. Brendan Brown earned the title of Powerlifting National Champion.

(continued....)



In academics, 38 cadets have earned fellowships to continue their studies, including First Captain Dane Van de Wall, who received one of the most prestigious awards in academia: the Rhodes Scholarship. Congratulations, Dane. It's a great achievement. Thank you. Congratulations. Great achievement.

But no one modeled the values of the soldier-scholar quite like Lindy Mooradian. Lindy earned both the highest overall class standing and the highest physical program score. She has published scientific research in a prominent journal and set five new records on the athletic track. Lindy, incredible job. Where is Lindy? Where is Lindy? For somebody that did so well, they didn't give you a very good seat, Lindy. We have to talk about that. Congratulations.

Right now, America needs a class of cadets that lives by your motto: "With Vision, We Lead." We need you to carry on the spirit of the great General Ulysses S. Grant. Soon after assuming overall command, following three years of Union setbacks, General Grant encountered someone heading north to Washington during the Battle of the Wilderness: "If you see the President," Grant said, "tell him from me that whatever happens, there will [never] be no turning back."

We need you to be as visionary as Patton, who as a young man in 1917, became the first soldier assigned to the Army Tank Corps. One month into the job, he saw the future, writing, "If resistance is broken, and the line pierced, the tank must and will assume the role of pursuit cavalry and ride the enemy to death." Under Patton's leadership, that's exactly what they did.

We need you to be as bold and determined as the immortal General Douglas MacArthur, who knew that the American soldier never, ever quits. After leaving the Philippines for Australia at a low point of the Pacific War in 1942, MacArthur famously vowed, "I shall return." For two years, he then took great strategic risks and placed himself often in personal danger. On October 20th, 1944, MacArthur stepped off a landing boat, strode through knee-high water, and proclaimed, "People of the Philippines: I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil." He then called upon the islands' brave people to rise up and join the fight. America's momentum was unstoppable.

These great leaders were not afraid of what others might say about them. They didn't care. They knew their duty was to protect their country. They knew the Army exists to preserve the republic and the strong foundations upon which it stands: family, God, country, liberty, and justice. They were true, tough American patriots. That is what our country needs, especially in these times, and that is what you are.

Each of you begins your career in the Army at a crucial moment in American history. We are restoring the fundamental principles that the job of the American soldier is not to rebuild foreign nations, but defend — and defend strongly — our nation from foreign enemies. We are ending the era of endless wars. In its place is a renewed, clear-eyed focus on defending America's vital interests. It is not the duty of U.S. troops to solve ancient conflicts in faraway lands that many people have never even heard of. We are not the policemen of the world.

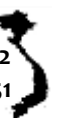
But let our enemies be on notice: If our people are threatened, we will never, ever hesitate to act. And when we fight, from now on, we will fight only to win. As MacArthur said: "In war, there is no substitute for victory."

To ensure you have the very best equipment and technology available, my administration has embarked on a colossal rebuilding of the American Armed Forces, a record like no other. After years of devastating budget cuts and a military that was totally depleted from these endless wars, we have invested over 2 trillion — trillion; that's with a "T" — dollars in the most powerful fighting force, by far, on the planet Earth. We are building new ships, bombers, jet fighters, and helicopters by the hundreds; new tanks, military satellites, rockets, and missiles; even a hypersonic missile that goes 17 times faster than the fastest missile currently available in the world and can hit a target 1,000 miles away within 14 inches from center point. For the first time in 70 years, we established a new branch of the United States military: the Space Force. It's a big deal.

In recent years, America's warriors have made clear to all the high cost of threatening the American people. The savage ISIS caliphate has been 100 percent destroyed under the Trump administration, and its barbaric leader, al-Baghdadi, is gone, killed, over. And the world's number-one terrorist, Qasem Soleimani, is likewise dead.

As Commander-in-Chief, I never forget for one instant the immense sacrifices we ask of those who wear this nation's uniform. Already, you have known the crushing pain of losing a brother in arms. Today, we remember an extraordinary cadet who made the supreme sacrifice in an accident last year: C.J. Morgan. We are deeply moved to be joined by his father, Christopher Morgan.

(continued....)





And C.J. was something very special. Christopher is a Secret Service Agent. A tough guy. Great guy. Great son, who is looking down right now. Christopher, I want you to know that we will carry C.J.'s blessed memory in our hearts forever. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Tomorrow, America will celebrate a very important anniversary: the 245th birthday of the United States Army. Unrelated, going to be my birthday also. I don't know if that happened by accident. Did that happen by accident, please? But it's a great day because of that Army birthday.

And as you know, the Army's first Commander-in-Chief, General George Washington, called the fort that stood on this majestic point "the most important post in America." Its strategic location on the Hudson River was vital to our war for independence. If British ships gained control of this river, they would have divided our young nation in two. So American soldiers stretched a massive metal chain across the waters of the Hudson, from West Point all the way to Constitution Island. I saw a piece of that chain. It's incredible. No enemy ship even dared try to cross. Every link in that great chain was formed from over 100 pounds of pure American iron, mined from American soil, and made with American pride. Together, those links formed an unbreakable line of defense.

Standing here before you more than two centuries later, it is clearer than ever that General Washington's words still hold true. West Point is still the indispensable post for America, the vital ground that must not lose. And the survival of our nation still depends on a great chain reaching out from this place — one made not of iron, but of flesh and blood, of memory and spirit, of sheer faith and unyielding courage.

Today, each of you becomes another link in that unbroken chain, forged in the crucible known as the United States Military Academy, the greatest on Earth. It has given you soldiers that you can rely on to your right and to your left. And now we are entrusting you

with the most noble task any warrior has ever had the privilege to carry out: the task of preserving American liberty.

As long as you remain loyal, faithful, and true, then our enemies don't even stand a chance, our rights will never be stolen, our freedoms will never be trampled, our destiny will never be denied, and the United States of America will never be defeated. With the grace of God and the heroes of West Point, America will always prevail. Nothing will stand in your way, nothing will slow you down, and nothing will stop the West Point Class of 2020 from achieving a true and lasting victory.

God bless you. God bless the United States Army. And God bless America. Congratulations. Thank you very much. Thank you.



(Web photos added)

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."



Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump

Bruce Everett Anderson, 77

W. Wardsboro, VT
March 24, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

James R. Calway, 76

Leavenworth, KS
May 5, 2020
173d Abn Bde

Alan Herbert Champion, 74

Greenfield, MN
March 22, 2020
HHC/2/503, RVN

Ernie Chapoose, 69

Ft. Duchesne, OH
April 14, 2020
HHC/3/503, RVN

Floyd E. "Trey" Covalt, III, 72

McHenry, IL
April 21, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

George E. Dexter, Col., 95

Albuquerque, NM
June 4, 2020
Bn Cmdr, 2/503 RVN

Paul E. Doherty, 73

Holliston, MA
March 13, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

William "Keith" Dukes, 75

Princeton, KY
April 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Bobby Gene Elliott, 74

Owensboro, KS
March 18, 2023
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Dale Faulkner, 75

Constantia, NY
May 4, 2020
173d Abn (LRRP), RVN

Dale Allen Henington, 68

Long Beach, WA
March 5, 2020,
173d Abn Bde, RVN

John E. "Jack" Jasinski, 71

Springfield, MA
March 6, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

John Tilson Johnson, Jr., 77

Winnsboro, SC
April 20, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Larry L. Kleintop, 70

Palmerton, PA
January 26, 2020
B/4/503, RVN

Michael (Mike) Lee

Mosbrooker, 81, LTC
Oak Harbor, WA
March 3, 2020, 173d Abn Bde

Orrin Gorman McClellan, 25

Langley, WA
May 18, 2020
2/503, Afghanistan

Joseph Lee Nally, 71

Springfield, KY
March 23, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Eugene Raymond Platano, 75

Ashtabula, OH
May 16, 2020
A/4/503, RVN

James T. Quick, 1SG, 88

Clarksville, TN
February 12, 2020
B/2/503, RVN

Timothy Patrick Risner, 73

Pateros, WA
February 9, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Stan Streicher, 77

April 5, 2020
Boca Raton, FL
Casper Platoon CO, RVN

Patrick "Tad" Tadina, CSM, 77

May 29, 2020
Fayetteville, NC
Recon 1/503 & 75th Rgrs, RVN

Wilbur Jones Wiman, 90

Fayetteville, NC
May 2, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN
WWII, Korea & VN

Gary Wayne White, Sr., 70

Hart, MI
April 6, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Dennis Wilson, 72

Mesa, AZ
May 14, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Michael (Mike) A. Wilson, 71

Washington C.H., OH
April 8, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

John "Rabbitt" Wozniak, Jr., 72

Fayette City, PA
April 24, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Ray "Zac" Zacccone, 71

Halfway, OR
March 5, 2020
C/2/503, RVN

*Rest easy with
your fellow warriors*



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