



2/503d *Vietnam* Newsletter



For the men, and their families, of the 2nd Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) ~ *We Try Harder!*

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com See all issues: <http://www.firebaseio319.org/2bat/news.php> April 2010 ~ Issue 14

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~

Charlie Company trooper on patrol in the "D" Zone jungle 1967.



Photo by Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d, MG (Ret)



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WHITE HOUSE SEEKS \$125 BILLION FOR VETERANS IN 2011

WASHINGTON -- To expand health care to a record-number of Veterans, reduce the number of homeless Veterans and process a dramatically increased number of new disability compensation claims, the White House has announced a proposed \$125 billion budget next year for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Our budget proposal provides the resources necessary to continue our aggressive pursuit of President Obama's two over-arching goals for Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "First, the requested budget will help transform VA into a 21st century organization. And second, it will ensure that we approach Veterans' care as a lifetime initiative, from the day they take their oaths until the day they are laid to rest."

The \$125 billion budget request, which has to be approved by Congress, includes \$60.3 billion for discretionary spending (mostly health care) and \$64.7 billion in mandatory funding (mostly for disability compensation and pensions).

"VA's 2011 budget request covers many areas but focuses on three central issues that are of critical importance to our Veterans -- easier access to benefits and services, faster disability claims decisions, and ending the downward spiral that results in Veterans' homelessness," Shinseki said.

Reducing Claims Backlog

The president's budget proposal includes an increase of \$460 million and more than 4,000 additional claims processors for Veterans benefits. This is a 27 percent funding increase over the 2010 level.

The 1,014,000 claims received in 2009 were a 75 percent increase over the 579,000 received in 2000. Shinseki said the Department expects a 30 percent increase in claims -- to 1,319,000 -- in 2011 from 2009 levels.

One reason for the increase is VA's expansion of the number of Agent Orange-related illnesses that automatically qualify for disability benefits. Veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicides during the Vietnam War are likely to file additional claims that will have a substantial impact upon the processing system for

benefits, the secretary said. (See Agent Orange report on page 13).

"We project significantly increased claims inventories in the near term while we make fundamental improvements to the way we process disability compensation claims," Shinseki said.

Automating the G.I. Bill

The budget proposal includes \$44 million to complete by December 2010 an automated system for processing applications for the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. VA also plans to start development next year of electronic systems to process claims from other VA-administered educational programs....



Commander-In-Chief visiting troops.

Eliminating Homelessness

The budget proposal includes \$4.2 billion in 2011 to reduce and help prevent homelessness among Veterans. That breaks down into \$3.4 billion for core medical services and \$799 million for specific homeless programs and expanded medical care, which includes \$294 million for expanded homeless initiatives. This increased investment for expanded homeless services is consistent with the VA secretary's established goal of ultimately eliminating homelessness among Veterans.

On a typical night, about 131,000 Veterans are homeless. They represent every war and generation, from the "Greatest Generation" to the latest generation of Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. To date, VA operates the largest system of homeless treatment and assistance programs in the nation.

(continued....)



Targeting Mental Health

"The 2011 budget proposal continues the department's keen focus on improving the quality, access and value of mental health care provided to Veterans," Shinseki said.

The spending request seeks \$5.2 billion for mental health, an increase of \$410 million (or 8.5 percent) over current spending, enabling expansion of inpatient, residential and outpatient mental health services, with emphasis on making mental health services part of primary care and specialty care.

The secretary noted that one-fifth of the patients seen last year in VA's health care facilities had a mental health diagnosis, and that the department has added more than 6,000 new mental health professionals since 2005, bringing to 19,000 the number of employees dedicated to mental health care.

The budget request will enable the department to continue expanding its programs for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), along with the diagnosis and treatment of depression, substance abuse and other mental health problems. Shinseki called PTSD treatment "*central to VA's mission.*"

The proposed spending will continue VA's suicide prevention program. Since July 2007, the department's suicide prevention hotline has received nearly 225,000 calls from Veterans, active-duty personnel and family members. The hotline is credited with saving the lives of nearly 7,000 people.

Reaching Rural Veterans

For 2011, VA is seeking \$250 million to strengthen access to health care for 3.2 million Veterans enrolled in VA's medical system who live in rural areas. Rural outreach includes expanded use of home-based primary care and mental health.

A key portion of rural outreach -- which shows promise for use with Veterans across the country -- is VA's innovative "telehealth" program. It links patients and health care providers by telephones and includes



**Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Eric Shinseki**

telephone-based data transmission, enabling daily monitoring of patients with chronic problems. The budget provides an increase of \$42 million for VA's home telehealth program. The effort already cares for 35,000 patients and is the largest program of its kind in the world....

Delivering World-Class Health Care

During 2011, VA expects to treat 6.1 million patients, who will account for more than 800,000 hospitalizations and 83 million outpatient visits.

The total includes 439,000 Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, for whom \$2.6 billion is included in the budget proposal. That's an increase of \$597 million -- or 30 percent -- from the current budgets.

The proposed budget for health care includes:

- \$6.8 billion for long-term care, an increase of \$859 million (or 14 percent) over 2010. This amount includes \$1.5 billion for non-institutional long-term care;
- Expanding access to VA health care system for more than 99,000 Veterans who were previously denied care because of their incomes;
- \$590 million for medical and prosthetic research; and
- Continuing development of a "virtual lifetime electronic record," a digital health record that will accompany Veterans throughout their lives.

VA is requesting \$54.3 billion in advance appropriations for 2012 for health care, an increase of \$2.8 billion over the 2011 enacted amount. Planned initiatives in 2012 include better leveraging acquisitions and contracting, enhancing the use of referral agreements, strengthening VA's relationship with the Defense Department, and expanding the use of medical technology.

Preserving National Shrines

"VA remains steadfastly committed to providing access to a dignified and respectful burial for Veterans choosing to be buried in a VA national cemetery," Shinseki said. *"This promise requires that we maintain national cemeteries as shrines dedicated to the memory of those who served this nation in uniform."*

The requested \$251 million for cemetery operations and maintenance will support more than 114,000 interments in 2011, a 3.8 percent increase over 2010. In 2011, the department will maintain 8,441 acres with 3.1 million gravesites. The budget request includes \$37 million to clean and realign an estimated 668,000 headstones and repair 100,000 sunken graves.

(continued....)



Building for the Future

\$1.15 billion requested for major construction for 2011 includes funding for medical facilities in New Orleans; Denver; Palo Alto, Calif.; Alameda, Calif.; and Omaha, Neb. Also budgeted for 2011 are major expansions and improvements to the national cemeteries in Indiantown Gap, Pa.; Los Angeles; and Tacoma, Wash., and new burial access policies that will provide a burial option to an additional 500,000 Veterans and enhance service in urban areas.

A requested budget of \$468 million for minor construction in 2011 would fund a wide variety of improvements at VA facilities.

Call-up this site on the web to read complete text:
www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1848

History Could Say It Never Happened

Sam Watkins had nothing to do with our war in Vietnam. He was a private in the Confederate Army during the Civil war. If you've seen the PBS documentary on the Civil War then you may know who I'm talking about.

It doesn't matter what side he fought for. What matters is that like most of us he was a soldier of low rank swept to and fro across a map fighting for this hill or that swamp while sharing many of the same fears and frustrations we experienced as warriors for our cause.

His was not a war of bold strategies and military philosophies. His was the war of the "Grunt," a war of mud and sweat and blood and sleeping in the rain. What makes Sam Watkins memorable is that he wrote down his experiences and because he did, we can see that in many ways we are kin to him.

"The histories of the Lost Cause", he wrote, "are all written out by 'big bugs,' generals and renowned historians, and like the fellow who called a turtle a 'coote.' being told that no such word as cooter was in Webster's dictionary, remarked that he had as much right to make a dictionary as Mr. Webster or any other man; so have I to write a history.

Pardon me should I use the personal pronoun 'I' too frequently, as I do not wish to be called egotistical, for I only write of what I saw as a humble private in the rear rank in an infantry regiment...I was twenty-one years old then, and at that time I was not married. Now I have a house full of young 'rebels,' clustering around my knees and bumping against my elbow, while I write these reminiscences of the war..." (Sam Watkins)

Reading his memoires reminds me we each have our stories to tell and no matter how mundane the details might seem, they may someday become nuggets of insight to some future ragged-ass Vet trying to make since of it all.



Jim

We of the 173d were all "selected" to be the point of the spear, and while it can be hazardous to your health, it also provides a perspective of that environment only we were privy to. You can't buy it...you have to live it.

I think Sam would be just as awed by your stories as I have been by his. I read about the battles he was in and I think "*Where did they find men with that kind of courage?*" But, I know that if he could read about the things you guys did he would be asking the same question.

Tell your stories fellas. Write 'em down if for no other reason than to tell others about a brave buddy. If you don't write it down History says it never happened.

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

~ CORRECTION ~

Another great issue, with my congratulations for a job well done. The picture shown, purporting to be Les Brownlee, is actually me. Les would probably appreciate a correction because he is a handsome devil.



Ranger Roy

LTC Roy Lombardo CO B/2/503d

On Page 27 of the March issue of our newsletter the photo above appeared in Tom Faley's atricle, "*OPERATION PHOENIX: One Very Bad Day,*" with the inscription, "*Col. Les Brownlee.*" The photo is actually of **LTC Roy Lombardo**. But, I invite you to look at the second photo of **Col. Brownlee** which should have appeared in the article.



Col. Brownlee

My point exactly. Both men were CO's of B/2/503d. Both were Colonels. Both were paratroopers. Both have butch haircuts. Both right arms are exposed. Both are wearing jungle fatigues. I think they are one in the same!!

The correction was made to the permanent newsletter on Paul Dinardo's web site. But....I still wonder. Ed. ☺





CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

~ EASTER AND HOPE ~

Dr. Ronald Reese Smith
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Easter and hope are synonymous. This holy day (from which we get our word holiday) always brings with it good news and the refreshing reminder that there is life beyond this life as well as a quality of life in this life that only God gives. Real life. Eternal life. Glorious life. Full life.

Question: What do you have when you don't have anything left? **Answer:** You have hope because of God's grace. We do not have a "last hope" or a "desperate hope," but rather we have the "confident hope," which Jesus Christ provides for those who receive his love. The fact is we can always rejoice and celebrate in our hope.

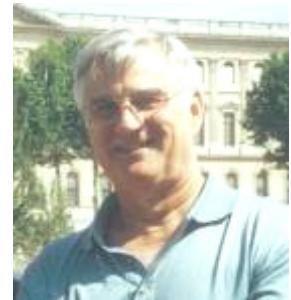
If we lose our hope, we have lost everything. Take away our wealth and we are damaged. Take away our health and we are handicapped. Take away our sense of purpose and we are hindered and befuddled. But, take away our hope, and we are stopped dead in our tracks... paralyzed... we are... hopeless.

Because Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty that we justly should have paid for our sin, we have been joined to the timeless life of God. Jesus Christ didn't have to die in our place; He did it simply because He loves us. It was a great kindness. It is what theologians call grace.

Because Jesus cleared away all the obstacles that stood between us and God, the center of our living is no longer here on earth; it is in heaven. Instead of being citizens of earth and having all our loyalties here; we have become more like a tourist. This does not mean, of course, that we shut our eyes to what's going on all around us. Quite the contrary. But it does mean that our ultimate concern lies with what is eternal. We are linked to what lies beyond the morning headlines and the advertisements on television. When hope is riveted to what is eternal, then it is possible to rejoice. Even if you lose everything else, your hope is alive. Hope is like the air we breathe. It keeps you alive.

We cannot change the past. It is gone. It's history. While we are today the totality of our past, the past is gone, forever. We only have today. Remember, none of us have done anything so dreadful that we cannot come to God; none of us are so good that we do not need to come to God.

As in combat and with our brothers and sisters in arms, we don't quit in hard times! We pray all the harder! We help those around us who have need! We do all of this because we have hope.



Those of us who live on the outskirts of hope need this reminder. Chuck Swindoll wrote: "*There is something altogether magnificent, therapeutic and reassuring about Easter morning.*" Because Jesus Christ gave His life to redeem us and then triumphed over the grave, then we have the hope--the assurance that Easter offers. A new day. A new start. A new life. In other words, hope.

Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the god who settled the relationship between us and Him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with Himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what He is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; He's already a friend with you.

How? You say. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God." (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, The Message)

An object of His grace, **Ron**

173d Scholarship Fund

Chapter officers, the 173d Airborne Brigade Association Foundation's scholarship application is now open for download. Applicants may go to the Association web site's home page <http://www.skysoldiers.com> click on 'Breaking News' on the left side of the home page, and click on the Scholarship Program link. Completed applications are due to the Scholarship Chairman by 15 April. And finally, please be sure your Chapter carries out a fundraiser for the Association Foundation.

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Vietnam Generation Begins to Fade as Death Rate Rises for War's Veterans

by Paul J. Bylin

Author of

"The Other Casualty Of War"

Forty years ago, Ron Willoughby was death with a telescopic sight as a Marine sniper in Vietnam.

Today, mortality has Willoughby and other Vietnam veterans in its crosshairs.

The generation of an estimated 8 million military service members of the Vietnam era, 1964-1975, is fading. The number of Vietnam veteran deaths has almost doubled since 2001 and, according to Department of Veterans Affairs' projections, will hit 103,890 this year -- approaching 300 a day.

That's more than five times the average daily number of U.S. Combat deaths during the peak casualty year of the war in 1968.

Willoughby, now 63 and a year older than the national average age of Vietnam vets, said three members of his old unit have died in the past five years, two from cancer and one from a heart attack. That's why the North Olmsted veteran said the unit reunions have been changed from once every two years to annual affairs.

Time is catching up, and they know it. **Jim Quisenberry**, a member of the local Joint Veterans Honor Guard, said he has been serving at an increasing number of funerals for fellow Vietnam vets in recent years.

"It's scary," said Quisenberry, 61, of Lakewood. *"It seems like the 'Nam' guys aren't going to be around a long time, not like their fathers."*

John Wilson, a professor of psychology at Cleveland State University, said one difference between Vietnam vets and those who served during World War II is that the older vets had closure -- a recognized victory -- for their conflict. The World War II vets came home heroes and were treated as such, he noted.

But *"for the Vietnam vet, there was never an end point, psychologically,"* Wilson said. So the impact of war continued long after the shooting stopped. When Hank Vasil, 62, of Brook Park, gave a eulogy last summer for Shelby businessman Ralph Phillips, 65, a close friend and fellow member of his Army unit in

Vietnam, he was joined at the funeral by a friend from the unit whose legs were failing from diabetes. Another close buddy from those days couldn't make it because of cancer and multiple sclerosis.



Arlington Cemetery

"It's not a good feeling" watching them pass, Vasil said. *"It's an emotional numbing, almost the same as the combat experience. The only way to survive is to become numb, because you feel so helpless."* So the survivors of the battles of Khe Sanh, Dak To and Hamburger Hill wait and watch their ranks thin.

One concern is Agent Orange, a defoliant used in Vietnam to deprive the enemy of forest cover, destroy crops and clear vegetation from the perimeters of U.S. Bases. Though the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, finds only *"suggestive but limited evidence"* that Agent Orange can be associated with diseases, Veterans Affairs lists 15 conditions -- qualifying veterans for service-related compensation -- that might be connected by exposure to the defoliant. Among them are ischemic heart disease, prostate and respiratory cancers, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, Parkinson's and Hodgkin's disease.

Quisenberry, wounded twice during his Vietnam tour with the **173d Airborne Brigade**, wonders about the risks. *"We were in some areas of deforestation where we drank our water out of rivers and bomb craters,"* he said. *"So far I haven't shown any symptoms, but I worry about it."*

(continued....)



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In the past three years, the number of Vietnam vets seeking treatment from the VA has gone up 25 percent nationally, about 10 percent locally, and the largest category of that treatment is for post traumatic stress disorder, according to Dr. Edgardo Padin-Rivera, chief of psychological services at the Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center.

Vietnam veterans are reaching a point in their lives where they may be retired, losing the past support systems of family and friends, susceptible to depression and prime candidates for late-onset PTSD, Padin-Rivera said. Marine Vietnam vet Jim Minnery, 66, of Elyria, said counseling has helped him cope with PTSD -- the modern term for the "shell shock" diagnosis his grandfather got after serving in World War I. "*I'm doing pretty good now,*" he said. "*It helped that I quit drinking 23 years ago. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't be here.*"

Willoughby, the Marine sniper, said one member of his unit is a recovering alcoholic who once said "*he wasn't drinking to get drunk. He was drinking to go to sleep because of all of this stuff.*" Willoughby revisited the ghosts of his own past with a return trip to some of his old battlefields in 2008. "*I guess to remember and forget at the same time,*" he said. "***I wanted to go back to see what it was, because that was a time when we thought we were going to die.***" Now they know they are.

The prospect of death has lent a new urgency to life for some Vietnam veterans. Some plan to start collecting Social Security as soon as they can, while they still can. After seeing two Vietnam buddies die of cancer, both at age 54, then discovering he had diabetes, Marine veteran Ron Covrett, 60, of Fairview Park, made funeral and burial arrangements, right down to his headstone and disposition of worldly belongings. "*I've got all my ducks lined up with the insurance, all the legal stuff tied up,*" Covrett said, remembering the buddy who lost a bout with cancer. "*It got in his throat and just ate it.*"

But Carl Carter, 62, of Richmond Heights, isn't disturbed by the looming mortality among his fellow Vietnam vets. "*It's a normal phase,*" he said. "*I'm not looking forward to it, but, hey, it's coming no matter what. One thing for sure, I'm not as afraid as I had been in the past,*" he added. "*The things we've been through and done, many a day we didn't think we'd come home. So this has all been gravy since then.*" As an increasing number of Vietnam vets make that final

march, some look back on what their generation is leaving behind.

Their Legacy

To Carter, it's difficult looking back. "*Sometimes the thing that distresses me most is that we put forth all that effort and it seems like nobody appreciated it,*" he said. Others point to treatment programs for PTSD and chemical contamination that didn't exist when Vietnam vets left the service, but because of their efforts now serve a new generation of warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan.

As CSU's John Wilson noted,

"Vietnam veterans brought an awareness to the American people that there is a post-traumatic war syndrome that is real. By their voices and their suffering, these veterans drew attention to a wider audience, both scientifically and medically."



Taps at General Ellis Williamson's funeral at Arlington.

Vietnam veterans like Bob Stockhausen, 62, of Lakewood, cite another legacy. "*Our generation was the one that figured out you can oppose the war but support the troops,*" he said. "*Even though our welcome home was 15 years late, we're out on the front line welcoming home the troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.*"

(continued....)



That community support of the troops nowadays will prove invaluable in treating returning veterans with PTSD, said Dr. Padin-Rivera of the VA. “*The atmosphere of acceptance around veterans is very different from what it was back in the ‘70s, and this has made a tremendous difference beyond anything we could do as professionals,*” he said.

Some Vietnam vets believe their legacy in the lessons of that war has yet to be learned. Mary Reynolds Powell, 62, of Cleveland, is still proud of her experience as an Army nurse in Vietnam. “*I am the person I am today because I went through it,*” she said. But she believes the United States still hasn’t learned how to fight a war while considering the potential political, social, cultural and historic ramifications, an oversight ultimately dooming any military action overseas.

Quisenberry prefers that their legacy be remembered for the positives. “*We championed the PTSD issue, the Agent Orange issue and the POW/MIA issue,*” he said. “*You can change things. But you have to be willing to work at it.*” On a personal level, he said the experience “*made me a much stronger person, a more caring person and opened my eyes to the horrors of war. It’s not all Hollywood crap. It’s a very scary, horrible place to be. But if you can survive that,*” he added, “*you can survive anything.*” Except time.

The above report was sent in by Bill Nicholls, A/2/503d
(Photos added)

~ Hearts & Minds ~

Why it's good to be a 2/503d trooper.



Dak To Silver Star recipient Don “Rocky” Rockholt, A/2/503d, LRRP, winning hearts and minds of the villagers in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Prelude to the story:

THE BATTLE AT BAU SAN (Operation Silver City)

One G.I.’s perspective...

by Lew “Smitty” Smith
HHC/2/503d, ‘65/’66



War is an evil practice. It dehumanizes the people involved in it, the soldiers as well as the innocent. It steals all that is

good about humanity, and replaces that good with fear, horror, savagery and, ultimately, shame. It generally pits young men against young men in duels to the death; oft times fighting one another for reasons they don't fully understand. It is only when these same young men, the fortunate youth who survive war, when having come to an older age can look back at their time at war through different, clearer and wiser eyes. It is then they finally realize they were scant more than tools of power, of the powerful. This story is a dichotomy; it speaks of the excitement, yes, the thrill and exhilaration of fighting alongside ones fellow soldiers, cheating death of her reward, and of emerging victorious in a battle where the odds for triumph were heavily stacked against them; where a small number of their comrades sacrificed their lives so their fellow soldiers might live, yet where hundreds of the opposition died so one side may emerge triumphant. This story speaks of soldier's pride, in their own words, in facing their fears, overcoming those fears and surviving the death duel. Yet, this story is really about more than soldiers' heroism or pride in victory over a numerically superior enemy force fanatically committed to their destruction; this is also an anti-war story. It is a story about Generals climbing the ladder pursuing promotions while seeking career success at the expense of young lives; and it is about our megalomaniacal government officials motivated by ego-driven internal forces, religious self-righteousness, and external economic considerations, in their pursuit of their renowned place in history as well as personal financial gain, to justify their ill conceived and unjustifiable actions which took our country and our youth into this war. Most of those Generals and those political leaders responsible for the Vietnam War have now left us. But while in leaving us they also left behind countless millions who pay a daily price for their folly. I despise war, it is an evil practice.

Smitty, some time and somewhere in VN.



SKY SOLDIERETTE'S CORNER

The opinions expressed by the author of this article are strictly her own and the editor and readers of this newsletter do not necessarily have to agree with or accept these opinions. And my comments are not to be read as any lack of support for our troops or their families. Now that the legalities are out of the way.....



During the past couple of weeks, I received some emails and a posting on Face Book containing a picture of a young widow stretched out face down on her husband's grave in Arlington Cemetery. It is called "*Hallowed Ground.*" For the life of me, I can't find it again. I know it is out there somewhere in cyberspace and maybe my reaction helped it on the way. It is a very touching picture.

When I first saw the picture, my reaction wasn't normal. Yes, I felt her loss and felt sorry that she lost her husband in such a horrible way. And I recognized that she would be forever without that special person in her life – the love of her life.

My very first thought was "*She's the lucky one.*" Now before the weapons and words start getting thrown at me, let me try to explain what I have figured out in the days since. The reason why I think I felt that.

I know the shock of losing someone can be devastating – even if you are expecting it, or know that it could happen. You look for any thing to make sense of what has happened, to give you a chance to hang on, to give you one more chance to say I love you, to say good-bye again. It can be a disease; it can be an accident; it can be a homicide; it can be any number of things, including War.

There is a grieving period – sometimes weeks, sometimes months, sometimes years. But the loss is final and you get past the denial, hurt, anger, questioning -- to a place where you can remember the happy times. Time does have a way of erasing the ugly things that are there – whitewashing the unhappy, angry times – and leaving you with good memories to help you get through the days and nights when you are alone; thinking what has happened, but growing because of it.

But the spouse of a veteran – especially a long-term spouse – lives with a whole different process. There is a healing process that can begin and the sun peeks out from behind the clouds. There's a little bit of color starting to show in the drabness of your life. The healing process gives you the opportunity to let go and move on with your life – never forgetting.

You become one with the love of your life – with the one who you want to spend the rest of your life with.

But you don't realize that the death process began while he was away. Even if the combat soldier comes back and looks and acts pretty normal, you have this expectation that you can help him heal; that you can help him grieve; that you can share a life that includes those experiences that both of you have had to endure. And perhaps you do gain some semblance of being normal. There are arms around you, holding you and making you feel like you are an important part of their life.

At first, you get up in the morning with the thought of a bright new day of experiencing life. It's going to be good – you won't walk on a tightrope - reactions to ordinary things will be normal.



Not the photo Iva speaks of, but a photo.

Gradually there comes a time when the death becomes visible – only it isn't sudden – and it is more lingering than even the slowest lingering illness – and way more devastating. The pieces of soul have already started to die off. And each night you go to that grave to bury another piece. Then you hold the grave to try to bring it back and bury your face in it, to water it with your tears wondering if you can do anything to bring back a semblance of any kind of life.

After you have watched the anger, bitterness, isolation, negativity and vigilance, demons replace the soul you love, you realize that something else has happened. Yes, you still have to bury part of your love every night and you grieve on that grave every night. But now, you are burying your own soul. The laughter and enjoyment of life goes as you try daily to deal with the death that happens over and over again. Can you keep from putting yourself in a grave of Vietnam and having that to mourn too?

My prayer is that all of us someday, somehow have peace. That we don't have to bury the last little part of our souls and our lives together. That we recognize that love is still there and each of us is important. That our actions don't have to hurt each other. That someday the good memories will replace the memories of hell.

Iva Tuttle

Wife of 2/503d Bravo Bull Wayne



INCOMING!!

~ Reply to Iva's Message This Month ~

Very good, Iva. That's exactly what I do, try to keep cheerful, not let things affect me, use my spiritual path in all the ways I can to keep balanced and not be dragged down. No matter what things he says to me because he can't control anger over little things, no matter what his mood is, no matter what -- I have to keep my balance or be dragged down into the murky jungle of the residue of Vietnam. You captured our struggle to stave off second-hand PTSD or depression, perfectly.

A Sky Soldier's Wife

~ Rooms, Special Guests & Activities at This Year's Reunion ~

The initial 173d Airborne Brigade Reunion allotment of rooms at The Avista Resort were all booked several days back. A second, smaller allotment, is now being booked. Anyone wanting to stay at The Avista Resort, Headquarters for Reunion 2010, will want to book your room ASAP.

If you call and all rooms are booked, there will be two (2) overflow locations near The Avista Resort that will be used for additional 173d Airborne Brigade personnel.

The rooms at the Avista are very spacious. Would suggest you share your room if possible with a HERD brother or family. Room rates are exceptionally low.

Some notes of interest to you and your family about Reunion 2010 include:

Five WWII 503rd veterans, including men who made the Corregidor Combat Jump, will be joining us as our special guests at reunion 2010. This special mission is a first for 173d Airborne Brigade Reunions. This mission was funded by men representing all units of the 173d, and friends of the 173d.

The City of North Myrtle Beach, SC is supporting us in our efforts by making major contributions for the street dance and gathering as the HERD comes to North Myrtle Beach.

The dinner at The House of Blues on Saturday night will be casual. No suits and ties will be needed for this year's reunion at North Myrtle Beach. The atmosphere will be beach with beach music. Very casual dress, so remember this as you pack.

Don't miss the PTSD seminars being held for our vets, spouses and couples by Doctors LTC's Scott Fairchild

(82nd Abn) and Judy Mathewson (Air Force) who will also address the VA Claim Process.

Looking forward to seeing you at North Myrtle Beach!

**Eddie Hair
Reunion 2010 Planning Committee Member
SC Chapter 30
"Contact Charlie" 1/503rd, "Headhunter Platoon"
Class of '68-'69**

~ Daughter of Sky Soldier Remembered ~

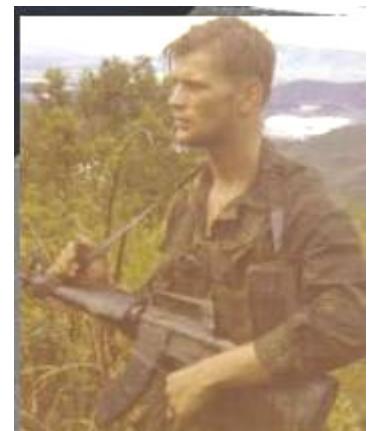
On Page 18 of Issue 10 of our newsletter in January, **Wambi Cook A/2/503d** told us of the passing of **Kipling Johnson**, the daughter of Sky Soldier **Harry Johnson (KIA)**. At the time we had no photo of Harry's daughter and Wambi's friend Kip, but this photo was recently located of Harry's widow, Marjorie, Kip and her friend Wambi.



Marjorie (widow), Kip and Wambi

~ Chopper & FAC Crew Members ~

Please put in your newsletter that Herd Rangers are looking for any Chopper Crew members and USAF FAC pilots. Please contact me as we want to start our mini-reunions (even years) with them invited. Contact Information:
ncorgr@gmail.com
(360) 393-7790



"Twin"

**Robt "Twin" Henriksen
N Co. Rangers**



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Burr
Resolution
Recognizing
Day to Honor
Vietnam Veterans Passes Senate



FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
Friday, March 19, 2010

David Ward
CONTACT: (202) 228-1616

WASHINGTON , D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, announced that a resolution he introduced encouraging communities across the nation to establish “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” was passed unanimously by the United States Senate. The resolution designates March 30, 2010, as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day,” to honor the return home of our armed service members after serving in Vietnam . *“There’s no question that our troops served our country bravely and faithfully during the Vietnam War, and these veterans deserve our recognition and gratitude,”* Burr said. *“Tragically, when these service members returned home, they were caught in the crossfire of public debate about our nation’s involvement in the Vietnam War. As a result, these brave men and women never received the welcome home and gratitude they fully deserved.”*

The United States became involved in Vietnam because policy-makers believed that if South Vietnam fell to a communist government, communism would spread throughout the rest of Southeast Asia . The US Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese in 1961, and in 1965, ground combat troops were sent into Vietnam . After many years of combat, all US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam on March 30, 1973, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Therefore, March 30, 2010, is an appropriate day to establish “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.” More than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives and more than 300,000 were wounded in Vietnam .

#

Brooks D. Tucker
Deputy Staff Director
Communications and Veterans Outreach
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, Republican Staff
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Washington D.C. 20510
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Sent in by Eric Hitchcock
HHC, 2/503d

**173^D AIRBORNE
BRIGADE ASSOCIATION
MAN OF THE YEAR
FOR 2010**

LTC HAROLD LEWIS BRENT (Ret)

After receiving many nominations from various Chapters of the Association to be the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association Man of the Year for 2010 the committee has finally arrived at the person that will represent us at the Static Line awards banquet.



That person is LTC (R) Harold Lewis Brent. He served with the 173rd from May 1966 until May 1967. He served with A Battery/3/319th as a Forward Observer from June 1966 until February 1967 after being an Aerial Observer. He then became the Brigade Liaison Officer for the remainder of his tour. He continued to serve in the National Guard and US Army Reserve until his retirement. He still serves in the Texas State Guard as a Colonel as the Commandant, Texas State Guard Officer Candidate School and as the Deputy Commandant of the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University.

He is an accomplished engineer having graduated from Texas A&M University before joining the US Army. He got his commission from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School in 1964. He is a Senior Parachutist.

He has been and still is the Secretary for the Chapter 13, Lone Star, for the past 16 years after having been one of the founding members of Chapter 13. He was one of the main forces behind the 173rd reunions held in San Antonio and Fort Worth in years past, and is hard at work for the 2011 reunion in San Antonio.

He will represent the Association very well. Thank you LTC Brent for serving the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association.

Airborne all the way!

**Roy Scott, President
Michael Montie, Vice-President
Gary Granade, Treasurer
Tim Austin Secretary**



It's All About The Patch

Hello folks,

Here's a new poem, one that is pretty special to me. About two or three months ago, **Britt Small** told me that he was proud to see me wearing the patch for all the vets. Kinda had a ring in the way he expressed it. I have heard that the Viet Cong and NVA, our foe in Vietnam, dedicated a memorial to the men of the Herd, the only unit so designated by the Vietnamese. This memorial was placed in the hills of Dak To.

Feel free to place your patch of honor to this poem and use as you see fit, if yours is not the Herd. When asked recently about the pride I place in this patch, I was admonished about pride being a sin. I replied, "*Not when honor is involved.*" I honor each of you and take pride in the honor to call myself a fellow veteran. Working in education, each day at work I see the fruits of our labor. Let all veterans be free to express the same pride and honor with their unit patch.

With honor and pride,
Adoth, 173d
3/18/2010

THE PATCH

A special camaraderie,
Is forged in fires of war.
Where strangers from diversity
Tell all just who they are.

They wear a special unit patch
Earned with their sweat and blood.
The foe respects no greater match
From this brave brotherhood.

With each who earns the right to wear,
They know not greater cause.
This brotherhood counts lives they share
As all that gives them pause.

The patch displays the many trials
The battles and the pain,
The pride and all the many miles,
And losses they call gain.

The battles books may well describe,
As students study facts.
For those who fight they say with pride,
It's all about the patch!

~ A Fallen Brother ~

Chapter officers and all men of the 173d Airborne Association, it is with the deepest regret that I forward today's DoD announcement that 19-year-old **PVT Nicholas S. Cook, 2/503d**, has been killed in action. His family lives in Hungry Horse, Montana.



He was raised by his grandparents, and leaves a two-year-old daughter.



Funeral arrangements are pending. Association Gold Star Chairperson Deborah Yashinski will advise us of the arrangements as soon as she is notified.

Hungry Horse is a community of 900. It lies ten miles west of Glacier National Park, and north of a line running between Spokane, WA, and Great Falls, MT.

All of us have been members of the profession of arms. We understand that Sky Soldiers who pay the ultimate price have a right to expect we who survived our war will be represented at the funeral to pay our respects to our fallen brother, and to convey the condolences of the Association personally to his family. Please forward this notice to your Chapter members and brother Sky Soldiers immediately, and advise me at the email address below of members who expect to attend.

Nicholas fought and died in freedom's fight against an intolerable enemy who must be defeated if peace is to be restored around the world. His loss is grieved by his family and friends, his Brigade and Association, and his countrymen. His effort is complete, and he now rests in peace. We who served in the Brigade will remember Nicholas as we do all other fallen Sky Soldiers.

Michael E. Montie
Vice President
173d Airborne Brigade Association
C/4-503d 68-69
memontie@aol.com





UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Agent Orange Diseases Associate with Agent Orange Exposure (Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503)

VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides:

Veterans' Diseases Associated with Agent Orange Exposure:

Birth defects in children of Vietnam Veterans.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is not associated with Agent Orange exposure. However, VA has recognized ALS diagnosed in veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military was caused by their military service. Learn about VA benefits for ALS, including health services and disability compensation and health benefits at:
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp#veterans

Presumption of Exposure -- A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962 and ending May 7, 1975, will be presumed to have been exposed to an herbicide agent during such service, unless there is affirmative evidence that established that the veteran was not exposed to such herbicide agent. (Note: the dates of service in Vietnam for the purpose of presumed exposure are not the same as the statutory definition of the "Vietnam Era").

Length of Exposure -- There is no regulatory requirement as to how long the veteran was in Vietnam, even a few hours of service in country is sufficient to establish the presumption of exposure. The last date on which a veteran will be presumed to have been exposed to an herbicide agent will be the last date on which he or she served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning January 9, 1962 and ending May 7, 1975.

Presumptive Service Connection (herbicide-related diseases) -- If a veteran has one of the diseases listed in 38 C.F.R. 3.309(c), and his/her exposure to an herbicide is either presumed, based on service in Vietnam, or

otherwise proved by the evidence, the disease is presumed to be related to the in-service exposure -- (*see Pearlman v. West, 11 Vet. App. 443 (1998)*) -- provided it was manifested within the appropriate time frame. Hence, service connection should be granted.

FAMILY AIRBORNE TRADITION LIVES ON

Our son John was recently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in Afghanistan. He's with the 82nd Airborne. We're very proud of him.

Jack Leide, MG (Ret)
CO C/2/503d, '66/'67



LTC John Leide



I WANNA BE AN AIRBORNE RANGER!

or HOW I WON THE WAR ALL BY MYSELF

A note was circulating within our ranks the other day about some jerk claiming to be a heroic Vietnam vet with hero medals from here to there, but having never set foot in-country. We've all met them. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to fill-up white space in our newsletter, I asked our guys to send us their best wanabe stories. For your amusement and deserved disdain, here they are. Ed.

According to the 2000 Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country is: 13,853,027. By this census, Four Out Of Five Who Claim To Be Vietnam Vets, Are Not

~ Wanabe ~

I was reading the Zephyrhills, Florida newspaper back 10+ years ago and a front page, large photo and article caught my eye about a "local hero." The article told about a local guy, retired Major, Medal of Honor recipient, West Point graduate who had been awarded the CMH by none other than Douglas MacArthur at his bed side while recovering from wounds. The entire story smelled of at least embellishment and at most down right lies. I mailed it to a friend of mine in DC. I got a phone call a few weeks later asking me to watch the paper for a retraction, and sure enough, there in the next weekly issue was an article as large as the first stating the paper had been informed by the Pentagon that the entire story was a lie.

Under the new "Stolen Valor" federal law this is now a felony. As I understand the new law, you can lie all you want about your heroism, but if you claim unearned decorations, display them or wear them, you can be charged with a felony.

**Ed Privette
CO HHC, 2/503d**

~ He took his leave ~

\$300,000. fine? Guess I better stop wearing that Blue Max. I was out of town and missed the fun, but **Don "Rocky" Rockholt**, A/2/503, ex cop, ex LRRP, threw

one wanabe out the back door, literally, and with great prejudice, at the VFW here once.

Was at a bar one nite listening to some jerk try to pickup two pretty girls sitting next to me. I sat and listened as he told them about his daring undercover work in the war as a Green Beret, the girls were thrilled. When he got to his time as a Navy Seal I interrupted him with a few choice questions he couldn't answer such as, "Where did you go to jump school?" and "Which of the Corps were you in in VN?" and "What was your MOS?" He took his leave. No shit. Damn wanabe's. I then proceeded to tell the girls how I personally beat back 100 VC in hand-to-hand combat. The pretty girls took their leave.

**Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d**

~ Outlandish Lies ~

Thanks for setting the record straight Smitty, (I mean about beating back the 100 VC). I've been telling folks in Texas about the guy from "the Herd" who beat back 50 NVA in hand to hand. Sorry and thanks again. Jokingly yours. I am amazed at the idiocy of people when they say such outlandish lies when so much information is verifiable almost instantaneously these days.

**Mark Dunlap
E/2/503d**

~ One to the torso and one to the head ~

A few years ago when our weekly veterans therapy group, mostly of Vietnam vets, began growing significantly, one of the meeting first-timers tried to fit in and apparently had no clue the other guys around the table would see through any phony as soon as they started telling their tall tales. He claimed that when he went to Vietnam as a replacement (I don't know what unit he mentioned), they were under attack as soon as they got off the plane. Of course, he said he had a loaded M-16 and as soon as he deplaned he was in a battle and facing an enemy, promptly firing "one round to the torso, one to the head, another to the torso".

I think he claimed to have killed half a dozen VC or NVA. Nobody really said anything then because they were snickering to themselves, but afterwards the group counselor from the VA confronted him, said unless he could produce a DD-214 and other evidence he wouldn't be welcomed back again. That's the last we saw of him.

But even some of the legit regulars in the group occasionally get on a roll and don't realize they must obviously be exaggerating their experiences.

(continued....)



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There might be a little remark here and there, but generally everyone else at the table probably figures it's just part of the post-traumatic stress that tends to cloud members' sanity from time to time.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503d

O.K, Larry, you're right. It was only 50 VC. Lew :)

~ Trip 'em up ~

Yes, I have encountered my share of wannabes over the years and those who claimed to have been Airborne. I have tripped them up by asking where they went to Jump School, and surprisingly, and then again not, they would not say Fort Benning. I have found it easy to spot the wannabes and to expose them. It is amazing some of the stories some would try feeding me. One particular person tried to tell me that the scar on his shoulder was made by a M-16 round going up from his armpit and out the top of his shoulder. I first informed him in so many words that I didn't appreciate him trying feed me such a story, and then I told him that if a M-16 round had traveled up from his armpit and out the top of his shoulder, he wouldn't have a arm left. It turned out that he had not even been to Vietnam. I find it hard to be around people like that, more so now then ever before.

Ray Zaccione
C/2/503d

~ How do you tell the son? ~

I had a friend, or I thought I had a friend -- always the dramatic. Like laying in a above-ground pool at night with a crossbow waiting for the State Police to arrive at his domestic report, trying for DBC (Death By Cop). I tried to council him; bailed him out a couple times. One day he left his wife and son and disappeared into the Hills of PA with a young thing! Then his son came to me. He had a handful of medals his dad gave him from Nam. Like a CIB with a cluster; Master Jump wings, RVN Campaign Ribbon with 2 stars. I knew then and there I'd been had! How do you tell an abandoned 16 year-old his dad was a fake? He still thinks his dad was a Hero! Wan'na Bee's do more than lie, they hurt innocent people. Wonder where he went? Think I'll go looking for him this weekend.

Butch Clark
HHC/2/503d

~ LBJ ain't LBJ ~

A guy at work kept talking about being in Vietnam, his stories left me with some doubt. So one day I asked him, "*What was the meaning of 'LBJ' in Vietnam?*" He said "Any dummy knows that, it's Lyndon Baines Johnson."

Well, that may have been correct, but to me and anyone I knew who was there, it meant Long **Binh** Jail. Aren't trick questions great!

I don't know if this is true or not, but I thought we were all supposed to be stupid for going; so why would so many claim to be just as dumb as me?

Mike Harris
B/2/503d

~ The cleaners got cleaned ~

MOAA recently did an article on a group of LIARS about their military exploits and many were public figures some of whom were prosecuted. Brain Denehey the actor comes to mind.

Recently I was coming out of a diner in New Jersey and I saw two elderly couples (older than me) and saw that one gentleman wore a hat with the Essayons on it (engineer). I asked him if he was a combat engineer which he said he was. I then told him I had served with the 299th Combat Engineers at DAK TO and he asked me if I had seen any Action. I told him that *"those who have not seen combat talk about it a lot and those who have seen combat just share stories with those they served with."* As I paid my respects and was walking away I heard the gent say, *"He's right you know."*

Sadly, my dry cleaners, a real nice guy, had a Seal badge mounted on his notice board and when I asked him where he went to Jump School he said he forgot. He lost a customer.

Paul Fisher
3/503d

~ An uncomfortable subject ~

Wanabees...an uncomfortable subject. Guess we all have had our encounters. Sometimes people we considered friends, we had to turn away from. But the worst, in my opinion, are the politicians and tenured professors who were found out to be total frauds, or have not yet been uncovered. These guys who build their careers, BS'd students, received awards, gained wealth... yep, the worst.

And, we have to watch out for ourselves as well. I have encountered those who seem to think that just because they served they have the right to demand proof from anyone who claims to have served in any capacity. I keep Herd tags on all my vehicles, and a copy of my 214, and Herd Deros papers in a baggy, just to be able to put a "doubter" in his place when it occurs. Then I demand they show proof they had a right to question me in the first place.

(continued....)



I had a truck driver interrupt a conversation I was having in a Waffle House with a former Marine late one night. He immediately gave his expert opinion on whatever "learned lessons" we were discussing. Said he was a Ranger with the 173rd ABN BDE. I lit up, saying "*Heh dude, I was with the Herd too man!*" Introductions around etc....then the BS started.

He was a Ranger; he was with the Herd at its inception; made high altitude jumps into the Ho Chi Minh trail; was captured in North Vietnam while on a secret mission; was held prisoner for 8 months; hated the American military because they never even tried to rescue him; praised the Australians for rescuing him. My BS-O-Meter immediately went off, but I decided he might just be one of those vets who didn't have much to beat his chest over, and leaned toward exaggeration...or, that maybe just because I did my time as a grunt in the bush didn't mean I knew everything that happened in the Nam, so I just let it go.

But, the dude kept showing up around our little group of vets that gathered regularly for strong coffee, politics, and old war stories. What finally got me off my ass to start checking the guy's credentials was his abusive behavior toward the poor, underpaid workers. So, I started making the calls, sending the emails. Managed to get an address for the man.

First contact to the Herd leadership. Their response: No DoD record of him having served at all. Second contact to the Ranger Association: Never heard of him. Third contact to the Australians who served with the Herd in Nam: They never rescued any Americans. Fourth contact to the POW Association: That's when the crap really hit the fan. They have a site called "*The Hall of Shame*," where they put the particulars of any person who dishonors their members through fraudulent claims.

I confronted the wanabee in front of the vet congregation. Tossing the documents in his lap, I asked if he would like to explain why the military, the Herd, the Rangers, the Australians, and the POW Association had never heard of him. He tossed the papers to the floor, backed away from the group, and stormed out.

And this guy was just one of many over the years, including Congressmen, and tenured, highly respected professors. So guys, there is a lot of hassle to making sure one has their ducks in a row before confronting someone. But, in honor of our brothers who made the ultimate sacrifice, or suffer till this day, it's all good!

**Dave "Link" Linkenhoker
B/2/503d**

~ 3 Wanabee Stories ~

I have three "Wanabee" stories for you.

After I retired from the Army I went to work for the Army at Fort Dix. At first I was the Retirement Services Officer, later Program Manager, and as Director of Military Personnel by time I retired a second time.

The first was a guy who claimed to be a Vietnam veteran who had the Medal of Honor. I looked up his name in the book that was published by the Medal of Honor Society. He is in my office making a stink about how screwed up the Army records were to his girl friend and another couple. I found a match for his name. Missionary Ridge 1864. When I asked for his ID Card he produced a Xerox copy with his information typed in. The next call was to the MP's who took him away. He ended up going to court.

The second case was from a phone call. A so called veteran had been turned down for funeral honors and burial in a veteran cemetery. The friend was telling me this guy's story and how he was going to the news and TV if I didn't fix it. I requested a copy of his DD 214. Once I took a look at it we had the fun counting all the mistakes. Of course the Congressional Medal of Honor was in bold dark type. The individual was not in any data base he was a total phony. When I explained all this to the buddy who called, he was heart broken that his good friend had lied about his military service.

The last case was shortly before I retired. An individual who was a real veteran and had served a tour with the First Division used his doctored DD 214 to be allowed to play golf at the Fort Dix Golf Course. (You have to watch those golfers, they will do anything to play). His downfall was shooting off his mouth at the bar. This guy was dumb, 90% retirees at the club and he claims to have the Medal of Honor. After some questions were asked I was given a copy of the DD 214 he used to gain membership for me to check it out. Two quick phone calls, one to DA Awards Branch and the other to the Medal of Honor Society, proved he was a phony. Shortly after my call to the Medal of Honor Society I received a call from the FBI. We set up an appointment where I gave them all I had on the individual and another phony was on his way to federal court.

Then there are those DAV guys and what I call "Professional Veterans," but those stories will be for another time.

**Joe Logan
B 2/503d**

(continued....)



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~ This is Canada, No Wanabe's Allowed ~

In 1995, we returned from the 173d reunion and were invited to Maple Ridge, BC for a Vietnam Vets cross border campout for a weekend, so we decided to go. We packed up the motor home and away we went – within days of getting home. While there, we met a man named Ray Heims from the 11th Armored Cav and had a really neat conversation, but that's another story. We walked across the campground to meet with some of the veterans from the American side.

Standing around the bonfire, we kind of stood there listening to various men telling the obligatory war story. This one person kept getting deeper and deeper into stories. When he started telling how he was a paratrooper and had jumped out of all these planes, our ears really perked up. Really wild stories. Only thing was, instead of jump wings on his chest, he had air force wings. Oops. I started asking him some questions and nothing was matching. Wayne was kind of wondering what was coming next. But I was ignored by this famous "Paratrooper" until I called him a name that only comes from about two extra glasses of wine, and Wayne told him something I didn't hear. Last time we went to the bonfire, but he left the next morning.

We were very lucky to have a FO that was attached to the 173d give us a Vietnam Order of Battle book. In the late 1990's, I was operating a tea shop in our small community. One day, two women came in. One of them introduced me to the other as a Vietnam Veteran's wife and explained to me that she had brought this lady out because we had so much in common. It was fairly quiet, so I sat down with them to visit. I was told about how he suffered so much because he sat in trees all the time and had to shoot all these little kids – the usual BS that you hear. So I asked "*When was he there?*" "*1964 through 1968,*" she said. "*Really? Which unit did he serve with on those tours?*" "*Oh he was with the 82nd the entire tour he was over there.*" So I asked again – "*Which tour?*" "*It was all one tour.*" "*Did he ever jump?*" "*What do you mean, jump?*" Didn't say another word. Came home, grabbed the book and Wayne and I headed to town. Knew all along, but needed to confirm it that the 82nd didn't go over until after Tet in 1968 as the 3rd Brigade Task Force. So Wayne called him. When Wayne told him that he had served with the 173d, this guy served with about 10 Marine outfits and at least a dozen Air Force and all sorts of other things. Wayne asked to meet him for coffee and the guy hung up on him. Funny. We've never heard from him since.

A few weeks after that, we went to the Canadian Legion. Wayne had just joined more as an issue than anything else. The Canadian Legion had just opened its doors to anyone who served in Vietnam and the local

unit hadn't wanted to let him in. Anyway, one of the people in the lounge that night came up to him and started telling him how he was a Vietnam Vet too and that he had served with the One O One. Wayne said first off, you didn't serve with the One O One because that's not what they were called and second I worked with your dad when we first moved here in 1974 and you were only 12.

Love Canada, but this must be where most of them come to hang out!!!!

Wayne & Iva Tuttle

CHAPLAIN CONNIE WALKER

[Upon learning Connie Walker was hospitalized, a G.I. sends his Chaplain a letter]. Ed.

Dear Chaplain Walker,

Believe I first met you with the 2/503 sometime in '66, March or April while in the field. Two of our elements opened up on each other briefly and when the gun fire went off, I dove to the ground landing in a nest of large black ants.



Jerry

While scrounging around in a medic's bag for anything that would relieve the bites, you came up to me and asked if you could help. I immediately recounted the incident with the ants using every four-letter word I had learned in the army to describe it. It was then that you introduced yourself as a chaplain.

Needless to say, after my expletive-filled explanation, I was sorta shocked. You took it in stride. If it wasn't you it was Chaplain Watters. You guys looked so much alike as I recall, but I believe it was you.

Whatever life we have left we carry the memories of all that we have been and seen and most often, the kindnesses we have received. Bad memories fade to the distant past as well they should and good memories stay in the forefront. We appreciate your humping the boondies with us and wish the best for you and your family. God Bless.

**Jerry Hassler
RTO S-2/Recon HHC, 2/503d, '66-'67**



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STOLEN VALOR

Photo and excerpts from the web site of the same name. <http://reportstolenvalor.org/>

PORTLAND, Ore. - A Portland man has been honored around the state and country as a war hero, lectured school children about his valiant acts, and local and national veterans groups have praised him for years. But his claims of valiancy are all lies.

A months-long KATU News investigation uncovered the truth about XXXXXX's military service, revelations other veterans called appalling.

Each year the 80-year-old XXXXXX hosts the Vincent J. MacDonald Chapter of the 11th Airborne Division Association to honor men and women who were liberated from the Japanese in World War II by the 11th Airborne in a daring raid in the Philippines at Los Banos.

Additionally, XXXXXX told his tales of heroism in Korea and Vietnam to students in high schools across Oregon including Milwaukie High and Redmond High.

In one picture XXXXXX is wearing the Silver Star above his left breast pocket that he says he won in Korea for an act of heroism.

"I asked the guys to give me their grenades and stuff and ran and threw (the) grenades at the Chinese to alert them that they were being attacked," he recounted to a reporter. Several publications celebrated XXXXXX's three tours of duty in Vietnam as an advanced reconnaissance scout with the Rangers.

He said he saw a lot of combat in Vietnam and lost a lot of friends there. *"I have nightmares, and I wake up and I know I'm home,"* he said.

XXXXXX was honored last year in Atlanta as the 2009 Airborne Man of the Year for his service during World War II and for helping to liberate the Los Banos POW camp. At

Sunset High School in 2006, he described to students what Los Banos was like.

"The bullets were hitting the tanks, ding, ding, ding, bouncing off," he said. The facts, however, blew holes in his story. According to XXXXXX's driver's license he would have only been 15 during Los Banos.

To that XXXXXX said he's been misunderstood. *"I wasn't there. They may have heard me wrong, but I wasn't there."* As for his claims he joined the military right after World War II he said *"I was stationed in Japan, 46, 47, 48, 49."*

But his military record from the National Personnel Center shows that he joined in 1952, not in 1944, 1946, or 1950. XXXXXX said the date on the military record was wrong.

In an interview with a KATU News reporter, XXXXXX admitted that he was never in combat and did not win the Silver Star. When asked to show when he served in Vietnam – when his military record says he only served a matter of days each year in the reserves – XXXXXX admitted he never went to the country.

While being interviewed by a KATU News reporter, XXXXXX wore the Ranger patch on his uniform, but according to officials from Fort Benning – where Ranger training is completed - there was no record that XXXXXX ever trained there as a Ranger.

"I'm not a tabbed Ranger, but I did recon," XXXXXX said. A "tabbed" Ranger is a badge awarded to those who have completed Ranger training.

Repeated questions about why Fort Benning had no record of him were answered only with silence. He admitted he's been a fraud for years and that there are a lot of people he needs to apologize to.

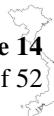
Now when people like Jim Innis - who was at one of the yearly celebrations of the 11th Airborne Division Association - hear the truth about XXXXXX, they say they're appalled.

"It's detestable; it's criminal; it's grossly unfair to all their comrades," Innis said.

In 2006 Congress passed the Stolen Valor Act which made pretending to be a war hero a federal offense.

After KATU's investigation brought XXXXXX's falsehoods about his military record to light, the U.S. attorney's office in Portland said it is going to take a close look at what has been uncovered.

[The pretender's name does not deserve to be read, nor his face seen]. Ed.



~ NO HEROES IN THIS PLACE ~

In a too loud voice you tell them
of the glory which was yours,
in battles o'er distant lands
when you attacked those foreign shores.

You were a brave, heroic Ranger,
a Navy Seal too, you claim,
and it makes their hearts a'flutter,
when they hear how you were maimed;

when you fought in hand-to-hand
as you saved your fellow men,
from bad guys all around you,
your tales, they never end.

Amazed, your listeners sit spellbound
when you tell them how you cleared those mines,
and your unmatched combat valor
when you survived behind enemy lines.

Then the day you attacked Surabachi
on Iwo that grave morn,
and again at Porkchop Hill,
Ne'ry a soldier did you forlorn.

With hot lead flying 'round you
in the "D" Zone and at Dak To,
you spew these tales of valor,
no man but you could know.

As your audience regales you,
your medaled hat you doff with pride,
whilst they buy you your next drink,
elbowing closer to your side.

The throngs they grow and then they hush,
hypnotized by the web of your spell.
Corregidor and Normandy,
those days when you jumped into Hell.

You've done it all to them you tell,
next week will be Kirkuk.
More men to save and bad guys to kill,
for the next chapter of your book.

Then in mid-sentence interrupts
a gray-haired old G.I.,
saying 'scuse me sir, and pardon me,
but your stories make me cry.

I weep not for your bravery,
or your valorous deeds bygone.
Nor for the wounds you spoke of,
wounds you've never borne.

For you see we know your type quite well,
we've met your kind before,
and in the names of my fallen brothers,
I will take your lies no more.

So my good folks, listen if you must,
to the falsehoods this man tells.
Buy his drinks and slap his back
and watch as his chest swells.

But there are no heroes in this place,
this pretender to you has lied.
The real heroes are not here today,
the real heroes have all died.

Smitty Out

SIGN OVER AIR FORCE OFFICERS' BILLETS:

Though I Fly Through the
Valley of the Shadow of Death,
I Shall Fear No Evil. For I am
at 50,000 Feet and Climbing.

SIGN OUTSIDE A 173D AIRBORNE TROOPER'S HOOCH;

Into the Valley of the Shadow
of Death, I Shall Fear No Evil.
For I am the Meanest
Motherfucker in the Valley!

~ Relatives in Combat ~

Brigade Combat Team Liaison, **Jim Bradley**, reports the Brigade Public Affairs Officer is writing an article about current members of the BCT who have or have had a relative serving in the Bruigade. Please contact Jim at webmaster@173dairborne.com

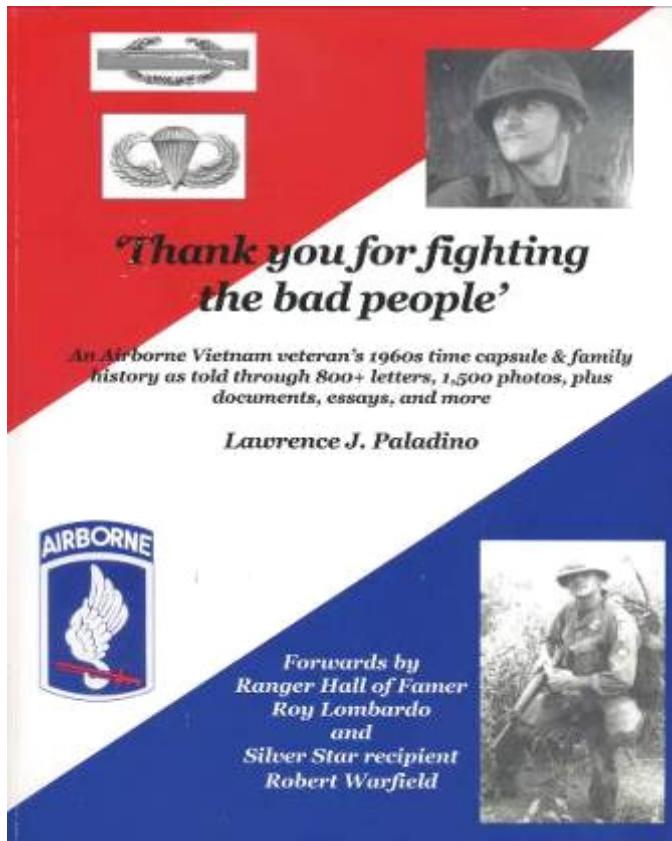
Mike Montie, V.P.
173d Abn Bde Assoc.



2/503d Books of Interest

If you served with the 2/503d on Okinawa or in '65/'66 in Vietnam, you'll want to get a copy of this book by **Larry Paladino B/2/503, Thank You For Fighting The Bad People**. I got one, in fact I ordered another one for a buddy. A lot of our shared history in there. It's well worth getting a copy while he still has them available. Believe Larry had only 300 or so copies printed of this 1300 page history, and about half are gone. Ed.

THANK YOU FOR FIGHTING THE BAD PEOPLE



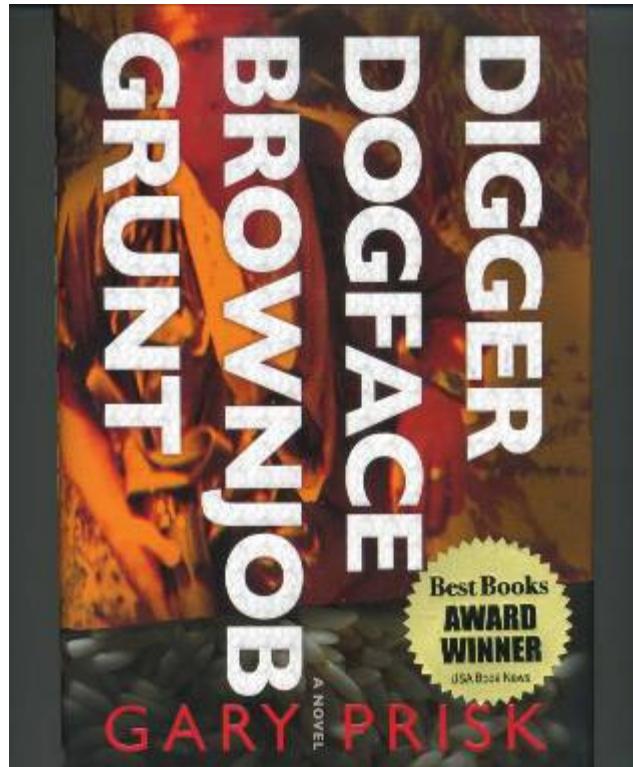
For a personalized copy contact Larry at:

rto173rd@wowway.com

DIGGER, DOG FACE BROWNJOB GRUNT

Another book authored by a 2/503d trooper is Digger, Dog Face, Brownjob, Grunt, by **Capt. Gary Prisk**, former Charlie Company platoon leader and company commander. This 400 page fiction-based-on-fact Vietnam War tale will throw you right back in the jungle and the central highlands, if that's where you want to be thrown. I personally read it in starts while waiting for my wife to finish her shopping....I kinda save it for dessert. A lot of bad guy shoot 'em ups in there based

on actual battles. Gary reports West Point is looking at it as possible requisite reading for their cadets (hope it doesn't scare 'em too much). Gary's descriptive command of the language makes me want to give-up typing and speaking. Essential reading for VN war buffs, or any war buffs. Ed



Gary's book is available on Amazon.com

Wrote a Book?

If you served with the 2/503d in Vietnam and wrote a book about the war, send in details and we'll let everyone know about it. Ed.

His Chute didn't open!



"Yeah, Clyde was a good trooper, but he drank way too much milk."



SKY SOLDIERS TO DROP IN ON THE ***GRAND STRAND***

Elements of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association will conduct special operations in and around the province of North Myrtle Beach, SC. The operations are to kick off **2 June 2010**. The Paratroopers are expected to accomplish their mission by 6 June 2010 (D-day anniversary). A recon company (SC Chapter 30, led by retired **LTC Hal Nobles**), has moved in, secured high ground and set up base camp at **Avista Resort** located at coordinates 300 North Ocean Boulevard, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29852. R&R casualties are expected to be heavy, so pack your rucksack, fill your canteens and prepare to move forward.

AS A TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION, SC CHAPTER 30 WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT THE FOLLOWING GIFTS TO ALL PAID REGISTRANTS:

Men: Please enjoy a leather duffel bag and patriotic polo shirt, both with embroidered logos. The duffel bag measures 21" x 12" x 12" with two zippered side pockets and a large front pocket and holds up to 100 lbs.

Ladies: It's our pleasure to present you with a quality canvas zippered tote bag, which measures 18"w x 15"h. Also included are a matching patriotic polo shirt and visor. All items feature embroidered logos.

Activities: Registration fee includes admission to a banquet with a guest speaker, buffet-style dinner and live entertainment. These activities will take place at the *House of Blues*, located along the White Pointe Swash stretch of ocean thought to have been a favorite hiding spot for famous pirates. House of Blues Myrtle Beach opened in 1997 and is built to resemble a Southern farmhouse with adjoining tobacco warehouse. The music hall is covered in authentic tin from an old tobacco barn from Jackson, Mississippi. In keeping with North Myrtle Beach atmosphere, dress for this event will be very casual.



Adoption Program: We also encourage you to participate in our *Sky Soldier Adoption Program*. At

each reunion we have active duty Sky Soldiers fly in from overseas. They personally must pay airfare, hotel, meal and reunion fees, which can cost thousands of dollars. We try to offset their cost by giving them a discount on these fees. You can help by purchasing a meal voucher for our active duty Sky Soldiers. Please consider contributing to this program! These young Sky Soldiers will appreciate this tremendously, and you will reap the reward by giving! See the registration form on our web site www.173rdreunion2010.com to donate.



Avista Resort, North Myrtle Beach, SC

Vendors: Also included in the registration fee is access to the vendors' area, hospitality room, PTSD seminar, and cookout with a parachute jump on the beach by the **Army's Golden Knights**. Buses will be provided to take attendees from Avista Resort to nearby shopping and attractions.

Accommodations: [Avista Resort](#) in North Myrtle Beach will serve as headquarters for the reunion. The oceanfront resort features 1, 2 and 3-bedroom condos, indoor and outdoor pools, fitness center, and more. Hotel accommodations are **not** included in the reunion registration fee; however, all attendees will be given a special group rate. To make reservations, call **1-800-968-8986** and use reservation code **1317183**.

(continued.....)





Oceanside Pool Area at the Avista



USS Yorktown, Charleston, South Carolina

Day trip: Don't miss our day trip to **Historic Charleston**, South Carolina! Cost includes transportation to/from Charleston, a visit to Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, home of the USS Yorktown, a horse-drawn carriage ride through Charleston's historic district and a drink and box snack for the ride home. There will also be a stop at the historic city market for lunch and shopping on your own. See the registration form to sign up. For complete details, including online registration, online hotel reservations, itinerary, and who's attending, please visit our website at: www.173rdreunion2010.com

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at the number below.

**Wayne Bowers, C&D 2/503d '67-'68
173d Airborne Brigade Association
SC Chapter 30, 803-237-3169**

SKY SOLDIERS....FALL IN!!

173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

TENTATIVE 2010 REUNION SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2010

- 09:00 - 17:00 - Registration - Ballroom C
- 09:00 - Until? - Vendor Tables - Ballroom A
- 09:00 - 24:00 - Hospitality Room - Ballroom B
- 18:00 - 20:00 - Welcome Reception - Pool Plaza Area
- 18:00 - 19:00 - Active Duty Briefing - Loc. TBD
- 18:00 - 20:00 - Asso. President's Reception
Ballroom C
- 19:00 - Until? - Mini-Reunions (Each unit to organize their own gathering)

THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010

- 07:00 - 08:00 - Eagles Nest Golf Tournament Transportation
- 08:00 - 17:00 - Charleston Bus Trip
- 09:00 - Until? - Eagles Nest Golf Tournament
- 09:00 - 17:00 - Registration - Ballroom C
- 09:00 - Until? - Vendor Tables - Ballroom A
- 09:00 - 24:00 - Hospitality Room - Ballroom B
- 17:30 - Until? - Golden Knights Jump on LZ North Myrtle Beach; Concert to follow

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 2010

- 07:00 - 09:00 - Gold Star Family Reception and Breakfast - Tree Top Lounge
- 09:00 - 12:00 - Board of Directors Meeting - Tree Top Lounge
- 09:00 - 17:00 - Registration - Ballroom C
- 09:00 - Until? - Vendor Tables - Ballroom A
- 09:00 - 24:00 - Hospitality Room - Ballroom B
- 12:00 - 15:00 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Seminar - Tree Top Lounge

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2010

- 08:30 - 12:00 - General Membership Meeting - Ballrooms A/B/C Theater Style
- 08:30 - 10:00 - Ladies' Event - Tree Top Lounge
- 09:00 - 12:00 - Registration - Mezzanine Area - Second Level
- 12:30 - Until? - Vendor Tables - Ballroom A
- 12:30 - 24:00 - Hospitality Room - Ballroom B
- 16:00 - 17:00 - Transportation from Avista Hotel to House Of Blues
- 16:30 - 17:30 - Cocktail Hour
- 17:30 - 19:00 - Color Guard/National Anthem/ Speakers
- 19:00 - 20:30 - Dinner
- 20:30 - 23:00 - Dancing
- 20:30 - 23:30 - Transportation to Avista Hotel

SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 2010

- 08:00 - 09:00 - Memorial Service - Pool Plaza Area at North Lawn
(In case of rain - Ballroom C)
- 09:00 - LZ North Myrtle Beach Closes - Mission Complete



House of Blues, Myrtle Beach



THERE IS STILL TIME, BUT THE CLOCK IS TICKING



"Serving those who served." Scott Fairchild, left, Judith Mathewson and Nathan Thomas of Welcome Home Vets help troops to readjust after their deployment.

We call him *Doc Scott*, or the *PTSD Guru*, or the *All-American*, and she is our *Colonel Judy*, but they're not Medics from Vietnam, in fact, neither served in Vietnam. Yet, like our Medics these Docs have saved a lot of our lives, and they continue to save lives; those of old vets like us, and the young kids coming home from the Sand.

As Iva so rightly pointed out in her report, for every Vietnam vet who is fortunate enough to find help to deal with his or her PTSD, there's another one, or one-thousand or ten-thousand or more who will never find help, will never know it's available or is too afraid or proud to ask for help. Pride, what a bastard it can sometimes be. Again, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is not a weakness in one's character; it does not mean you are crazy; it means precisely what it says it is, *STRESS*, and stress is the biggest killer of all.

The stress many of us who've been in combat live with can negatively impact just about every aspect of our lives. The stress of war can come between a husband and his wife, a father and his kids. It can influence normal daily activities and work, and produce ungodly depression. It can kill just as easily as that unseen sniper, as it all too often goes unseen, or at least misunderstood.

"I knew something was wrong with me. Doc Scott helped point out what it was. I'm glad I talked to the Doc. I'm glad I did after months of putting it off. He was able to give me insight into why I was feeling like I did. I believe that I'm having a better relationship with my wife of almost 39 years. She has endured me for a long period of time thinking I was just a hardhead."

Harry Cleland, SP4 RTO

B/2/503, '66 - '67

What Harry said, I've said, and what so many others of us have said after having had the good fortune of

meeting the Doc or Col. Judy, and receiving their treatment and care and never-ending support. Frankly, I don't know how they deal with all of us and the torment they absorb as a daily diet -- I do know this, this old RTO would be parked somewhere under a bridge had it not be for the Doc.

Dr. Scott Fairchild and Col. Mathewson are unique birds. They genuinely care about veterans of our country, but not just in words alone. While you'll often find them in one-on-one sessions with combat vets and their spouses for hours at a time, more often you'll see them at vet rallies, attending veteran funerals, or visiting vets in hospitals.

These Docs are soldiers' soldiers. They speak our language, and understand us. They allow us to finally face and confront our demons. Not only we unwashed, but our officers should be pleased to know there is someone they too can finally turn to, and open up to, and trust. PTSD is an equal opportunity illness, affecting PFC's to Generals.

I often refer to Doc Scott at the 'PTSD guru,' a handle which justifiably fits him. Scott is a nationally-recognized authority on PTSD, having conducted much of the early work and research on the illness for the U.S. Army at Walter Reed Army Hospital. He has testified before the U.S. Government on the illness. He and Col. Judy have helped countless vets and their wives, including many Sky Soldiers and their spouses from throughout the country, with the large majority having gone on to realize successful outcomes with their VA claims for PTSD.

This coming June at the 173d reunion in North Myrtle Beach, these Docs have volunteered their time to conduct three separate PTSD awareness sessions; one for our vets, one for spouses and one for couples. If you and your wife are struggling through life with that demon on your shoulders, you simply cannot afford to miss these meetings at the reunion this June.

For over 30 years, after learning about PTSD, I viewed it as bullshit and those pursuing claims for it were simply *looking for a free ride*. Brothers, it's real, just ask your wife or your kids; and you are entitled to receive help.

While at Myrtle Beach the Docs will give you a brief and easy form to fill-out, the results of which will indicate whether or not you are among the ranks of PTSD sufferers. But, the clock continues to run, and with each tic there becomes less time to find the help you need, deserve and are entitled to. If not for you, then seek this help for your bride and your kids and your grandkids.

Smitty Out



PTSD SESSION LEADERS

AT 173d REUNION IN NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SC THIS COMING JUNE



“Colonel Judy”
Judith.mathewson@patrick.af.mil

Lt Col Judith J. Mathewson began her military career as an enlisted member in 1986 in the Alaska Air National Guard, Anchorage, AK. She earned her commission at the Academy of Military Science, Knoxville, TN in 1987 and served as the Social Actions Officer from 1987 through 1992. Next, she became the State Social Actions Officer, Information Management Officer, and was chosen as Executive Officer for the Commander, Air National Guard. She served as the State Plans Officer, crafting the AK Air National Guard Strategic Plan. She was chosen to attend the Air War College in-residence at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, AL and earned her Master's in Strategic Military Studies. She was the recipient of the Air War College Activities Award and earned the Air Force Community Service medal for volunteering in the local Montgomery schools and community. Lt Col Mathewson taught special needs students in the Anchorage School District and created a peer mediation/conflict resolution program to help students resolve disagreements at the lowest level. She taught “English as a Second Language” for two summers in Poland, and taught diversity skills to students in rural Alaskan communities. She was instrumental in starting the AK Troops Teachers Program to meet the needs of the rural Alaskan communities' teacher shortfalls. Lt Col Mathewson retired from the public education system in 2001. She served in the Elmen- dorf AFB Public Affairs Office, and later planned a high visibility conference with Secretary of Defense Cohen for the United States Air Force Counter-Proliferation Center. Lt Col Mathewson was a Topical Research Intern for the Department of Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) with emphasis on Asian American culture. She holds a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, Special Education, and is completing her dissertation for her Ph.D. in Marital and Family Therapy. She serves as Program Manager for the Equal Opportunity Reserve Components Program and Air National Guard Liaison at DEOMI, Patrick AFB, FL. Colonel Judy has lead numerous PTSD treatment programs for our 173d troopers and their spouses.



“Doc Scott”
info@baytreebehavioral.com

Dr. L. Scott Fairchild is a licensed psychologist who operates Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, Florida, and was the Founder and Co-Director of the Stress, Trauma and Acute Response (STAR) Team for Kennedy Space Center. Additionally, he has founded Welcome Home Vets, Inc., a not-for-profit organization operating in Brevard County, FL to support returning Florida veterans with their transition and reintegration into the community.

Dr. Fairchild served 21 years on active duty with the Army Medical Department from 1975 to 1996, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. While on active duty, he worked in combat health care administration for half of his career, before completing his Doctorate of Psychology at the University of Denver and his internship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 1989 and entering clinical practice.

Dr. Fairchild completed his doctoral work on Human Interaction in Space Travel and Space Operation and also later trained in Aviation Psychology serving with Aviation and Airborne units. He was selected for the first congressionally mandated Psychopharmacology Demonstration Project, which trained active duty psychologists to prescribe medications.

Dr. Fairchild specializes in working with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder primarily in Veterans who come from across the country for evaluations and treatment. He has worked with PTSD, mood disorders, ADHD, dementia and Alzheimer's disease, as well as other brain-based disorders. He has been a strong supporter of technology to identify and treat emotional disorders. He has most recently teamed with Synaptic Connections to bring advanced neuro-assessment and treatment tools to the Brevard County area to serve the needs of patients throughout the entire Southeast.

Doc Scott has treated 173d troopers from throughout the country. The Doc was a paratrooper with the 82nd Abn.

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SOMETHING SPECIAL



Something special is happening. Thanks to over 150 Sky Soldiers representing all units of the 173d Airborne Brigade, and friends of the 173d, we will be welcoming to the reunion in North Myrtle Beach, SC this June, paratroopers of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR)

from WWII as our honored guests. Upon learning of our good fortune to meet these warriors and brothers, men of the Greatest Generation, here's what a few of our troopers said:

"These guys deserve far more than we can ever repay. Doesn't matter if they were a company clerk, cook or carrying a Garand,"

"Let's show these early Troopers that we appreciate all that they did before us."

"The WWII guys are my heroes. I have followed them at Air Shows, Doolittle Raider Reunions, special talks and presentations, you name it, I have been there to pay them homage."

"I'd be honored; and would like to know more about these amazing guys. Potential here for bridging to a past that commends us all."

"I hope they attend, I'd love to meet them."

"This should have been done years ago. So many potential friendships lost to time. I look forward to meeting these brothers."

"Great idea!"

"You'll want to do it with class and to really show how much we appreciate and understand what these guys went through during 'the big one.'"

"Outstanding idea!"

"I think this is a great idea. You have my vote!"

"That's an excellent idea! I will be honored to be in their presence."

"This is a great tribute! Great Idea!"

"If you had not asked me to help with this fabulous undertaking, I would have felt insulted! Yes, yes, yes! I will be proud to help in this much delayed honoring of these 'Founding Fathers' of the 173rd! I look forward to meeting each and every one of them."

"Thanks for the opportunity to somehow show my appreciation for those who (among many other things), freakin' jumped back onto Corregidor to retake it from the Japanese. It is my distinct pleasure, and again thanks for the opportunity."

The South Carolina Chapter 30 reunion organizing committee members will be doing their utmost to welcome these troopers, and they invite all in attendance to meet and thank each of these men for their courageous and history-making service to their country. The history they lived and the legacy they passed on to us as 503rd paratroopers is something we can all be proud of.

A special word of gratitude is due these good people who are helping make this happen:

**Kevin Austin (173d)
Tim Austin (3/503)
Jim Bailey (2/503)
Gordon Baker (173d)
Jesse Beachman (4/503)
Dave Beal (2/503)
Bob Beemer (2/503)
Bill Berry (173d Eng.)
Gayle Bethea (2/503 spouse)
Jim Bethea (2/503)
Jerry Bethke (2/503)
Walter Bills (2/503)
LTC Blanken (173d)
Don Bliss (Caspers)
Pat Bowe (2/503)
Wayne Bowers (2/503)
Mike Broderick (2/503)
Bob Bruce (1/503)
Dave Canady (2/503)
Abel Candia (2/503)
Bob Carmichael (2/503)
Ed Carns (2/503)
Mike Carver (2/503)
Jimmy Castillo (2/503)
Chuck Cean (3/503)
John Chester (E/58 LRP)
Jim Chieco (2/503)
John Civitts (2/503)
Bob Clark (5th SF)
Butch Clark (2/503)
Harry Cleland (2/503)
Tim Cloonan (173d Med)
Bob Cockerill (173d)
Dave Colbert (2/503)
George Colson (2/503)
Wambi Cook (2/503)
Virgil Cooley (2/503)
Gene Councelman (1/503)
Buzz Cox (2/503)
Ken Cox (173d)
Larry Cox (2/503)**

(continued....)



Woody Davis (2/503)
 Gary Davidson (2/503)
 Gary Cucinitti (1/503)
Reed Cundiff (173d LRRP)
 Gary Davidson (2/503)
 George Dexter (2/503)
Matt DeZee (N75 Rangers)
 Roger Dick (2/503)
 Tom Dooley (2/503)
 Jim Dresser (2/503)
 Frank Dukes (2/503)
 Mark Dunlap (2/503)
 Ken Easton (2/503)
 Paul Epley (Bde PIO)
 Tony Esposito (2/503)
Scott Fairchild (82nd Abn)
 Paul Fisher (3/503)
 FL Chapter (173d)
 Bob Fleming (2/503)
 Craig Ford (1/503)
 Rick Fred (2/503)
 Les Fuller (2/503)
 A.B. Garcia (2/503)
Tony Geishauser (Cowboys)
 Jim Gettel (2/503)
 Steve Goodman (2/503)
 Jim Gore (2/503)
Johnny Graham (2/503)
Gary Granade (E-Troop)
 Joe Gray (2/503)
 Jim Green (2/503)
 Dave Griffin (2/503)
 Mike Guthrie (2/503)
 Steve Haber (2/503)
 Eddie Hair (1/503)
Larry Hampton (1/503)
 Tom Hanson (173d)
 Mike Hargadon (2/503)
 Mike Harris (2/503)
Barry "Bear" Hart (2/503)
 Jerry Hassler (2/503)
 Jim Healy (2/503)
Robt. Twin Henriksen
 (N/CO Rangers)

Dennis Hill (1/503 & 3/503)
 Wayne Hoitt (2/503)
 Ken Kaplan (2/503)
 Ed Kearney (2/503)
 Bill Knapp (2/503)
 Skip Kniley (3/319)
 Gary Kozdron (1/503)
 Joe Lamb (2/503)
 Virgil Lamb (2/503)
 John Leppelman (173d)
Dave Linkenhoker (2/503)
 Joe Logan (2/503)
 Roy Lombardo (2/503)
Bob "Luke" Lucas (2/503)
 Art Martinez (2/503)
 Frank Martinez (173d)
 Mike McMillan (4/503)
 Bill Metheny (4/503)
 Dave Milton (2/503)
James Montague (2/503)
Rick Navarrete (2/503)
 Butch Nery (173d)
 Bill Nicholls (2/503)
 Jerry Nissley (2/503)
 Hal Nobles (3/503)
Dave Norman (2/503)
 Ben Oakley (2/503)
 Dale Olson (2/503)
Larry Paladino (2/503)
 Ed Perkins (173d)
Marcus Powell (2/503)
 Anonymous (2/503)
 Ed Privette (2/503)
 Court Prisk (3/319)
 Gary Prisk (2/503)
 Ed Privette (2/503)
Jim & Julie Quick (2/503)
 Ken Redding (2/503)
 Dan Reed (2/503)
 Paul Reed (173d)
 Bill Reynolds (2/503)
 Jack Ribera (2/503)
Floyd Riester (Bde HQ)
 Jim Robinson (2/503)

Lee Robinson (2/503)
Don Rockholt (2/503)
Andy Russell (2/503)
Walter Russo (173d)
Nick Sabree (5th SF)
San Diego 173d Abn. Assoc.
 Jack Schimpf (2/503)
 Roy Scott (3/319)
 John Searcy (2/503)
 Tom Siopes (2/503)
Pat Sirmeyer (E-Troop)
 Mike Sirmeyer (Cav)
 Arvil Sirvula (2/503)
Steve Skolochenko (173 Spt)
 Ken Smith (2/503)
 Lew Smith (2/503)
 Ron Smith (2/503)
Ralph Southard (2/503)
 Larry Speed (1/503)
Jimmy Stanford (2/503)
George Stapleton (173d)
 Jim Stephens (3/319)
 Sam Stewart (2/503)
 Mike Sturges (2/503)
 Ed Swauger (2/503)
Pat "Tad" Tadina (173d)
 Ted Thompson (2/503)
Wes Thompson (173d Eng.)
Thunderbird Chapter (173d)
 Joel Trenkle (2/503)
 Alton Turner (2/503)
 Steve Vargo (2/503)
Terrel Vickery (2/503, 75th)
 Bill Vose (2/503)
Dave Walker (Rngr/LRRP)
 William Wallace (173d)
 Bob Warfield (2/503)
 Russ Webb (2/503)
 Jerry Wiles (2/503)
 R.R. Will (173d)
 Ron Woodley (173d)
Pat Wright (2/503 & 4/503)
Ray "Zac" Zaonne (2/503)
Dwight Zimmerman (173d)



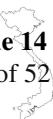
For its successful capture of Corregidor, the 503rd was awarded a
Presidential Unit Citation (US) and received its nickname,
"The Rock Regiment" from it.

AIRBORNE! ALL THE WAY!!



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / April 2010 - Issue 14

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OUR 503^D HONORED GUESTS

As of the date of release of this newsletter, five paratroopers from the 503^d PIR will be attending the reunion this June in North Myrtle Beach, SC. We'll name our guest troopers in the next issue of our newsletter.



Thanks to **Paul Whitman**, an Aussie who manages the 503^d P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion web site, the following reports, stories and photos are presented. The story of the jump into Corregidor by **Chet Nycum**, who will be attending the reunion, is especially interesting. Chet's story will be continued in the May issue of our newsletter.

To read more about the men of the 503^d
visit their web site at:

http://corregidor.org/heritage_battalion/nycum/chx_alt

The 503d PRCT *Heritage Battalion* is recognized officially as the website for the 503d PRCT of WWII.
Join us and share our Heritage and values.

THE 503^D P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION

THE 503d PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT



September 5, 1943. Dwarfed by and silhouetted against clouds of smoke (created to provide concealment), C-47s from the US Army Air Forces drop a battalion of the 503rd Parachute Regiment at Nadzab, New Guinea. A battalion dropped minutes earlier is landing in the foreground.

On February 14, 1942, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment was formed. The Regiment's 1st and 2nd Battalions were formed at Fort Benning, Georgia, from the 503rd and 504th Parachute Battalions, respectively.



Unlike many other airborne units, who were deployed in the European Theater of Operations, the 503rd was the first airborne regiment to fight in the Pacific, and as an independent unit.

The unit's first operation was an unopposed landing at Nadzab, New Guinea, on 5 September 1943. The regiment jumped in the Markham Valley, New Guinea, on 5 September 1943, in the first successful airborne combat jump. Although the Nadzab landings were unopposed, the troops were later attacked by enemy bombers from the air. The 503rd's deployment helped force the Japanese evacuation of a major military outpost at Lae. During their overland withdrawal, the third battalion of the 503rd had a major skirmish with the Japanese rear guard.

On 3 July 1944, two battalions of the 503rd jumped on Kamiri Airfield on the island of Noemfoor off the coast of Dutch New Guinea, followed by an amphibious landing by the other battalion a few days later. At the Battle of Noemfoor, the 503rd played a major role in the elimination of the Japanese garrison on that island.

(continued....)





COURTESY OF THE MACRAILD COLLECTION

Paratroopers of the 503rd unload from their trucks two hours prior to takeoff for the first combat jump of the Pacific War.

As a result of his heroic actions during the battle, paratroop **Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks** was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Airfields constructed on Noemfoor after its capture enabled the advance of Allied troops from New Guinea to the Philippines landing at Lingyen Gulf, Luzon.

Following a non-combat landing on the island of Leyte, in the Philippines, the 503d RCT (Regimental Combat Team) made a major amphibious landing on Mindoro Island in the central Philippines on 15 December 1944. Originally, it was intended for the 503rd to jump on Mindoro, but due to inadequate airstrip facilities on Leyte, an airborne landing was not possible.

During the Battle of Mindoro, the 503rd was subjected to intense air and naval actions during this operation, at one point being shelled for 25 minutes by a Japanese naval task force. One company of the 503rd RCT engaged in a fierce battle against a company-size Japanese force defending an enemy air raid warning station on the north end of the island. The success of the Mindoro operation enabled the U.S. Army Air Force to construct and operate air strips and forward air bases to support later operations.

On 16 February 1945, the 503rd RCT jumped on Fortress Corregidor on 16 February 1945 to liberate that island from occupying Japanese forces. The assault on Corregidor was the most intense combat action in which the 503rd engaged during its existence. Braving intense fire, the paratroopers rushed forward and overcame the heavy blockhouse defenses, dropping explosives into embrasures to kill hidden Japanese gunners. For its successful capture of Corregidor, the unit was awarded a **Presidential Unit Citation (US)** and received its nickname, “The Rock Regiment” from it.

Post World War II history:

Inactivated at Camp Anza, California, in December 1945, it was reactivated and redesignated as the 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment in February 1951 and assigned to the U.S. 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, following the departure of the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment to Korea as a separate Airborne regimental combat team. In 1956 the 503rd went with the rest of the 11th Airborne Division to posts in southeastern Germany.

The 503rd was relieved on 1 March 1957 from assignment to the 11th Airborne Division and was concurrently reorganized and redesignated as the 503rd Infantry, a parent regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System.

(continued....)



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The lineage of Company A, 503d AIR, was reorganized and redesignated on 1 March 1957 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Airborne Battle Group, 503rd Infantry, and remained assigned to the 11th Airborne Division (organic elements concurrently constituted and activated). The lineage of Company B, 503rd AIR was redesignated on 1 September 1957 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Airborne Battle Group, 503d Infantry (1-503rd), assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, and activated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (organic elements concurrently constituted and activated). This year marked the point during which infantry regimental numbers ceased indicating actual tactical units but instead were used in designating battle groups of Pentomic divisions, which did not have regiments and battalions.

On 1 July 1958 the 1st ABG, 503rd Inf was relieved from assignment to the 11th Airborne Division and assigned to the 24th Infantry Division when the 11th was reflagged as the 24th. The battle group's stay was short, and on 7 January 1959 it was relieved from assignment to the 24th Infantry Division and assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. The move was accompanied by the rotation of the only other Airborne battle group, 1-187th, from the 24th to the 82nd. Concurrently 1-504th and 1-505th were relieved from the 82nd and assigned to the 8th Infantry Division in central Germany. At Fort Bragg, 1-503rd joined 2-503rd, already assigned to the 82nd, as one of the division's five battle groups.

The two active elements of the 503rd remained together under the 82nd until the following year, when 2-503rd was relieved on 24 June 1960 from assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division and assigned to the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. The following year, on 1 July 1961, it was relieved from assignment to the 25th Infantry Division and assigned on 26 March 1963 to the **173rd Airborne Brigade** on Okinawa.

The 1st ABG, 503rd Inf remained with the 82nd Airborne Division until 26 March 1963, when it was relieved from assignment to the 82nd and joined 1-503rd in its assignment to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Shortly thereafter, on 25 June 1963, it was reorganized and redesignated as the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry. On that same date, 2-503rd was reorganized and redesignated as the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry.



Men of the 2/503d on patrol in Vietnam.

Vietnam War:

In May 1965, two battalions of the 503rd Infantry deployed as part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Vietnam as the first major U.S. Army ground combat unit to be deployed, joined later by 4-503rd Inf and 3-503rd Inf (bearing the lineages of the former Co D and Co C, 503rd PIR, respectively). During its six years in Vietnam, the four battalions of the 503rd participated in fourteen campaigns, earning two more Presidential Unit Citations and a Meritorious Unit Commendation. The **2nd Bn (Abn), 503rd Inf** participated in the only combat jump of the war during "Operation Junction City" in 1967. It redeployed to the U.S. in July 1971, having the distinction of being one of the last units to leave Vietnam.

Following the return of the 173rd to the U.S. was its inactivation when its assets were used to form the 3rd Brigade (Airborne), 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). Both 1-503rd and 2-503rd were relieved from the 173rd effective 14 January 1972 and assigned to the 101st. The other two battalions, 3-503rd and 4-503rd, were inactivated following the 173rd return from Vietnam. The 3rd Brigade, along with other supporting division units, saw its jump status terminated on 1 April 1974 when the 101st became a completely Airmobile division (renamed Air Assault on 4 October 1974).

The lineage of 2-503rd was inactivated on 1 October 1983 and relieved from assignment to the 101st, followed by 1-503rd on 16 November 1984. The existing battalions were reflagged as units of the 187th Infantry Regiment during the implementation of the Army Regimental System (ARS).

(continued....)



Reactivation in Korea, Assignment to Italy:

On 16 December 1986 both 1-503rd and 2-503rd were reactivated and assigned to the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, in Korea when two existing infantry battalions were reflagged. (Note: On 16 March 1987 another former 101st unit, 1-506th Inf, was also assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division and activated in Korea). The 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf was inactivated on 29 September 1990 in Korea and relieved from assignment to the 2nd Infantry Division, but 1-503rd and 1-506th remained and became Air Assault battalions within the division. The 2nd Bn, 503rd returned to active status as an Airborne battalion on 16 December 2001 when it was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Italy when its colors were used to reflag the existing 3-325th Inf. The company names were kept from its lineage in Korea: A Company (Able), B Company (Battle Hard), C Company (Chosen), D Company (Destined), F Company (Fusion), HHC (Hellbound).

Global War on Terror:

In March 2003, the Turkish government refused to allow American ground forces, which were positioned at their ports, to move through Turkey in order to establish a northern front in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. America needed another option and the Sky Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade provided that option. On the 26th of March at 2000 hours, fifteen C-17 aircraft delivered 20 heavy platforms and 959 paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade onto Bashur Drop Zone in the vicinity of Bashur, Iraq. This combat parachute assault was the beginning of Operation Northern Delay and established the Coalition's northern front.

The parachute assault force consisted of HHC, 173rd Airborne Brigade; 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment; 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance); D Battery (Airborne), 319th Field Artillery Regiment; 173rd Support Company (Combat); 501st Support Company (Forward), 250th Forward Surgical Team; ODA, 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 4th Air Support Operations Squadron (USAFE); and the 86th Contingency Response Group (assigned to the 86th Airlift Wing (USAFE)).



2/503d combat jump. "Next stop Iraq"

The paratroopers were under the command of **Colonel William C. Mayville Jr.**, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The chariots from which the Sky Soldiers were delivered into battle were the C-17s of the 62nd and 446th Airlift Wings from McChord AFB, Washington and the 437th Airlift Wing and 315th Airlift Wing (AFRES) from Charleston AFB, South Carolina. The C-17s were under the command of **Colonel Robert "Dice" R. Allardice**, commander of the 62nd Airlift Wing. This airborne operation was not only the largest since the 1990 invasion of Panama, but was the first airborne personnel insertion ever conducted with the C-17.

The successful establishment of a northern front was essential to the Coalition battle plan. Without a northern front six Iraqi divisions arrayed in northern Iraq remained free to move south to reinforce Baghdad. Fast-moving Coalition forces were closing on Baghdad with the expectation of having to capture the Iraqi capital from three defensively arrayed divisions. Six additional Iraqi divisions streaming from the north could dramatically affect the balance of power around Baghdad.

Another critical factor was the oil-rich area of Kirkuk. The oil wealth of the Kirkuk area would be crucial to rebuilding Iraq but the Iraqi army had shown a willingness to destroy their country's own future simply to spite the Coalition. Securing the oil fields and airbases of Kirkuk was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

(continued....)



The success of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in its securing of Bashur and Kirkuk and its subsequent control and rebuilding of Kirkuk Province and later the As Sulaymaniyah Province was unmatched in-theater. The Sky Soldiers integrated forces from fifteen other units, to include five Army divisions, to accomplish every mission.

In the summer of 2004, the 1st of the 503rd deployed to Iraq, where its troopers took part in the battle of Fallujah and conducted combat operations in the violent Al-Anbar province. The battalion suffered above average losses during the deployment. Based in the outskirts of Ramadi, 1-503rd was targeted by daily mortar attacks and received a significant amount of Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, also known as VBIEDS or car bombs. Despite this, the 1-503rd was very successful in their mission to curb insurgent activity. According to an interview with **Lieutenant Colonel James Raymer**, as of February 2006, insurgent activity is markedly lowered from the year that 1-503rd conducted operations in Ramadi. Additionally, the 503rd played a critical role in the 2005 elections in Iraq in Ramadi.

Upon completion of its year-long deployment to Iraq, 1-503 did not return to Korea, but instead relocated to Fort Carson, Colorado, with the rest of the brigade. It was redesignated on 1 October 2005 as the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, inactivated on 15 November 2005, relieved from assignment to the 2nd Infantry Division, and assigned on 15 June 2006 to the 173rd Airborne Brigade when the existing 1-508th Inf was reflagged. The 1st Battalion began its predeployment training, and redesignated its company names to match with their Korea beginnings: A Company (ATTACK Company), B Company (Legion Company), C Company (March or Die), D Company (Dog), E Company (Eazy), HHC (Hotel).

In May 2007, the 173rd ABCT (including both 1- and 2-503) deployed to Afghanistan. Both units fell under the NATO ISAF mission. 2-503 remained as part of TF Bayonet and the unit was the subject of several articles detailing their operations during OEF VIII. 1-503 was attached to the 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne and then 4th BCT, 101st Airborne as part of TF Fury and TF Currahee, respectively. □



THE TEST PLATOON

The development of principles to govern the use of American paratroops fortunately avoided too firm an attachment to dogma. Aside from the modification of the tried and true principles of war to fit the nature and form of the new weapon, it was perhaps fortunate that there was very little actual experience upon which dogma could develop.

However there never seemed to be any doubt amongst command circles that the paratrooper was to be a member of an elite group, a soldier exemplifying outstanding attributes in all areas. This would not always fit comfortably with the exigencies of establishing a citizen army, but whilst the theorists could and did debate their theories, there needed to be some *Yankee practicality* in establishing what it was that the Army must do to the citizen to make him part of a fighting elite.

The history of the 501st Parachute Battalion, later the 2nd Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, begins with the Test Platoon, for it was the Test Platoon which became the 501st. So the 503d properly claims many of the Test Platoon as its elder brothers.

We, therefore begin our history of the 2nd Battalion 503rd Parachute Infantry with a brief history of the Test Platoon, about whom many have written already.

(continued....)



Although the commendation given below errors in stating that two men were killed during their training, this does not detract from the fact that these men volunteered to jump into the unknown defying death to show the way to thousands who would follow. They earned their place in the history of our Nation, an accomplishment for which our citizens should be eternally grateful.

The lateness of this "COMMENDATION," written after World War II was over, is ample evidence that their heroic achievement had paid off in our successful airborne operations during World War II. Had these men not put their lives on the line to pioneer the way there would have been no jumps in North Africa, on Sicily, in the Markham Valley, on Noemfoor Island, in Normandy, in Southern France, on Corregidor, in Holland and in Germany.

The call for volunteers for a parachute test platoon was issued at the reveille formation of the 29th Infantry Regiment on 26 June 1940. Firstly, the men were warned of the high risk they would be taking. This risk was so high that married men would not be accepted. Undaunted, over 200 men had volunteered by 0830 hours.

At officers call that morning volunteers were asked for to fill the position of platoon leader. Seventeen lieutenants volunteered. The situation was settled by accepting four men from each company, each with a written recommendation from his company commander. This provided forty eight men as compared to the usual thirty nine man rifle platoon. The nine extra men were considered as reserves to allow for injured men.

1st Lt. William T. Ryder was selected as the platoon leader because he scored the highest score on a written test. Ryder, having studied whatever he could obtain on the German and Russian experience with the use of paratroops, had finished the two hour test in forty five minutes. **2nd Lt. James A. Bassett**, who had scored second to Ryder, was added as assistant platoon leader on 11 July, lest Lt. Ryder be incapacitated.

The physical training was tough from the very beginning, and has been ever since. The platoon began with a three mile run early in the morning. This soon became tiresome, so, on their own, the men increased it to a five mile run. They lived in tents on heights overlooking Lawson Field. An old, corrugated metal hangar was made available to the platoon for a classroom and parachute packing shed.

The original issue equipment was Spartan -- two pairs of Army Air Corps mechanics coveralls, an A-2 (cloth) flying helmet, and special leather boots with a strap across the instep to give support to the ankles.

Sergeant Hobart B. Wade, with eleven years of service, was picked as platoon sergeant. The only experts on parachutes were in the Army Air Corps, so four of the most experienced jumpers – parachute riggers – were picked and sent to Fort Benning as instructors. The chief was the most experienced **Warrant Officer Harry "Tug" Wilson**. He was joined by **Sergeant James Harris** and **Corporals Lawrence Ketcherside** and **James B. Wallace**.

Landings were practiced by jumping off trucks. Discipline was rigid. The slightest infraction was punished by requiring push-ups. Even letting one's eyes wander could result in push-ups. If the push-ups were not done in a manner suitable to the instructor, they were repeated until they were suitable.

The platoon was flown aboard three Douglas B-18A Bombers to Maguire Field which was adjacent to Camp Dix where they stayed. They were taken from Camp Dix to Hightower where two 150 feet towers were located. One of these towers was a controlled tower and the other a free fall tower. After practicing on these towers they returned to Fort Benning and continued their rigorous training. Now they had six weeks training behind them and plans were being made for the actual jumping phase. They were in super physical condition. Each man could now pack their own chutes.

As they came to the last week of training one test remained. The jump! In fact, the jump would be five jumps, the satisfactory completion of which would establish the paratrooper's qualifications. There was no doubt that Lt. Ryder, as leader would jump first, but who would be the first enlisted man to jump? All wanted this honor. Sergeant Wade settled this argument by placing forty-seven numbers in his steel helmet and having each man draw a slip. The number on the slip designated the spot the drawer jumped in.

The lucky winner had many offers to buy his position. Offers went to \$50.00. At this time, privates drew \$21.00 per month. Jump pay had not yet been thought of. So these were large amounts of money. Finally **Private John Ward** made the top offer, \$10.00 above the highest offer Number One received. Number One still refused.

On the morning of 16 August 1940 the jump began. After the C-33 leveled off at 1500 feet and flew over the jump field, Lt. Ryder was in the door ready to jump. Warrant Officer Wilson knelt in the door waiting to pass the Go Point.

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When this was reached, he slapped Lt. Ryder on the leg and the first jump was made. Now Number One moved into position. Slap!

"Go! Jump!"

Still no movement.

It was too late now to jump on this pass. Mr. Wilson motioned Number One to go back to his seat. As the plane circled Mr. Wilson talked to Number One. Number One wanted another chance. Okay, this time we'll do it. Back into the jumping position and once again, slap!

Sadly, no movement. Number One returned to his seat.

Private William N. "Red" King moved into the jumping position in the door. Slap! Out into American military immortality leaped Red King... the first enlisted man of the test platoon to jump out of an airplane. Number One was transferred to another post and anonymity. Now there were forty-seven. Was Number One a coward? I don't think many experienced jumpers would say so. There are things some men cannot do at a given time. Possibly another time would have been fine. He wanted to. He intended to. He just could not... at least that morning.

The next jump was also individual exits. The jumpmaster would stand up five men and jump each one by slapping him on the leg. Then the plane would make another pass and the next five would be jumped.

The third jump was a mass jump, the entire plane load. The stick stood up and hooked up. The first man jumped on the slap of the jump master. The entire stick followed without stopping.

The fifth, and final (qualifying) jump was a mass jump of the entire platoon from three planes flying in column formation. **Secretary of War, Mr. Henry L. Simpson**, and the **Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall**, led a group of VIP's who gathered at Lawson Field to witness this historic



Loading

occasion. The event went off well, with one exception. **Private Leo Brown** was the last man to jump. He landed on the roof of the parachute hangar and had to be rescued by using a ladder.

Now the trail had been blazed. The 501st Parachute battalion was formed soon after. The Paratrooper was now an integral part of the Army. So the Test Platoon was the parent of the 501st Parachute Battalion. The formation of the 501st Parachute Battalion was approved the following month, September 1940. □

OLD SOLDIERS CAN'T FORGET



You know, it's hard for an old soldier to forget, and sometimes at night as I lie on my bed, I think of old buddies, some living some dead;

I wonder if our fight for freedom was for a just and noble cause, if our heartaches and suffering were really worth it all.

Then in the distance, I seem to hear a heavenly bugle blow, and at that moment - there is no doubt in my mind for I know; If God were to call us all together again and raise our flag on high, not one would back down in his fight for freedom, we'd just have a new battle cry.

Those from among the living and those from within the grave, would all join together and cry out, "*Better dead than slave!*"

Sometimes as I sit and wonder and think of the wars we have fought at home and in distant lands, I think of the men who fought these wars for freedom and how it affected each and every man.

They weren't all destined to be National heroes, nor was it intended that it be that way; but each of them who faced any enemy in mortal combat recognized, that the supreme sacrifice could be required of him on any given day;

There are some in our country who say that all of this has been foolish, and who am I to disagree? However, this question I would like to pose; had not these men been willing to sacrifice, would this great Country have ever been or, still be the land of the free?

Louis G. Aiken, Snr.
Plt. Sgt.
Co. 'B' 503 Prcht. Inf.



~ Editor's Note ~

You know guys, Sgt. Aiken's prose could have been written by any one of us -- we've all read each other's poems, and invariably they speak about our buddies, those still with us, and those lost to time and those fallen in battle. In selecting pieces from the 503d P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion web site, I chose what is shown here in our newsletter pretty much at random; there was just too much history to select from. But, what I came away with as one old G.I. myself is, there is more we have in common with our WWII paratrooper brothers than what we don't. That, no doubt, can be said about all G.I.'s from all wars. Ed.

While we were told this song is seldom if ever sung by the men of the 503rd anymore, I suspect most of us have never before heard the song or seen the lyrics. Nevertheless, it speaks to the 'Airborne Spirit' and the comaderie of the paratroopers of the 503rd Airborne. Ed.

~ 503rd Regimental Song ~

*If you see a soldier with a parachute on his cap,
Walking proudly down the street, I'll bet you
money that,*

*If you say, "Hey soldier boy what outfit are you in?"
He'll turn about and he will shout with all the
pride in him,*

*I'm proud I'm allowed to be one of the crowd
of the parachute infantry!
We'll lick the Japs, the dirty rats, and we'll
get Hitler too!*

*We'll see him and his rotten gang
in hell before we're through.*

*From the islands of the Philippines to the heart
of Germany,
You will hear our battle cry
as we float down from the sky...*

*I'm proud I'm allowed to become one of the crowd
of the parachute infantry - Hey!!*

A Soldier Remembered

During World War II, I served with HQ CO, 2nd BN, 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team as a machine gunner on a .30 Cal, air cooled, belt-fed, light machine gun crew, but this story is not about me.

This story takes place on the Island of Mindoro, Philippine Islands in February 1945. My good friend, **Robert L. Dunn**, and I had just been part of a briefing about our next mission...the airborne assault of the Island Fortress of Corregidor.



A few nights before the assault was to take place, Robert and I were sharing thoughts with each other about the upcoming jump. Needless to say, we were both quite nervous. But more importantly, Robert was worried about his mother loosing another son. Robert's brother, **Staff Sergeant Archie M. Dunn, Jr.**, was missing in the Dutch East Indies as a Radar-Radio Operator and Gunner on a B-24 that was part of the 307th Bomb Group, 371st Bomb Squadron.

Robert was concerned about the possibility of being killed during the Corregidor Operation and the effect that it would have on his mother, losing another of her sons. Our conversation then turned to the very possibility of us being killed. Robert then said something very personal and direct, *"I don't want to die, but if I do, my concern is that nobody will remember me after the war is over and that people will forget about this place and what happened here."*

After expressing both our fears and concerns, we made a pledge to each other. We pledged that if one of us was killed during the war, upon returning to the states, the other would take every opportunity to honor the memory of his fallen friend. We promised that on each Memorial Day or any other "remembrance day," the survivor would speak of his friend that, even though he did not want to die, was still willing to do his duty for his country.

PFC Robert L. Dunn was killed in action during the assault of Corregidor on February 18, 1945.

Since returning home from the war, I have been true to my pledge to Robert. For the past 59 years, I have used every available bully pulpit to tell the story of my friend. Long live in our memories one young man, Robert Lee Dunn of El Paso, Texas who died in defense of his homeland, the United States of America.

God Bless America! **Delmar D. Holbrook**





CORREGIDOR DAY 1

~ The Jump ~

by Chet Nycum
“G” Company, 503rd PIR

I recall Mindoro and the “G” Co. Roll Call of my morning of Feb.16, 1945 starting with a very routine “FALL IN,” so like many other “FALL IN’s” that I can still sing its peculiar cadence.

“McCallum?” “HERE.” “McLemore?” “HERE.” “McNeill?” “HERE.” “Newell?” “HERE.” I go tense. Norelli?” “HERE.” “Nycum?” “HERE.” My body relaxes. “O’Brien?” I exhale. “HERE.”

But this morning I wonder if today will be the day my luck runs out. I start to become conscious about being different to the others, as if being different places me somehow more in danger, that fate might separate me from them. I notice many men in the lines around me have their jump boots, and look at my feet, self-conscious that I am wearing WWI leggings. Were they really out of the small sizes? Is there some damn thieving supply clerk somewhere with small feet and a beautiful pair of Corcorans? Why not me?

We load on to a convoy of trucks, which are then off to the air strip where we are directed toward banks of stacked parachutes, each man taking one and strapping it on. We adjust ourselves, and each other, starting to look like a flock of mean, heavily armed penguins as we waddle around fastening our loads. As one of the two platoon scouts, I am ‘Tommy Gun’ equipped. I am carrying three days supply of rations, ten each twenty round clips of Thompson .45 ammunition, two fragmentation grenades, and two Phosphor grenades, my

trench knife, and my utility knife. The last item I fasten to my webbing is the weapon case, in which I am carrying a Thompson machine gun hanging diagonally across my body. I am number 3 in my string because they like the Tommy Gun men in early, in case there is a problem. I try to tell myself that I am ready, so many times until I can believe it true.

The command is shouted to load up, and I load onto the waiting C-47. We are each so heavy, we cannot get on the aircraft without the assistance of the man behind. Ahead of me is *, and behind me is *. It is 1030 hrs.

Our plane is air borne and we try to settle back to get as comfortable as possible, to wear our 60-80 lbs of equipment as if it was but a rosette in a tuxedo. I look at my brothers in arms. Is it to be my turn today? If not mine, then whose?

Time passes. Our altitude must not be high, for the tropic heat remains with us. I recall the crossing of the Owen Stanley Mountains going to Markham Valley, where our lips were blue from the cold. Our Jumpmaster speaks. No coach at a football game was ever more sure of himself. Casual to look as unconcerned as if it were just a bus ride, I do not wish to name Lt. H, though I recall him well. *“We have been picked by MacArthur to retake Fortress Corregidor from the Japanese! This is our special honor!”* His words take my thoughts back to the fall of Bataan, the Death March, and the siege and surrender of this island to the Japanese, and my hate and anger are renewed. We are hallowed to be taking back the Fortress Corregidor. I do not know whether men on the other aircraft were given the same talk.

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Chet ready for his qualifying jump at Fort Benning

Our flight does not seem long, as none of the flights into combat seem long, for time goes on quickly when one is not eager to get to the drop zone. I am sitting here quietly, as if wanting a longer flight can somehow make it so. Too soon I hear the order

“STAND UP AND HOOK UP!”

Each of my brothers rises up from his thoughts, and with snap fastener in his left hand, allows the static line to pass over the top of his wrist and snap it on to the cable running the length of the aircraft.

“CHECK EQUIPMENT!”

I check my gear, and check my static line again. I would check it a hundred times if it would assure me absolutely, but I must check the gear of my brother in front of me, the Number 2 man in our stick. Number 4 checks me.

“COUNT OFF!”

“1 O.K!”

“2 O.K!”

“3 O.K!”

“4 O.K!”

I notice my breaths are short, and my heartbeat is racing. What was that about into the valley of the shadow of death? That is not for me today, I congratulate myself.

The silence when the entire string has given the OK startles me. How quickly the eternity rushes time past my eyes and ears, and I see the red light come on.

“STAND IN THE DOOR!”

The green light is on, and for a few eternal seconds, we are not moving. Then, almost as one, we quickly move forward, my right hand never leaving the back of Number 2 in front of me.

“JUMP, GO!”

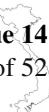
In but the time it takes to blink, I let go of him as he falls away into the blast of the airstream, and I am falling behind him.



In the first second, I have fallen over 150 feet towards “B” field, and I feel the jolt and look up to see a full canopy. There is just enough time to stop my oscillation. The wind is blowing me backwards, and I see a bomb crater in front of my feet. I drop into the crater, sliding part way down its side, landing full and fair on my back in a cloud of dust. It is as good a landing as I can hope for.

The very first thing I see is a trooper with a movie camera taking pictures of my landing. For the rest of my life, I shall see myself on film, television, and video dropping into Corregidor WWII in my WWI leggings. I catch my breath momentarily, and some Headquarters troops pounce on me and help to free me from my harness. I remove my Thompson from its case, and discard the case. I load a magazine, cock it and put it on safety. Hell will break loose later. A few quick words, and they point me toward a section of the field which I will soon discover is on its southern edge.

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The jump into Corregidor, 16 Feb 1945

Now in company, I take a position looking down the beaten slopes towards the beach, laying there waiting to provide covering fire when the infantry reaches the beach. I see a trooper climbing the slope towards me, using his rifle as a pick, jamming the barrel into the ground to pull himself up.

"Give me cover," I tell the man next to me, and I lay my Tommy gun down and go towards him, grabbing his shoulders, and carrying him through to the first shelf below Topside. I run west along this shelf to another bomb crater and deposit him solidly into it. I clean the dirt from his rifle barrel, and take up a 'ready to fight' position. Having done this, I realize that I have done it all without thinking.

Two men join us in our crater. They are not troopers, and they are asking me questions, "*What's your name, soldier, where you from?*" Are they reporters, or photographers? Don't they realize there's a war on, and we're in the middle of it?

I return to the safety of my Thompson, and take up my position. There, on Topside, I am playing tourist, with nothing much to do. I scan the view, and take in the beauty of the invasion before me. I see the Navy ships

to the South of the island, and wonder what the name of the Destroyer might be. There is also a minesweeper, running paravanes off the bow. The other boat is running straight toward the shoreline directly under me. It looks like an LCM, but with a series of tubes pointed skywards. I do not need to ponder as to its role, for shortly it starts spitting projectiles into the air, and in an instant I calculate their trajectory as directly towards my position. I roll down into a pile of broken concrete slabs, and wonder if it's possible to get any closer to the ground as a few projectiles hit the ground on either side of me, but I am entirely unharmed, though a little disappointed to find myself as a target without first even seeing a Jap.

The action of the day moves us towards the beach, where we know the 34th Infantry are landing and I find myself resting directly above bottom side, where I clearly see Malinta to my front. I congratulate myself on the show I am sure to see, but my cheer is too soon. There is a large explosion to my right, I feel it on my cheek. I look to see if one of our Navy friends has been hit, and for the instant recognize the destroyer which I had been looking at earlier. I realize that the mine-sweeper is nowhere in sight, and I cannot even see a ripple where she once was.



Is that the way it is, one minute here, and the next gone? Does it matter whether by shore artillery, or mine? I look out on the waters and see a flotilla of ships coming around the island and heading towards the south beach, and I know it is our team coming to reinforce Malinta Hill. already ashore. We move down the slope to be ready to cover the troops as they come ashore. One of the tanks does not get far for it strikes a land mine and becomes immobile as it tries to move across the beach. There are our comrades of the 34th Battalion reinforcing the assault on Malinta Hill.



Landing Zone "B"

(During the war I never heard it called a Drop Zone)

The race to the top of Malinta is over, and we are pulled back across Topside to clean out enemy pockets.

Suddenly there is a large explosion and I look over my shoulder to Malinta Hill, where I see large billows of smoke emerging from one of the main entrances.

As the smoke from the explosion moves towards topside, I wonder how many of our men on Malinta Hill are dead, and how many Japs in the Hospital inside the hill have died. I mourn just our men, and move on.

On Topside again, I am now together with my platoon, and we are waiting briefly to ensure that our landing is secure.

We start moving towards the north, "towards the ice plant," I am told. The patrol puts us on a road that crosses past the Hospital and then in front of the parade ground on Middleside, and as we move down the road we see Lt. E, one of our officers, standing alone out in the open, to the left of the ice plant. He has his field glasses to his eyes, and is intent on his inspection of something that interests him. We shout at him to take cover, but he does not seem to hear us. Then, as I am

looking at him, he falls, dead. Clearly a Japanese soldier, hidden somewhere in the landscape through his field glasses, perhaps at the ice plant, was looking back at him.

Through him I learn to avoid any lingering affection for the Corregidor landscape.

We fan out to cover the ground ahead of us, and come upon an ammunition dump on high ground east of and above the ice plant. The storage area faced NW and SE, and all the shells are stacked with their projectiles pointing northwest into the hill. As we move across this storage area we can see that the Japs have wired the dump with explosives. We quickly move back and report the find.



The Ice Plant

Some demolition men arrive, and after a short delay, they set off an explosion. After the explosion, small fires burn in the area well into the night, and we move into a position that slopes down towards bottomside and the ice plant. There, about half way across the face of the road, is a wrecked truck. It looks all the world as if our air corps friends have been sporting with it, but some of the men decide to seek its shelter for the night.

It being the end of the day, some of the men, feeling relatively safe inside the G Company sector, set to trying some of the sake and the whiskey which had been

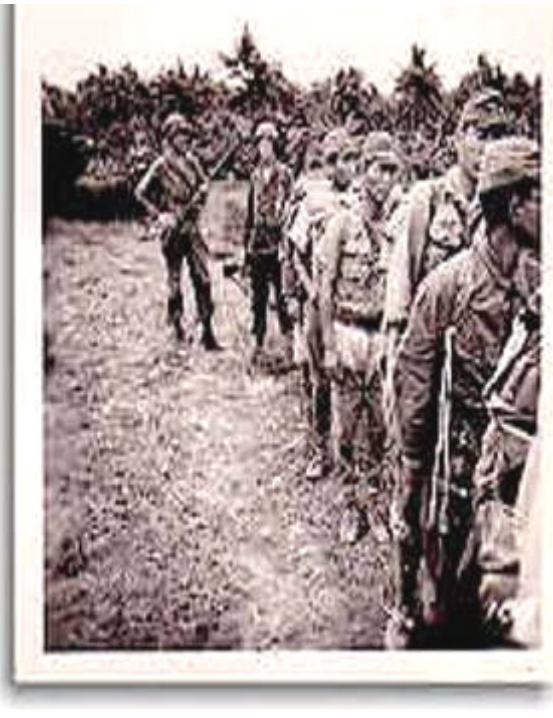


found in our journey across Topside. The whiskey has four roses on the label, and with a sake chaser the two made a powerful mix. Now and then, a round from the ammo dump opposite us explodes as the fire cooks it off, and the shell casing is blown high into the air directly over our heads and into the bay beyond us. As the shell casings would turn and tumble in flight above us, they made a sound "kalk kalk kalk kalk kalk," sounding for all the world like wild turkeys flying overhead.

(continued....)



Some of the troopers, for we are now well into the night, are feeling pretty wild and brave, and on hearing the turkeys, start shouting and shooting at them. The firing at the turkeys doesn't last very long, for there is much bitching about wasting ammo, and giving our positions away.



"G" Company troopers with captured enemy.

Either way, in the morning, there is no turkey for breakfast, but more than a few sore heads.

As we try to rest, the sky lights up and we hear our .75's firing salvos. We do not see the explosions though the star shells keep bursting towards the east for about fifteen minutes, and once again all is quiet. I will learn later that a group of Japs, in the hundreds, assembling somewhere east of Malinta Hill, never did have an even chance to form their Banzai charge. I like those odds.

After the barrage, it becomes quiet with only isolated sporadic firing as Japs try moving through our lines, or as nerves and anxiety gets the better of us. It doesn't help that we know by experience how well the Japs can move at night into our positions. Sometime in the night's wee hours, one of them manages to crawl under our water-carrier, and blows himself into glory, destroying our water supply as he departs.

I have had a good day, yet a disappointing one. Ready for anything, I have not even seen one live Japanese. I know many men have not had an easy day of it, for I know that those men who dropped short, or dropped long, have had to fight for their lives towards safety, and lost. There are missing faces, the area is alive with the

sound of gunfire, and the aid station at Topside is doing a sad and busy trade.



"G" Co. buddies after Fortress Corregidor was taken.

Morning comes of the second day and we cautiously move from our cover, expecting all the while to draw fire, but none comes.

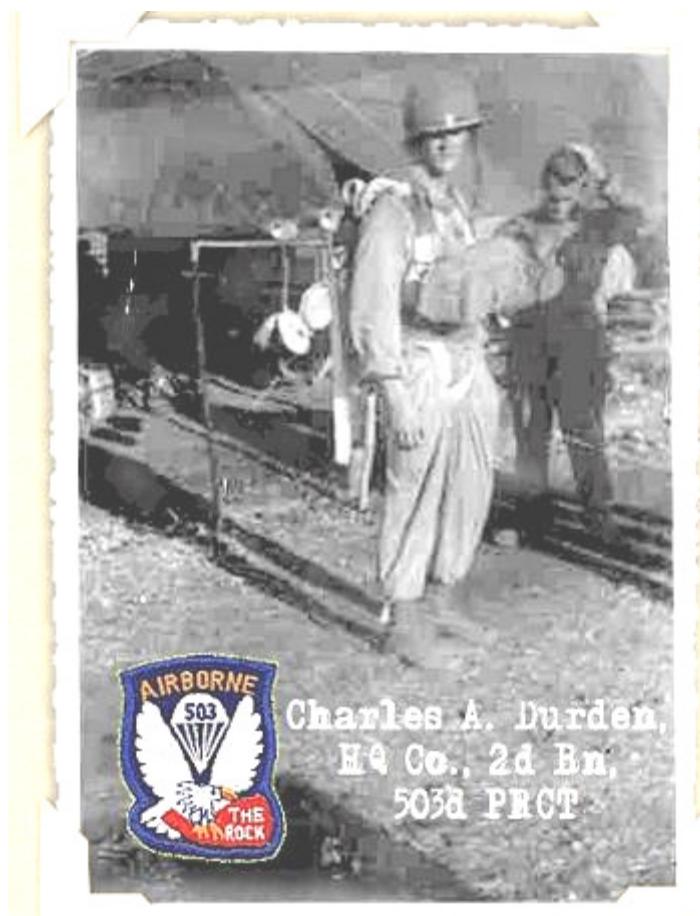


Photo of Charles before jump in to Corregidor where he was wounded in battle.



We have little time left to honor men of the 503rd, past and present, but, what we can do is recongize some, and hopefully in so doing, we honor all. Ed.

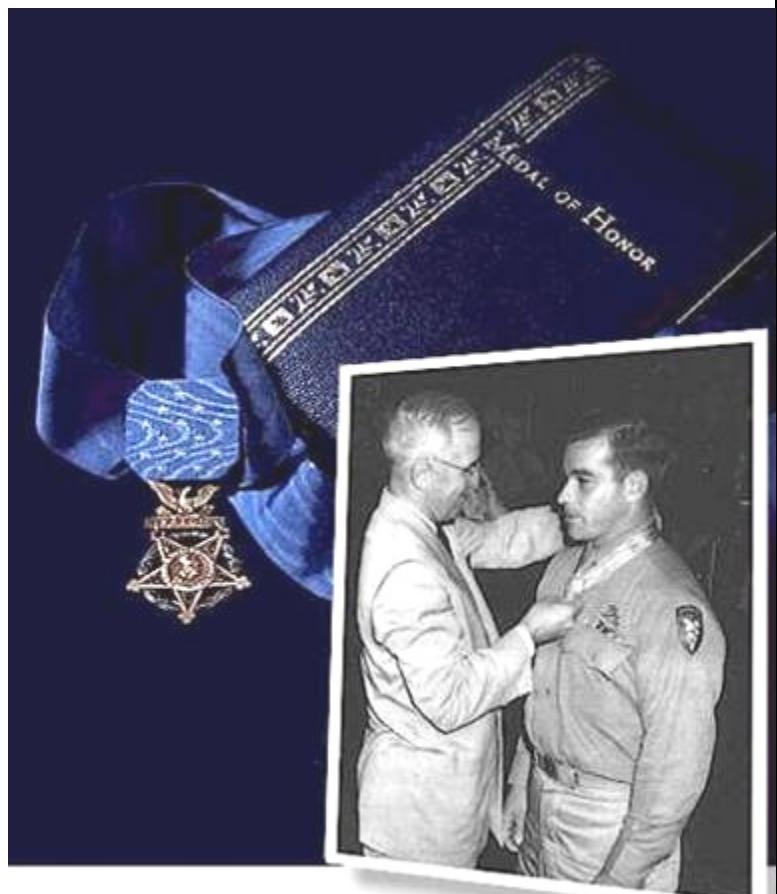
~ The Medal of Honor ~

LLOYD G. McCARTER

Private, U.S. Army, 503d
Parachute Infantry Regiment
Corregidor, Philippine Islands
16-19, February 1945
Born: 11 May 1917, St. Maries, Idaho



He was a scout with the regiment which seized the fortress of Corregidor, Philippine Islands. Shortly after the initial parachute assault on 16 February 1945, he crossed 30 yards of open ground under intense enemy fire, and at point blank range silenced a machinegun with hand grenades. On the afternoon of 18 February he killed 6 snipers. That evening, when a large force attempted to bypass his company, he voluntarily moved to an exposed area and opened fire. The enemy attacked his position repeatedly throughout the night and was each time repulsed. By 2 o'clock in the morning, all the men about him had been wounded; but shouting encouragement to his comrades and defiance at the enemy, he continued to bear the brunt of the attack, fearlessly exposing himself to locate enemy soldiers and then pouring heavy fire on them. He repeatedly crawled back to the American line to secure more ammunition. When his submachine gun would no longer operate, he seized an automatic rifle and continued to inflict heavy casualties. This weapon, in turn, became too hot to use and, discarding it, he continued with an M-1 rifle. At dawn the enemy attacked with renewed intensity. Completely exposing himself to hostile fire, he stood erect to locate the most dangerous enemy positions. He was seriously wounded; but, though he had already killed more than 30 of the enemy, he refused to evacuate until he had pointed out immediate objectives for attack. Through his sustained and outstanding heroism in the face of grave and obvious danger, Pvt. McCarter made outstanding contributions to the success of his company and to the recapture of Corregidor.



In the May issue of our newsletter we'll continue the report on men of the 503rd in WWII.



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~ The Chicago Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade ~

Folks,

I'm a member of the 25th Anniversary Committee to celebrate this event, following is more information.

I have been designated as the liaison with our Warriors who served prior to and after the Vietnam War. I am the one who will work with them to develop the program.

The reason for my sending this note to you is to request your assistance in contacting those who have an interest in developing specific events honoring conflicts or eras other than the Vietnam War. We want this to be a special weekend for all our Veterans and to do that we need the input and participation from Veterans of every era.

My name and contact information are provided below. We're looking to contact Veterans and their organizations throughout the Midwest, so I'd appreciate your passing this notice on to all who would have an interest in participating.

In closing, let me present you with the unique salute of a Sky Soldier from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Vietnam-era,

AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!!

RAGMAN

Robert A. Getz, 2/503d

rgetz173@yahoo.com

Phn: 847-214-1245, Cell: 630-777-8574

IMPORTANT SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ALL VETERANS, CURRENT ARMED FORCES MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS!

On June 13th, 1986 "The Chicago Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade" became the largest parade of its kind in the history of America. Over 200,000 veterans and their families marched proudly down the streets of Chicago to the cheers and applause of over 300,000 spectators. It was an emotional and inspirational day designed to be a healing celebration and end the uneasy truce between veterans and our fellow countrymen after the Vietnam War. The attendance of over 500,000 veterans and marchers attest to the success. If you were there you will never forget it.

June, 13th 2011 will be the 25th Anniversary of the parade. Plans are currently being made to commemorate this historic event over a three day weekend in Chicago on June 17th, 18th and 19th 2011. Committees have been formed including some of the original organizers, and a framework of events are formulating.

We will continue to keep you updated as our plans become more concrete. Until then whether you attended the parade, wish you had attended the parade or want to join a celebration of all those who served and sacrificed for our country in all times of need, keep June 17th, 18th and 19th, 2011 open and plan to join us in Chicago for these great events. This would also be a great time to hold unit reunions as family oriented plans are being made.

Thank you to those who served, are serving and thank you to those who support our country. Check our web site at ServiceandHonor.org. for updated information.

**Charles S. Lofrano
Committee Chairman**

173rd Airborne Chapter 25 Thunderbird Chapter

Please mark your calendar for:

16th Annual Viet Nam Remembrance Ceremony

Sunday:

April 25, 2010

Starts:

8:30 AM, Ceremonies 9 AM

April 30, 1975

NVA captures Saigon & Vietnam War ends.

Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza
Phoenix, Arizona
17th Ave./Jefferson



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173D ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Michael Montie provided us with his Vice-President's report.

Gary Granade gave the Treasurer's report.

Tim Austin gave the Secretaries report. He encouraged all chapters to get their reports turned in. Also told them the report was available on-line at the Association web site. They just have to set up their chapter account, go there and fill out the report.

Mommaski was unable to attend at the last moment, so **Bill Vose** passed out her report.

Eric Hitchcock gave the Foundation report. He presented a short briefing on the needs of the Foundation this year. Approximately \$10K will be needed to cover the needs for Bereavement, Scholarship, and Warrior Support. There was discussion of creating a fund drive to support the long-term goals of the Foundation. (Since the meeting Eric has done more extensive research and determined for the Foundation to fund all the yearly projects it will require \$23,000.00 a year. This is for the wounded warrior, scholarships, bereavement, and gold stars programs).

Craig Ford was present to give the Memorial Foundation Report. He said this will be the only Australian Memorial outside of Australia and many of them will be in attendance. There will be a book available at the dedication that will list all of the donors. The Foundation believes all 173rd Vets should have their names in the book, so each should send in at least \$5.00 and they will have their name listed as a donor. These donations should be sent in soon because the cutoff date for receiving donations is 31 March 2010. Send these donations to: Craig Ford, 17207 76th Ave, West, Edmonds, WA 98026.

Much discussion was made at the end of this presentation. A motion was made by **Pappy Patchin**, with a unanimous second, that the Association send a letter to the Memorial Foundation requesting recognition as a major donor of the members and chapters of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association, formerly known as the Society of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The motion was passed. As Association Liaison to the Foundation, Michael Montie agreed to address the action at the Foundation's monthly teleconference.

Terry Modglin provided a presentation on efforts being made to coordinate hotel Rally Points for units within the Brigade and bus transportation for the Memorial Dedication activities. This coordination is being done by the "Memorial Dedication Transportation Group" (see next page in this newsletter. Ed) which is an initiative separate but supportive of the efforts of the

Memorial Foundation and the Association. Some of the Rally Points hotels for units within the Brigade have not yet been chosen. He said he still lacks more information on 4th Battalion arrangements and has none as of yet for the 17th Cavalry nor Casper.

Reunion Brats, a group that assist military units in holding reunions gave a very good presentation. This was given by Kim Batista from the Fort Hood area. They can provide much assistance with the entire reunion. The presentation was well received by all and many good comments were made about her presentation. They are compensated by taking a part of the registration fee. The Reunion Brats could assist us in planning and conducting future reunions.

Laura and Wendy from HelmsBriscoe then gave a great presentation. They have offices all over the world and can assist us in holding a reunion any place. Laura and Wendy are from the Houston office and have been with the company for at least 5 years. They are compensated for their services by the hotels, thus costing us nothing. We then broke for lunch. After returning from lunch we discussed the by-laws pertaining to the holding of reunions.

The replacement of the Brigade marker at Arlington National Cemetery was discussed and it was determined to be Chapter 1's marker and they will handle it as they see fit. Much discussion on changing to include the active brigade or leave it as it currently is. The Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery said he will allow no more markers, but that does not mean that policy will change with a new Superintendent. Many did not want the marker changed so as not to lose the Vietnam individuality. Several wanted it changed to reflect the active Brigade. It was reported that the Active Brigade CSM said, at the reunion this past summer, not to change the current marker. Each chapter was offered their checks from membership dues and all were given to the Association Foundation for scholarships.

Jim Bradley gave a great overview of how the web site is now configured. For future elections we are going to try and do it all on-line. Be sure and have each of your members go to the website and be sure they can access their files that are behind the log-in page. This requires each to have his login and password. If they are having difficulty getting to this page they will have to e-mail Jim to get their login and password correct. Also, each chapter has an area on the web site and Jim is asking each chapter to keep the number of people that will have access to that portion to one individual. All of the required reports for the chapters to turn in each year are on this site and easy to complete.



**OUR MISSION -- FACILITATE
THE TRANSPORTATION OF SKY
SOLDIERS TO THE MEMORIAL
DEDICATION & SUPPORT THE
MOST MEANINGFUL
EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE FOR
OUR SKY SOLDIERS!!**

By Terry Modglin, 4/503d

The **Country Inn and Suites**, 1720 Fountain Court, Columbus, GA 31904, will be the Rally Point for those members of the **2/503d** who wish to stay at the same hotel with their battalion buddies for the Dedication of the **173d National Memorial** at 10 a.m. June 1, 2010. The room rates are \$88. for single or double, and \$90. for a suite (of which there are just 5), plus tax. These rates are good for just the 31st of May and 1st of June. There is a big soccer tournament just before our contingent arrives and a smaller one just after so it is highly unlikely rooms will be available on these shoulder nights.

This is definitely a nice hotel, recently renovated. The 3d and 4th Battalions will be staying at hotels within the same zip code. There is no obligation for attendees to book rooms at any particular hotel. The Country Inn will provide free transportation to and back from the Memorial Dedication for guests booking 30 days in advance.



The hotel's phone number is **706-660-1880**. Their email is ex_clbs@countryinns.com If you call in the reservation, just indicate you are part of the **173d Airborne Group**. If you register through the Internet, go to <http://www.countryinns.com/hotels/gacolumb> and after you select your dates to stay, in finding

your rate you will see a link for "More Rates." Go there and put in the Promotional ID **173AIR**.

If this hotel is filled (as I expect it will be), we have other hotels in that area for more 2d Bat Sky Soldiers.

There will likely be a tour of Fort Benning on June 1, after the Dedication. Details will appear in a future issue of this newsletter.

In the interest of transparency, as I have indicated throughout, I am receiving no money whatsoever from this initiative, but my travel planner colleague, Mark Zeller, is receiving 10% commission on the hotel room nights taken. We have already spent a lot of time on this

and Mark will likely spend really significant time on this over the months ahead because it has so many moving parts. Believe me, the money will be hard-earned and will help offset some of his out-of-pocket expenses.

We are not part of the Memorial Foundation or the Association, but we have received the goodwill and cooperation of both. Mistakes made, if any, are ours alone....the *Transportation Memorial Dedication Group*.

If you have any questions, or guys with other battalions needing hotel information, please email me at Terry.Modglin@Gmail.com or call me at **202-270-3083**.

Airborne!

Terry Modglin, 4/503d

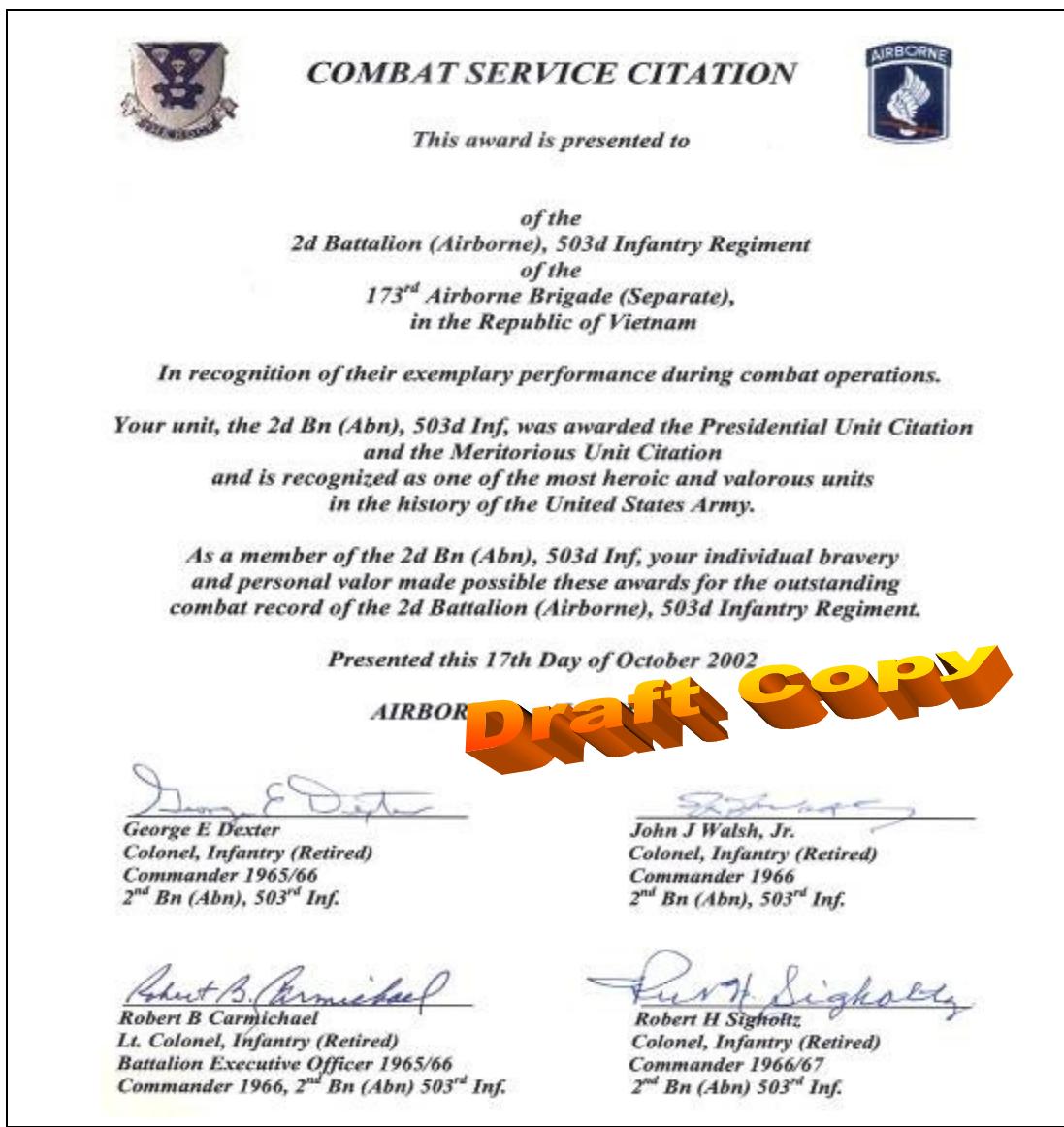
This notice appears in our newsletter as a courtesy to those working in support of the **173d National Memorial**. Ed.



2/503d COMBAT SERVICE CITATION

Our battalion, as were all the battalions of the 173d Airborne Brigade, were replete with heroes, most of whom were never recognized for their valorous actions during combat. Countless of our men were wounded, yet in many instances their wounds not so debilitating to warrant dust off; some refused dust off to remain in the field with their buddies. Some died saving lives of their fellow paratroopers, while others survived yet no one was there to see how heroic they truly were. All who served in combat are deserving of special recognition. It was with this in mind four of the former battalion commanders of the 2/503d took it upon themselves to create a special award for all men who served with our battalion during the Vietnam War. In 2002, Colonels

George Dexter, Robert Carmichael, John Walsh and Robert Sigholtz jointly created the *2/503d Combat Service Citation*, issued and signed by each man. Initially, the citation was given to men who directly served under their commands from 1965 into 1967. However, the commanders later decided to award the citation to *all* men who served with our battalion during *any* year of the war. To date, upwards of 300 citations have been presented to Sky Soldiers of our battalion. If you served with the 2/503d in Vietnam, to receive your personalized citation please send your physical address and how you wish your name to appear, to rto173d@cfl.rr.com and it will be mailed to you. *Airborne!*



GO AIRBORNE!

(Thanks to Jim Gettel, A/2/503d)

The Top Sergeant noticed a new paratrooper getting ready to load for a jump and barked at him, "Get over here Private! What's your name soldier?"

"John," the trooper replied.

"Look, I don't know what kind of bleeding-heart pansy crap they're teaching soldiers in jump school these days, but I don't call anyone by his first name," the Sergeant scowled. *"It breeds familiarity, and that leads to a breakdown in authority. I refer to my troopers by their last names only; Smith, Jones, Baker, whatever. And you are to refer to me as 'Top'. Do I make myself clear?"*

"All the way, Top!"

"Now that we've got that straight, what's your last name?"

The paratrooper sighed. "Darling, my name is John Darling, Top."

"Okay, John, here's what I want you to do"

Paratroopers at 65

Upon reaching 65, Willie, a former paratrooper, decided to retire. After having him under foot for a few months, his wife became very agitated with him. She suggested he go and do something to occupy his time, like join a club or get a hobby. Willie obliged and went out for a couple of hours.

When he got home his wife asked about his day and he replied, "Oh, I just went down to the park and hung out with the guys. And oh yeah, I joined a parachute club."

"What? Are you nuts?! You're 65 years old and you're going to start jumping out of airplanes again after all these years?"

"Yeah, look I even got a membership card."

"You crazy old man, where's your glasses! This is a membership to a Prostitute Club, not a Parachute Club!"

"Oh, great! Now what am I going to do? I signed up for 5 jumps a day!"



That's Who They Are!

In the March issue of our newsletter we asked if anyone could identify these two troopers. We pointed out the photo is likely from the early years of the war given the fact the Sarge is still wearing those pretty, bullet-attracting patches (nice jump wings too). The picture was taken in 1966, and shows 2nd Platoon B/2/503d PS **SFC Mac Adams** with his trusty **RTO Dave Griffin** on convoy near Bien Hoa.



VC Hung Lo: Do you hear something?

VC Lic Me: Yeah. It sounds like a convoy.

Hung Lo: You're right! I can see two of them!

Lic Me: Whatta we do???

Hung Lo: Well, one has an antenna sticking up.

Lic Me: Yeah. And the other one has those pretty bullet attracting patches!

Hung Lo: Nice jump wings too.

Lic Me: Decisions. Decisions.

Hung Lo: Wait! There's a driver too!

Lic Me: Yeah, I've seen him before, he's that attorney Bill Vose.

Hung Lo: Let's shoot the attorney!

Capt. Bill Vose, Esq.
at LZ Zulu-Zulu
in '05.



From the bushes in '05:

Hung Lo: I thought you shot
that guy in '66?

Lic Me: I did.



Friend? Kemosabe?

In 1966, we came under attack by a bunch of bad guys who surrounded us. While hiding under a fallen log and minding my own business while reading my Vietnamese dictionary opened to the page "friend," some cherry 2LT comes over to me and yells "*Follow me!*" I mean, this guy had been watching way too many Audie Murphy movies. I tried to ask him what our motivation was and if we could talk about it first, but he insisted and took me from my safe enclave resulting in little people I had nothing against shooting at me with real bullets. I've been having sport with that old Captain recently so thought I'd cut him some slack. This award to my friend and brother should have been for the Silver Star.

**HEADQUARTERS
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO San Francisco 96250**



**GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 422**

27 September 1966

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR HEROISM

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

VOSE, WILLIAM C. 0535509 SECOND LIEUTENANT INFANTRY USA Co. A 2d Bn (Abn)

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date action: 16 March 1966 Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Second Lieutenant Vose distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 16 March 1966 under enemy fire in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, Lieutenant Vose joined Company A as a replacement in the field. While he was still in Battalion Headquarters, the battalion came under heavy attack by an estimated 2000 Viet Cong. Making his way forward under heavy fire, he joined Company A which was under close assault by the enemy. Upon his arrival at the Company CP, it was learned that the second and third platoons were dangerously low on ammunition, and Lieutenant Vose quickly volunteered to assist them. Lieutenant Vose moved the length of the entire company front under murderous fire and succeeded in resupplying the platoons with the critically needed ammo. As the battle continued, the left flank was forced to pull back due to heavy casualties and was in danger of being overrun. Even though only six effectives remained in the platoon, Lieutenant Vose reorganized them and regained the lost ground. The company continued to receive effective fire from a .50 caliber machine gun emplacement approximately 70 meters to the front. Taking a three man detail, Lieutenant Vose led them forward in an attempt to maneuver around the gun. Although they succeeded, Lieutenant Vose was seriously wounded, but still managed to lead his men back to safety. Second Lieutenant Vose's outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provision of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962 and USARV Message 16695, AVA-S, 1962.



[In Issue 13 of our Newsletter was a detailed story on Operation Phoenix, by Col. Tom Faley (Ret), CO C/2/503d. Here, Ralph shares his recollections of that mission. Ed.]

FOLLOW-UP ON OPERATION PHOENIX

By Capt. Ralph Southard

My memory of Operation Phoenix is just as clear today as then. COL Faley's description of the operation is surprisingly correct. However, I do not remember the rice cache and enemy documents found before the battle began. I do remember finding a rice cache in late 1965 when CPT Cavezza (now LTG, Ret) was commanding A Company. I even remember the C-Ration meal I had that day as we were attempting to evacuate as much of the rice as possible. Yes, rice was an important commodity.

The C-Ration meal was a can of beef with cheese mixed in as I cooked it over a can of sterno. I also remember my fascination with the structure in which the rice was stored. The timbers used in the construction were obviously carved out in another location, probably North Vietnam, and carried to and reconstructed at its new location. But back to Phoenix.

What COL Faley did not elaborate upon was my own problems in controlling my platoon. As we completed our meal and moved out that day, **SSG Berry** was on point and I with my RTO followed immediately behind. All of a sudden we came under tremendous small arms fire. I was hit almost immediately, as COL Faley described. My first thought was where in hell is Berry? I thought that perhaps a VC ambush had allowed the point to pass. Then I thought perhaps the point had been killed and we were getting fire from that action. I later learned, however, that SSG Berry had moved to the right and completely disappeared into the jungle.

The small arms fire quickly let up and a heavy machine gun opened up, I think one of those 12.3mm. Could be wrong about that but I knew it was a heavy and was cutting the trees down over our heads. That was the first and only time I experienced heavy caliber machine gun fire coming in my direction. Thankfully, it was all way too high to do any damage except to the trees.

There was no time that I remember not being in radio communications with **CPT Mobley**. When I reported to him our situation he ordered me to pull back a few yards so fire support could be brought in. As I and two or three of our troopers pulled back, I noticed that there was no one behind us. Now another problem: Where in hell is my platoon? Talk about a confused and frustrated platoon leader; here I am standing in the middle of

nowhere with no visual contact with anyone except the two or three troopers with me. That was when the mortar platoon leader, **Cecil Harrison**, brought his platoon past me and moved to the front. I informed him that CPT Mobley had ordered us to allow some room for fire support but I'm not sure he understood. He walked his platoon right into hell. In minutes, his platoon members came back through me. They were carrying Cecil. The mortar platoon did not slow up, they kept moving. I did not see them again.

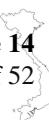
We heard some activity to our right front and started to move in that direction. At that time, the Headquarters Company Commander approached us with a few men and we moved forward together. As I approached CPT Mobley's position, everyone was there. I then realized that my point and the remainder of my platoon had all drifted to the right and seemed to be intermingled with the Second Platoon. That was when the second load of cluster bombs were dropped falling on A Company. The pellets splattered me and I thought I was hit again. One of the pellets had penetrated my canteen and as the hot water ran down my leg I thought it was blood. I thought, "*Oh hell. What else can go wrong?*" After dropping my trousers and finding no blood I realized, with great relief, that my canteen had been penetrated and that it was hot water I felt.

From that point forward, it was all a matter of getting the dead and wounded back to be evacuated. There seemed to be no privates, no sergeants, no lieutenants, just a bunch of troopers working together to clear the battle area of dead and wounded. I was on the last load out.

When I was dropped off at the aid station, I was asked to identify all the dead. That is when the realization of what had happened really set in with me. Among the dead was SSG Berry, one of the finest soldiers I ever knew. The last time I saw SSG Berry, he was sitting upright in the evacuation area with only a leg wound. He had helped carry several troopers to the evacuation area with that leg wound. I was told that he had died from shock.

Another one of the dead was **Sergeant Mitchell**. When I was a newly assigned private to the 187th Airborne Battle Group at Fort Campbell in 1957, Sergeant Mitchell was my first squad leader, and a great one. He had been one of my most dependable troopers in the platoon. I have always prayed that his wife and five children would be ok.

(continued....)



Another casualty that day was **Charles Daniels**, Platoon Sergeant 2nd Platoon. I don't know if Sergeant Daniels' story has ever been told. He had finished his tour in Vietnam and was ready to go home. He was not required to go on Operation Phoenix. It was over for him. However, someone ribbed him about not going on a last mission. He quickly gave in and said he'd go. Sergeant Daniels was a great soldier, one who I will always remember for his leadership, his dedication to the men under him, and his bravery in combat.

End of story. However, I do have a comment/question concerning the information on **CPT Cavezza** and **Sergeant Underwood** (page 15, Issue 13). It states that CPT Cavezza's RTO was **Jack Denton Bixby** who was KIA the day CPT Cavezza was wounded. My First Platoon RTO's name was Bixby. He was killed with a direct hit from a VC rocket the day CPT Cavezza was wounded. Is it possible that we had two Bixbys as RTOs? That is something I cannot recall.

~ MORE INCOMING!! ~

~ TWO LITTLE WORDS ~



Bravo Bull, Jim Jackson
I had no records to play on it.

Later, while looking through a well read *Playboy* magazine, I noticed an ad to join the RCA Record Club. If one joined you received 10 or 12 'free' albums. Well I filled out the application – selected the albums I wanted and, sending no money - signed up.

Two or more weeks passed when at Mail Call I received a box with the albums I had ordered. I opened an attached letter from RCA Record Club which stated in essence that although they would love to have me as a member, my APO address would not allow me membership. RCA further explained that in consideration of my APO address they were sending the albums I ordered free of charge.

I was humbled by their generosity. I had just turned 19 years old in October and was not one who took time to write my parents let alone a record club. I was so overtaken by their act of kindness that I wrote a short note to RCA thanking them for the albums (mostly country) they had sent me.

A few weeks later I received another box from the RCA Record Club. I was puzzled but opened it anyway. Its contents held another 12 albums and again country/western titles. I then read the letter attached. RCA wrote that during the Christmas Holidays they receive so many letters of complaints that my thank you letter was so appreciated they decided to send me more records to play on my battery-powered record player with marginal sound quality.

I learned a life lesson that day – the power of saying *thank you*.

James A. Jackson
3rd Platoon B/2/503d

~ BROTHERS REMEMBERED ~

What an awesome Newsletter this month. It brought back so many memories reading it. Seeing the names of so many friends such as **Dale Olson**, both **Sergeant Daniels'**; especially **SFC Charles Daniels**.

Something many folks don't know; he and I went up for SFC E-7 eight times and he finally made it, due to his having 13 years in-grade and I only had 10 years in-grade as only one stripe came down during our time there. Then on 26 February 1966, I had to go to the morgue and identify his body, along with Sergeants Berry and Brewer, and the body of my former RTO, **Lamar Fredericks** and several others.



Barb & Top Dresser at 173d reunion in Rochester, MN

You are doing a super great job with our 2/503d Newsletter. Just for that you can have several dances with Barb. :-) See you in June my brother,

"Top" Jim Dresser, A/HHC/2/503d

Well I sure as hell ain't dancin' with you Top!! (I did steal a dance with Barb once when he wasn't lookin!). Ed



2010 Tentative Schedule of Events:

Sunday - April 18

10:00 AM---- Wall Escort from Brevard Community College
Cocoa to Wickham Park
12:00 PM---- Covered Dish Picnic and Wall Set Up

Monday - April 19

6:00 PM---- Presentation of wreaths
6:45 PM---- Florida Air Academy Marching Band
7:00 PM---- Opening Ceremony at the Wall

Thursday - April 22

6:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
7:00 PM---- Bone Dog Band
8:30 PM---- Doc Holiday

9:00 PMMammoth Band

Friday - April 23

12:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
1:00 PM---- Two of Diamonds
2:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
2:30 PM---- JQB Band
4:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
4:30 PM---- Absolute Blue Band
6:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
6:30 PM---- Michael J. Martin
7:30 PM---- Doc Holiday
8:00 PM---- Open Fire Band
9:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
9:30 PM---- Viva Rock Band

Saturday - April 24

10:00 AM---- Line Up for the Massing of the Colors Back of Amphitheater
11:00 AM---- Opening Ceremonies / Massing of the Colors
12:00 PM---- LZ Helicopter Landing
1:00 PM---- Two of Diamonds
2:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
2:30 PM---- SweetWater Junction Band
3:30 PM---- Patience Mason, at the Wall Pavilion - Recovering From the War - PTSD
4:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
4:30 PM---- Caitlin Wehrly
5:30 PM---- Suncoast Vietnam Vets "The Last Patrol"
6:00 PM---- John Steer
6:45 PM---- Doc Holiday
7:00 PM---- Michael J. Martin
8:30 PM---- Doc Holiday
9:00 PM---- Viva Rock Band

Sunday - April 25

10:00 AM---- Church Services By Rev John Steer
10:30 AM---- Patience Mason, at the Wall Pavilion - Recovering From the War - PTSD
11:00 AM---- Doc Holiday
11:30 AM---- Open Fire
12:30 PM --- Doc Holiday
1:00 PM---- Absolute Blue
3:00 PM---- Doc Holiday
4:00 PM---- Michael J Martin
6:00 PM---- Melbourne Municipal Band at the Wall
7:00 PM---- Closing Ceremony at the Wall

Monday - April 26

9:00 AM---- Cleanup Wickham Park and Wall Take Down

Brought to you by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.

PLEASE - NO COOLERS, GLASS OR PETS IN REUNION OR MEMORIAL AREA



Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.

Presents:

Florida's 23rd Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion

April 22-25,
2010

Vietnam Traveling Memorial

Wall

The Moving Tribute Korean War Tribute

April 18 - 25, 2010

Web Page: www.floridaveteransreunion.com

Wall Web Page: www.travelingwall.us

Contact Numbers (321) 632-4928 - 453-7498 -
726-6752 - 501-6896

(continued....)



WELCOME

On behalf of the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard we welcome you to our 23rd Annual Veterans Reunion.

As Americans we acknowledge that freedom is a gift from God. The achievement of this fragile and precious right has been due to the sacrifices of our armed forces who have served since our founding and will only continue as long as they remain strong and on guard. Our theme this year is "US Armed Forces, Keeping America Safe Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow."

Our reunion serves as an event where we come together to pay respect to our fallen comrades, renew friendships, and express our appreciation to those who serve today.

As you move about the park and see some of our active duty military members or those who recently returned from the war, please join us in giving them a proper and enthusiastic Thank You for their sacrifice!

WELCOME HOME VETERANS

We sincerely hope you and your family enjoy your experiences at this year's Reunion, and we thank each of you for coming and sharing this very special event with us.

How To Find A Name

Volunteers are available to assist you in locating names you wish to find on our wall. Counselors are also available for those who may need personal assistance.

The Moving Tributes

1990 – 1991: Desert Storm/Desert Shield
2001 – Present: Afghanistan
2003 – Present: Iraq
9/11/2001

VIETNAM TRAVELING MEMORIAL WALL

The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard (VVB) is honored to present to you the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall. Our wall is a 3/5-scale replica of the Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. and measures 288 feet in length and six feet tall at the apex.

Not everyone has the opportunity to visit DC and see the Memorial Wall. For many, the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall may be their only opportunity to see family members' and comrades' names as they are presented on the National Memorial.

In 2009 the VVB's Memorial Wall traveled for six months to many states ranging from the small town of Hanley Falls Mn. (pop 250), and our largest road event in Punta Gorda Fl., where 20,000 people attended. This year's schedule begins soon after the reunion ends.

We are grateful for your continued donations and support which help to defray the costs of the maintenance, transportation and respectful display of our memorial to American communities.

TO REFLECT, REMEMBER AND PAY TRIBUTE...

Thank you,
The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard

DRAWINGS

There will be numerous drawings throughout the four-day period of the Reunion. Although it is hoped that you will be present for the drawings, we realize that will not always be possible. Therefore, all tickets that are drawn will be posted at the VVB's Quartermaster tent, across from the beer tent. Those prizes not claimed by 7:00 PM, April 25th become the property of the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.



~ A LITTLE STORY ABOUT NAM ~

We had just come in from the field and after several hours of cleaning equipment and our bodies we headed for the EM club. It was hot as usual and we were having a few drinks outside the club.

One of the guys was working on stringing wire from one building to the club. I was sitting on an old square cooler leaning up against the building when a bolt of lightning struck the building above my head. I did not know what had actually happened but **Grimes** who I was talking to said that the man on the ladder stringing wire was knocked off his ladder and that I was thrown about 3-4 feet right up the corner of the building and then just fell to the ground.

I could not move any part of my body but could hear voices. Grimes was yelling "*Knapp! Knapp! You hear me!*" And of course I was trying to say yes but could only listen and not respond. Someone said to get a cot out of one of the hooches and they did. Someone then said, "*He is dead,*" and I'm trying my best to scream, move do anything to let them know that I was not dead but, realized that my hearing was fading and maybe I was dying.

Someone said get him up to sick call and see what the Docs can do for him. The last thing to go through my mind before actually going unconscious was I pray they do not bury me alive. Next thing I knew I was waking up with a bunch of medics talking about what damage the lightning must have caused.

I started to feel pins and needles all through my body but still didn't feel like I was moving, when one of the medics said, "*His eyes are moving side to side at a high rate of speed,*" and I let out a shout, "*Where am I?! Am I alive?!*" and tried to sit up. They were yelling to some Doc or senior medic to come over and check me out.

They told me not to move and began the usual tests, and when they wanted to check reflexes in my arms and legs, nothing would respond properly. They assisted me to my feet, and asked if I could walk, but could not yet on my own.

I said what actually happened and they told me I was hit by lightning. I laughed and they asked me what was so funny? I said, "*I was hit once before.*"

Time passed and they said well you've been here 3 hours and that there was nothing more they could do so if I could walk I could go. Although feeling real weird all over I stumbled back to the club, had a couple drinks with some concerned friends **Grimes**, **New** and **Pappy Sides** from the 3rd platoon which I was assigned.

Unfortunately, many of my buddies have said that I am still numb from that experience! All I have to say is thanks for not burying me.

Bill Knapp
3rd Platoon, B/2/503d

[Note: If anyone ever, and I mean ever sees me standing next to Knapp in stormy weather, get me the hell away from him!!!]. Ed

~ GLAD TO BE ALIVE PARTY ~

Last month, on the evening of March 16, 2/503d troopers **Bill Vose, Jack Ribera, Steve Haber** and I, along with our wives and Steve's grandson, met at a restaurant in Orlando, FL to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the battle at LZ Zulu-Zulu during Operation Silver City on that same date in 1966. We toasted one another and all our men who were there, and well over 200 of our men wounded that day, and, especially our buddies who fell in that battle. None of us could forget **Cowboy Tony Geishauer's** huey being shot down in our perimeter which opened-up the terrifying fight which followed. **Col. Don Bliss**, Commander, Casper Aviation Platoon 1st Brigade Aviation Officer, 173d Airborne Brigade, heard of our Glad to be Alive Party, and sent the follow note. Ed.

After the ZZ mini reunion in Orlando 16 Mar 2010, it is with a heart felt thanks and a deep appreciation to the guys of the 2/503, and also to Tony and his crew for their heroic actions; not only at LZ Zulu-Zulu, but throughout their tours in a war many of us were not sure why we were fighting.

I stand in awe of the bravery of all of you. Someday, I would like to meet you guys face-to-face and celebrate with you. Even though I was not physically on the ground at that location, I still feel a sense of being a part of the action from all the fire support from attack helicopters, artillery and Air Force fighters we put on the enemy during that "Longest Day of the Year."



Colonel Don

May God bless all of you and keep you in good health forever.

Don Bliss, Casper 6
May 1965 to May 1966



N CO Rangers & Chopper Crews get together in Las Vegas, NV May 23-28 at the Golden Nugget Hotel

Need your \$80 deposit soon -
end of March deadline !!

(N COMPANY RANGERS FOR
CHOPPER INFILTRATION)

RANGERS AND CHOPPER CREWS MISSION
"LZ" FOR MAY

TRAINING TOGETHER AND KEEPING
CHOPPER READY FOR ACTION

TO ALL RANGERS AND THOSE
WHO GAVE US CHOPPER
SUPPORT TO
173rd LRRP + 74th LRP Det. +
75th N/CO RANGERS + 74th LRS
with 173RD Herd

Casper Platoon
61st Assault Helicopter Company -
Cowboys, Lucky Stars, Star Blazer,
other support companies like
616th Transportation Det, 922nd
Signal Det. (Avionics), 193th Medical
Det. and others like USAF "Tonto" &
"Shadow"



If you are in contact with anyone
that I listed or missed,
contact them.

Members who served along
side with N Company (173rd
LRRP + 74th LRP Det. +
75th N/CO RGR + 74th LRD
Det). are invited to a mini
reunion in Las Vegas on May
23 (Sunday arrival) to May
28 (Friday checkout).

This invitation is for all who served
in-country from 1965 to 1971 and
also supported the 74th LRS Det.
after 'Nam.

The hotel "Golden Nugget" will be
the LZ for this event and room rates
will be \$49.00 + tax per night.
Schedule of events will be forwarded as
it is developed.

Website for hotel:
www.goldennugget.com

Reunion attendance cost: \$80.

Note: Any funds left over after
expenses, will be donated to the
173rd Herd Memorial

Bring your spouses / family
members / military friends
and friends.

If you are interested in attending:
Please send Reunion funds OF \$80 to
Ron Thomas as soon as possible !!!!!

Ron Thomas
Reunion Coordinator
184 Greenbriar Townhouses
Las Vegas, NV 89121
(702) 303-0011
18bz@gmail.com

Hope to see you there !!!

Robt 'twin' Henriksen
70-71 Team Golf/Delta
Unit Director
cell 360 393-7790

