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July 2010 ~ Issue 17

## ~ Photo of the Month ~

3000 Veterans on motorcycles from across the USA paraded in Washington, D.C. the Sunday before Memorial Day. A solitary Marine greeted them with a salute on Constitution Avenue. The Marine stood at attention saluting for 3 straight hours, while the parade of roaring bikes kept on coming. The event is held in remembrance of those who've fallen in the military; the group is called "Rolling Thunder." As the camera is on the Marine he struggles with his emotions, and continues holding that 3-hour long salute -- his head lowered, his eyes down, in reverence for the fallen. It got to be overwhelming for him, and his tears started flowing. Semper Fi brother.



See video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gfnmDGk0KM&feature=related>



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# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

## God and Country: Happy Birthday America

**Dr. Ronald Reese Smith**  
1LT, FO, B/2/503d, 3/319<sup>th</sup>  
[ronalddreesmith@gmail.com](mailto:ronalddreesmith@gmail.com)

Call me sentimental! Call me emotional! Call me patriotic! Whenever I am at an athletic event, a civic function or any place where our national anthem is played, I cannot seem to finish singing without tears rolling down the crevices of my cheeks. My mind can't help but bring up memories and pictures of friends and comrades who serve and served our country in the cause of freedom for other countries. No nation is perfect, not even ours. Yet no nation in the history of humanity has given so much and has asked for so little in return.

At the World Economic Forum, retired Four Star General and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was asked a lengthy and complicated question by George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. The long and involved question ended with a statement suggesting that America was *"in danger of relying too much on hard power and not enough on building the trust from which the soft values...when the bottom line is reached, [that] is what makes human life valuable."*

Secretary Powell delivered a lengthy response to the former Archbishop's question. Included were a number of poignant statements, especially this one:

***"We have gone forth from our shores repeatedly over the last hundred years and we've done this as recently as this year in Afghanistan and put wonderful young men and women at risk, many of whom have lost their lives, and we have asked for nothing except enough ground to bury them in, and otherwise we have returned home to seek our own lives in peace, to live our own lives in peace. But there comes a time when soft power or talking with evil will not work where, unfortunately, hard power is the only thing that works."***

It is a privilege and a responsibility to be in an honored place among the nations of the world. President Reagan, referring to a biblical image used by Jesus, declared us to be *"A city on a hill."* As we celebrate our nation's birth this month and give thanks for the privileges and freedoms which are ours, it is important to recognize and give thanks to God our Creator who is the Lord and

Creator of all the nations of the world—whether nations recognize Him or not. He wishes us to be found by Him, to be with Him, to listen to Him, to enjoy Him and, yes, to experience His peace.

Psalm 46 was written by a school of musicians known as "the Sons of Korah." For nine verses they sing that we can rest securely and rest serenely because of the observable evidence of God's work around us. Then, in verses 10-11, God speaks; *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth....The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah."*

Psalm 46 describes a great deliverance of God's people. Here is but a sample, a down payment, from the God who has promised to bring peace to the earth. God who has promised that His kingdom shall come and His will, will be done on earth as it is in heaven, will do that. We can be assured that one day, in His time, God will move in history, and put down the anger of the nations. Poets often reason that way.

During the War of 1812, the British attacked America. This lion of history felt it could win the second game in the series. So, during the war, in 1814, they came against our capital city, Washington, sacked and burned her buildings. Next, they moved on to Baltimore to do the same. There was a fort, however, Fort McHenry, that stood in their way. The British brought up their gun boats. They thought that they could destroy it easily.



**Fort McHenry**

Right at two-hundred years ago now, one of our own poets observed first hand the hand of God at work in our fledgling nation. He also wrote a hymn about his experience. That poet was also a young lawyer, Francis Scott Key, who had gone out to the gun boats to talk to the British Generals about releasing some American prisoners. While he was on board that British ship, the bombardment of Ft. McHenry began. It was in the evening as the sunlight disappeared.

*(continued....)*



Francis Scott Key stood on the deck of the ship and he saw the American flag flowing in the breeze. Then, night came. The bombardment continued. Through all the fire and bomb explosions he could still see the flag waving in the dark. The next morning when the British ammunition had been spent and he saw that Fort McHenry still stood, he looked and saw the star spangled banner, tattered, but still waving. As you know, Francis Scott Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner" from that incident, which later became our national anthem.

**Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed,  
at the twilight's last gleaming?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars,  
thru the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched  
were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare,  
the bombs bursting in air,  
gave proof through the night  
that our flag was still there.  
Oh, say does that star-spangled Banner yet wave,  
O'er the land of the free  
and the home of the brave?**

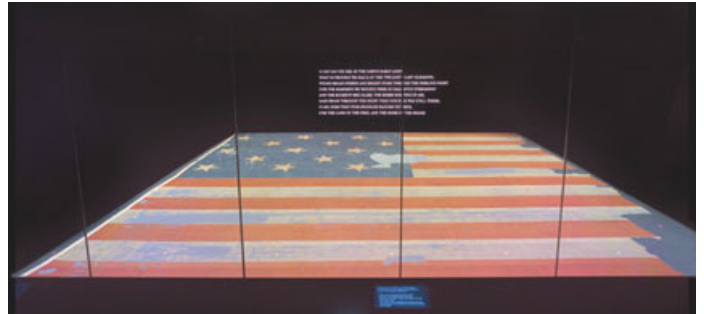
What many, maybe even most, Americans do not know is that Francis Scott Key wrote second, third, and fourth stanzas to the national anthem that never make it to our football games. It was from this single incident at Fort McHenry that he looked forward to the future. In the 4<sup>th</sup> verse he wrote:

**Oh! Thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
between their loved home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace,  
may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made  
and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquest we must, when our cause it is just,  
and this be our motto: "In God is our Trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!**

Francis Scott Key was saying that the attack on Fort McHenry was a symbolic sample of the fact that God had delivered this nation. God had rescued our country. And as he looked forward to the future, he felt as long as the nation was true to God, God would be true to the nation.

That's what the author of Psalm 46 was saying as he looks at that one incident and he sees that God has worked on behalf of His people. He sees that the Assyrians had been defeated -- when defeat seemed impossible. And as He looks forward to the future, He sees that God who has brought peace in the single incident, shall bring peace to all the earth.

Visitors to the Smithsonian Museum of American History can see the flag that flew over Fort McHenry when Francis Scott Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner." The original flag measured 42 feet by 30 feet. It was the immense size of the flag that allowed Key to see it from his position ten miles out to sea, following a night of gunfire.



**The Star Spangled Banner at Smithsonian Museum**

The means by which a flag that large could fly on a pole 189 feet in the air is on display at Fort McHenry on Baltimore's inner harbor. There in one of the barracks were two oak timbers, eight feet by eight feet, joined as a cross. National Park Service personnel discovered this cross-shaped support near the entrance to Fort McHenry in 1958, buried nine feet in the ground. Not only did the cross piece help rangers locate the original site from which the star spangled banner flew, it answered the mystery of how such a large flag could fly in stormy weather without snapping the pole. This unseen wooden device provided a firm foundation for the symbol of our national freedom.

Similarly, the cross of Christ provides the foundation by which our faith in God and our hope for our country is rooted and supported.

As we celebrate the 234th birthday of independence of our land, let us also "praise the power that has made and preserved us as a nation." As we kick back and have some beer and BBQ, go to the beach or mountains, or just hang with our family, let us pray for our brothers and sisters in arms serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially those of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Afghanistan. Let us remember, *"Then conquest we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto: 'In God is our Trust.' And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"*

May God continue to bless America and may America bless God.

An object of His grace, Ron





## SKY SOLDIERETT'S CORNER

The first week of June was really indescribable to so many of us. To me, it was a revelation, an opportunity to develop a sense of meaning and purpose, a greater understanding of what letting go means, a homecoming, a completing of a circle, and a focal point for healing, rest and peace.



Again, I was struck by the sense of brotherhood so strong among the members of the 173d Airborne Brigade, from its inception to its current status. The feeling of comradeship that is felt by the members who have served with the 173d Infantry Regiment, to the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team who jumped in Corregidor and islands in the Pacific, to the veterans of Vietnam, to the veterans of Iraq and the veterans and soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan. Again, I will state that with the various Veterans groups that we have been associated with, with the various veterans we have met who served with any other group, that this bond is stronger and more unique than any other out there.

I can only describe my own feelings about the Memorial at Fort Benning. I can only hope that you will understand when I try to tell you how very special I feel that Memorial is. How it will become a great place of healing for the men and women of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

The speeches were stirring. The ceremonial parts were emotional. The feeling achieved by watching the people in the stands was both inspiring and humbling as you watched all soldiers from all eras in the Herd joined together. The feeling of special honor of coming together that was felt when old guys acknowledged and greeted new guys was almost overwhelming. It transcended decades, countries, and being.

When the Color Guard walked across the field, it was as if they were leading a host of the Herd members who had fallen during World War II, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan to a final resting place. Those who had passed away since those conflicts that were members of the Herd were again joined with those who had fallen in War, and we were witness to the gathering of the greatest warriors we could ever know.

When I turned at the memorial and saw the two young men dressed in Vietnam gear, I felt that they were held back from the memorial by those who had the Sky Soldier/Rock patch on their shoulders. It was fitting that they were there, but the place was for a very special group of people. When I walked into the memorial and looked up at the globe and wing, I knew that thousands had come home.

The Vietnam Wall is a good place to start healing, but this was a place of peace for all.

Thank you, Col. Smith and the Memorial group. I now know that there is a final resting place for the Herd. And, yes, Ray, there is a Trooper's Green. I have seen it, I have felt it, I want to return.

**Iva Tuttle**  
(Wife of Wayne Tuttle, C/2/503d)

## INCOMING!!

If anyone here remembers me and they can write a letter to me stating that they remember serving with me, I need that letter for help with my disability claim to the VA. I was with 2/503d, N Co. 75th Rangers in '68-'70. Thanks for mailing a letter to me at the address below. It will be greatly appreciated.

**Robert Lookingbill**  
53586 CR 27, Lot 134, Bristol, IN 46507

**Bob**

## GREAT NEW BANNERS!

Thanks to Ashley Bowers, graphic artist extraordinaire, and daughter of C/2/503d good buddy Wayne Bowers (fortunately, she got her mother's good looks), for creating three, great new banners for our newsletter. All three are so unique and professionally produced we'll alternate use of them in future issues. Thanks Ashley!! Anyone needing super graphics work created might want to contact the dad Chargin' Charlie at [bowway@aol.com](mailto:bowway@aol.com)

## WHODAT?



Who can identify this 2d Bat trooper with his new friend?



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## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### VA ANNOUNCES CHANGE TO MEDICATION COPAYS FOR SOME VETERANS

June 10, 2010

WASHINGTON - As previously announced on January 7, 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs froze prescription copayment increases for six months. Veterans who generally have higher income and no service-connected disabilities - referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 Veterans - will now pay an additional \$1 for each 30-day supply of outpatient medications. Taking effect July 1, the increase to \$9 from \$8 is the first change in VA's medication copay since Jan. 1, 2006.

*"Because of the harsh economic reality facing many Veterans, we delayed the change," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We're now ensuring the Veterans most in need of VA care are those least affected. Yet, even with this increase, VA medication copays are lower than much of the private sector."*

This change does not impact Veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 who will continue to pay \$8 for each 30-day supply of medications for their non-service connected conditions unless otherwise exempted. These Veterans will also continue to have their out-of-pocket expenses for VA outpatient medications capped at \$960. per calendar year.

**Veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a disability rated 50 percent or greater – who are known as Priority Group 1 Veterans -- are exempt from the copay.**

VA generally sets its outpatient medication copay rate based upon a regulation that ties the rate to the Medical Consumer Price Index for prescription drugs.

Veterans who have difficulty paying copayments for outpatient medications should discuss the matter with their local VA enrollment coordinator. Veterans may also contact VA at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit VA's health eligibility web site at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility)

### NEW INSIGHT FOR TREATING PARKINSON'S

June 14, 2010

Veterans and others with Parkinson's disease who undergo deep brain stimulation (DBS) may benefit from research co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and published recently in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. The new report shows DBS is equally effective at either of two sites in the brain. Earlier results from the landmark study appeared last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, indicating that DBS overall is somewhat riskier than carefully managed drug therapy but may hold significant benefits for appropriate patients. The new analysis finds both sites roughly equal for patient outcomes relating to movement symptoms. Researchers will follow the study participants several more years to examine the relative benefits and risks of each DBS approach. An abstract of the study is available on the *New England Journal of Medicine* website <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/short/362/22/2077>

### VA ANNOUNCES NEW HOTLINE

June 14, 2010

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) has announced a new telephone hotline to provide emergency support and resources to homeless veterans. The hotline of the new National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID VET will provide homeless veterans with timely assistance and coordinated access to VA and community services. Family members, workers at community agencies and non-VA providers also may call the hotline to find out about the many programs and services available to assist homeless veterans. For more information:

**Homeless Veteran in need of help?  
Call 1-877-4AID VET  
(1-877-424-3838)**



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# "I WAS THERE LAST NIGHT"

By Robert Clark  
Neillsville, WI

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the last twenty-four years, I wake up with it, and go to bed with it.

But this is what I said. *"Yea, I think about it. I can't quit thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned instead to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore."*

A psychologist once told me that NOT being affected by the experience over there would be abnormal. When he told me that, it was like he'd just given me a pardon. It was as if he said, *"Go ahead and feel something about the place, Bob. It ain't going nowhere. You're gonna wear it for the rest of your life. Might as well get to know it."*

A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has whose husband was in the Nam. She asks this guy when he was there. Here's what he said, *"Just last night."*

It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about.

JUST LAST NIGHT. Yeah I was in the Nam. When? JUST LAST NIGHT. During sex with my wife. And on my way to work this morning. Over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there.

My sister says I'm not the same brother that went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right.

Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, *"If I die before I wake."* This was the real thing. The kind where boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Bob Flannigan was my friend. Bob Flannigan is dead. I put him in a body bag one sunny day, April 29, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before he was shot, about what we were going to do when we got back in the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as myself.

A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blond hair. When he talked, it was with a soft drawl. Flannigan was a hick and he knew it. That was part of his charm. He didn't care. Man, I loved this guy like the brother I never had. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him. Maybe I didn't know any better. But I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. DON'T GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO DIE. Sometimes you can't help it.

You hear vets use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spent the war with. *"Me and this buddy a mine."*

"Friend" sounds too intimate, doesn't it. "Friend" calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that.



**2/503d buddies in Vietnam. There last night.**

In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become so good at it, that twenty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again.

My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me. My daughters. I know it probably bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife, I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed on for better or worse, she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter. But with my daughters it's different.

My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that. I can have an ex-wife; but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference.

*(continued....)*





I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of Iowa. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there.

And I'll never forget the way blood smells, slick and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. That memory isn't going anywhere.

I remember how the night jungle appears almost dream like as the pilot of a Cessna buzzes overhead, dropping parachute flares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle. It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. *"I know man. I know."* That's what he said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared shitless. *"I know man."* And at that moment he did.

God I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O'Brien writes his stories. I know what gives Bruce Weigle the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with.

We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. We touched each other and said, *"I know."* Like a mother holding a child in the middle of a nightmare, *"It's going to be all right."* We tried not to lose touch with our humanity. We tried to walk that line: To be the good boys our parents had raised and not to give into that unnamed thing we knew was inside us all.

You want to know what frightening is? It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, *"Some asshole is gonna pay."* To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in front of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they would rather be. Places and people they hope to see again. The picture shares space in a frame with one of my wife. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She

knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can. And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet.



**Two guys writing home in 1966. A/2/503d troopers Jack Ribera & Mike Sturges.**

I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. *"One more day, God. One more day."*

And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken. I still hear the way we sounded, the hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and trying our best not to show it.

The ones who still answer the question, *"When were you in Vietnam?"* with *"Hey, man. I was there just last night."*

[Thanks to Mike Sturges, A/2/503d, for sending in this story, a story we all understand too well].

## NOTE:

See Pages 42-43 for an invitation from the WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) Association's invitation to all Sky Soldiers to attend their annual reunion in Dallas, Texas this coming September.





## BRAVO BULLS

Front-- Joe Logan and Ruben Dimas

Standing-- Dave Glick, Jim Robinson, Joel Trenkle, Phil Farrow, Dick Eckert, Francis "Top" MacDonald, Alvin Ealey, Roy Lombardo, Robert Toporek, Mike Broderick, Mark Mitchell, Jack Schimpf, John Nix, Jerry Nissley

## FAREWELL TO ANOTHER BRAVO BULL, SKY SOLDIER JOHN NIX



I am writing to inform the Bulls that John Nix, the 4.2 Mortar FO, has gone to join Ruben Dimas, John Wills, and Dick Eckert. John was always in my back pocket in training and stayed there when we went to RVN. The arty FO team, led by Jim Robinson, only came when we went

to RVN, so I kept John and had Jim fly and move with the 3d Platoon to crossload Fire Support. John was taciturn and no nonsense from the get-go and always had a fire mission ready when needed. He warned me off a few times because he said that he wasn't sure that the 4.2's were where they said, which took a lot of balls.

When we went into D Zone to try to recover Van Campen's body, we were mortared by the VC on the LZ. Fortunately the rounds buried in the paddy and didn't detonate. Newby that I was to enemy fire, I initially thought that someone was firing the 40 mm grenades too close. I had John fire onto the high ground beyond the assembly area and that was one of the times he told me to hold off on additional 4.2 fires. Arthur

McClain was wounded and we had our second med evac before moving out to search for Van Campen.

I did meet John in Northern Virginia for dinner and he and his wife attended our rally at Fayetteville as did Dick Eckert. He left the military, educated himself as a



Petroleum Engineer, moved to Alaska, and begged me to join him on the Tanana River for fishing. He also had family in Mississippi and we had many a conversation about where they lived.

**Linda & John Nix**

May God and all of the deceased Bulls welcome John into the Final DZ to await our arrival in the very distant future, as several emails have already said.

**Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret)**  
**CO, B/2/503d**



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# FILLING THE RANKS

**Gary Prisk**

**Captain**

**Charlie Company, 2/503d**

**I**t was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, another dirty, dusty Delta day. But, it wasn't Bobby Joe or Billy McCallister.. it was No Deros Alpha...it was Dak To. And this day changed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Airborne), 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) forever.

As word of American paratroopers being executed by North Vietnamese Communist Regulars reaches the world stage, replacements were being diverted from parachute units around the globe. More importantly, a hard crust formed over the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and the 173d Airborne Brigade. From that point on, sympathy could be found only in the dictionary....between shit and syphilis.

The men from the other companies and the men diverted to fill the ranks would walk the endless miles, eventually they would find their end.

One paratrooper diverted to the 2/503<sup>rd</sup> was PFC John T. Thompson. Assuming he was headed for No Deros Alpha, Thompson picked-up his toy gun, shouldered a near empty rucksack and reports for duty...with Charlie Company. Big, skinny, with red hair and more freckles than his hairy body could hide, Thompson fell-in with the likes of Spec. Four Jim Bednarski, Spec. four Glen Harmon, SSgt. Ernest Asbury, Sgt. Jose Baez, PFC Billy Knight, and PFC John Fish. There were more...maybe another story.

And so they began what they like to call, *The Bullshit Tour*...wandering around Dak To turning figure eights into a mystery...knowing that eventually the bastards that whacked Alpha company were wandering around in opposing circles and at some point the bullshit would stop.

In August of 1967...it could have been September...the battalion would find the Brigade LRRP Team that had gone off the net...skinned and mutilated. Ensuring that revenge was in favor, all hands had to examine the bodies. Sympathy would get a vigorous, newly coined definition.

Here's a picture of one of these boys: PFC John Thompson... somewhere in the mountains around Kontum. I called him Drips...you can guess the reason.



**Drips**

After Hill 875 not many men were still walkin' and talkin' in Charlie Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, or any of the companies for that matter. Again, replacements came from all points on the globe. I was headed for the Horse Cay until a paper pusher said the Herd was havin' a party in Dak To. I met General Sweiter (?)...he was a General anyway...for an "In-his-tent Howdy-Do"...when the general started cryin' ...I knew I was in deep shit.

Here's a shot of PFC Lloyd Green, Sgt. Paul Schreiber and PFC Donald Jones taken near Duc Co at the fire base.



Here's a couple shots of 875 survivors.. "The Hill People"... taking their leave at the EM Club at An Khe when the battalion rotated in for "Palace Guard"...PFC Glen Harmon, aka Squeak, and Thompson aka Drips... Doc Coward was there too.

## **Squeak & Drips**

Here's a shot of Spec 4 Jim Bednarski (left)... aka Ben or Ski, with PFC Thomas Hurd (17 years old), Doc Walsh...PFC Collin Gillman, aka Pops...PFC Bobby Watts, aka Amps... and in front is Doc Dopart.



(continued....)



At the end of my tour (four-and-a-wake-up), Doc Dopart would present me with a Christmas card he had a friend in the states make for him. The card was a colored glossy of a VC one of the gunships had rearranged north of the Tiger Mountains. With no face and many-many holes, Chuck was back-stretched over a paddy dike facing the sky. Under the picture was a skyline relief of Bethlehem and under this were these words:

**PEACE ON EARTH**  
**Charlie Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Airborne),**  
**503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment**  
**173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)**  
**Christians: 1    Buddhists: 0**

This little ditty lead to a second Prejudicial Allegation being filed against me. This one was served on me when I was a student in the Ranger School during the Fort Benning Phase. For the record, the Ranger School cadre thought the card was hilarious. You see, the new battalion commander, a man I met for less than 5 minutes before he assumed command, was trying to get me court marshaled. Something about being responsible for everything your unit does or fails to do.

Senior medics could be extremely evil people. When I went on R&R, Doc Dopart along with the artillery FO, Lt. Cardenis, tied me up and the RTO's reported to battalion that Charlie Company had caught the deserter everyone seemed to be looking for...a damn good bit of black humor, no doubt.

Here's a picture of me being bound for transport to the rear area, branded a deserter. The MP's wanted to shackle-drag my ass from bunker to bunker and kept checking the loads on their 45's. Eventually, I went on R&R.



Here's a shot of one of our friends captured in the An Lao Valley, west of LZ English.



**Bad Guy**

When I took over 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Charlie Company, I had no idea where such a cast of characters could come from...helmets on backwards...rucksacks that were constructed out of trip wire and bits of twine ... eyes drawn into a void... bastard files to sharpen D-handled shovels... fatigues with every panel of fabric shredded ...and 40-grit words.

Here's a shot of myself and PFC Bobby Watts (left) aka Amps... and PFC Steve Senseney, aka Tennessee, the radio operators for Charlie Company, taken deep in the Fishhook just before another twilight came to call.



**Amps, Cap & Tennessee**

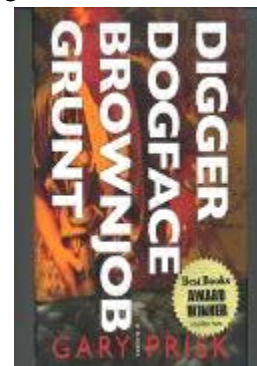
These men became my dearest friends...we have bonds that far exceed those of my primary family.



**Point Team, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon**

Seven of us got together for the dedication of the 173d Memorial at Fort Benning (see photo Page 19). Holed up in a laager...cabins and such in a rural part of Georgia. General Joe Jellison, my first company commander, Oscar Cruz, my platoon sergeant/field first sergeant, Tommy Thompson, aka Drips...Ernest Asbury, aka Nasty...Jim Bednarski, aka Ski, and Steve Senseney, aka Tennessee, raised our glasses high. We could not drink to all the men that fell, but we gave it a go.

Captain Gary Prisk served as platoon leader with and later company commander of Charlie Company, 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade in 1967/68 in Vietnam. He recently authored the multi-award winning Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt, a fictional novel based on his and his men's service during the war, available thru Amazon.com.





## Those Faithful ARVN Allies



The following is an excerpt from the book, "A Viet Cong Memoir, an inside account of the Vietnam War and its aftermath," by Truong Nhu Tang, former Minister of Justice, Vintage Books.

"Although the Cambodian markets were favored for the security they afforded, the Vietnamese villages in the vicinity occasionally provided supplies unavailable elsewhere--especially after 1970. Up till then our usual means of transportation was bicycle or foot. But in the winter of 1969-1970 the whole country was inundated by an invasion of Japanese motorbikes. In one way or another, these bikes made their way out from the cities and into the hands of even the most remote country people, who would get their bikes from the local Saigon army forces--in our case the ARVN's 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Divisions. Eventually, our Finance Department was able to set up regular supply channels directly between these divisions and the Front, forgoing the peasant middlemen.

From that point on we had a regular supply, not just of Hondas, but of typewriters, radios, cigarettes, and a variety of other goods. Before long there was a thriving business between senior officers of these ARVN divisions and the Front in weapons and ammunition as well. Among the most popular items were grenades and Claymore antipersonnel mines. More than a few American soldiers were killed with these mines bought from their ARVN comrades. American walkie-talkies were in high demand too; though our troops were used to the Chinese AK47 rifles and never developed much of a taste for the American M-16."

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## ARVN 5<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Commander  
General Hieu

General Hieu's first efforts were to strengthen the combat capability of the 5th Division. To achieve this goal, according to Colonel John Hayes, Senior Advisor of ARVN 5th Division, General Hieu made use to the fullest *the attack role of the 1st Armored Regiment* and gave orders to units of the division to switch from *defensive to attack posture*. By initiating a program of *carrying the war to the enemy*, in a year, the 5th Division bulldozed VC strongholds located in Binh Duong, Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces (Combat Zones D, C, Ho Bo, Iron Triangle...) forcing the VC to move its Southern Central Command headquarters to the neighboring Cambodia.



Officers of the ARVN 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

Colonel Nguyen Khuyen, Director of III Corps Military Security Bureau, noted:

When General Tri assumed the Command of III Corps, coincidentally all three divisional commanders of III Corps were graduated of 3rd Class of Dalat Military Academy: Major General Nguyen Xuan Thinh held the command of 25th Division, Major General Hieu, 5th Division and Major General Lam Quang Tho, 18th Division. Among these three Commanders, General Tri seemed to favor General Hieu the most because General Hieu used to be his Chief Of Staff at I Corps and II Corps in 1963

Nguyen Van Tin

Soruce: <http://www.generallhieu.com/tulenhds5-2.htm>





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team  
FOB Shank, Afghanistan 09634



Sky Soldiers, Families & Friends,

On this day we recognize past, present and future Sky Soldiers – men and women who have proudly served in uniform and delivered for the United States of America each and every time they've been looked to. Their accomplishments are praiseworthy, their sacrifices immeasurable and with this memorial we honor all Sky Soldiers.

Our bond, as Sky Soldiers is being part of a proud and decidedly tough group of professional warriors who throughout our history have shown resolve and commitment to every mission. To our veterans, I salute you and recognize the tremendous commitments and sacrifices you have made. You have paved the way, set the standards of excellence and gave all that you had. You've lost comrades, served in distant locations, apart from your loved ones, given so much of yourselves that I write this letter humbled, glad for this opportunity to help announce the unveiling of this fine memorial and assert to all of our membership that this is your tribute – this pays homage to your service and will help say to any and all visitors that those who served shall forever be remembered. Yours is a lasting legacy now made tangible thanks to this fine memorial. To some this memorial will be a tribute, to others a gathering place when veterans reassemble far from the fields of combat, and still to others, sadly - a final point of remembrance for a lost buddy. Whichever of these things the memorial will represent, it honors the proud paratroopers for which it is named.

Sky Soldiers are paratroopers, first and foremost. The men and women who have worn this patch, represent the epitome of Soldierly virtues that the Army has to offer. Our vision and mission statements are clear about the high standards that are expected from our Sky Soldiers on day one. And they have never let us down. It is the Airborne way.

For any trooper who has worn the Sky Soldier patch, there really is no substitute for the kind of pride that is yours to claim – those who have served in this brigade or been members of our extended Army Families and friends, who have supported their Sky Soldiers over the last 50+ years.

On the occasion of this ceremony, the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team is serving once again in Afghanistan, in support of OEF-X. The baton passes from generation to generation. Times change, but the high standards and traditions of fine units do not waiver. When our nation calls, "The Herd" is ready.

Intact today are the legacies forged by the Sky Soldiers, who have leapt from aircraft, grabbed their rifles and delivered on their commitments to this nation and all it stands for. I know the greatness of the Sky Soldiers, and it's found in their hearts and souls; they are warriors who are battle-tested professionals, hard-working, dedicated troopers – those who have served in peace or war, those who have made history and those whose lives have made a difference. This memorial is yours. It pays homage to you, your comrades, our Fallen, and our future paratroopers.

Sky Soldiers!

Colonel Jim Johnson  
Bayonet-6



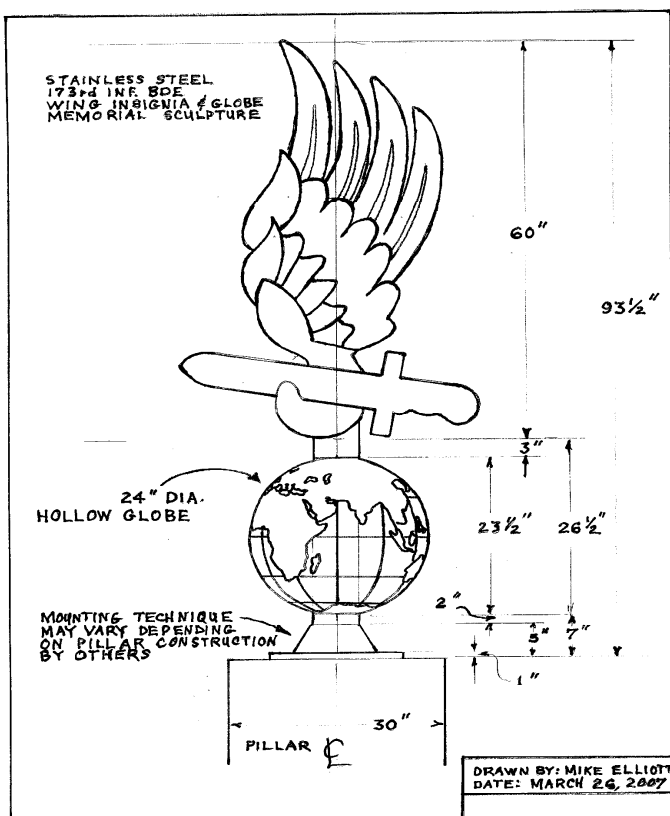
# CREATION OF THE 173d MEMORIAL

By Mike Elliott  
April 28, 2010

A little over three years ago a committee of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association came to Columbus, Georgia scouting a city to build a national memorial. They were also checking out potential companies to work with in bringing it to fruition. I was fortunate enough to have a meeting with them at the Columbus Chamber of Commerce where we discussed various concepts for the memorial. Association member Don Dali was designated the Director of Design and Construction.

Through ongoing discussions and correspondence with Don, it was agreed that I would make small plastic models of three versions of the sculpture. I made the models and sent them to Don. The models were displayed at a big associational meeting where it was decided which version they wanted. At some point during that period the group formed a not-for-profit foundation, the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, to do their fundraising.

During the latter part of 2007 Don Dali and I discussed specifications for the sculpture and terms of an agreement. The work was authorized in mid January, 2008. During the first two months I procured materials and fabricated tools, dollies, and jigs that I would need.



Mike Elliott

The fabrication of the sculpture started in early March. All materials are high quality stainless steel. I made the globe first. A full sized drawing of the globe, base and center post was accurately etched on a sheet of flat metal. All dimensions for the longitude and latitude bars were taken from that drawing. The solid  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch square bar stock was first rolled to the required twenty-four inch diameter and then cut to fit the dimensions on the drawing.



The pieces were fitted and welded around the post to form the grid for the globe.

The continents were then drawn onto 14 gauge stainless steel with a fine point sharpie pen and cut out with various tools including a Beverly shear, drills bits, and a hand held grinder. I had made a large convex dolly to use in shaping the continents with a rubber mallet. Each continent is made with one piece of metal. I did have to cut and weld two notches at the top of Eurasia to keep it from puckering. The work went well and I put a randomly sanded finish on the continents because I didn't want the globe to be brighter than the wing and bayonet.

(continued....)





The bayonet was cut and formed by hand. The blade is made of two pieces of metal. The grip is four pieces and the hilt is six little pieces. Each feather was cut by hand with the Beverly shear then welded and finished prior to welding it to the internal frame. The welds were ground and the finish reapplied before the next feather was made and attached.

The wing and Bayonet is a separate piece with a strong frame inside. It has a smaller pipe at the bottom that fits inside the post of the globe. All pieces of the wing and bayonet were scaled up from the original plastic model.



I worked from the bottom up on the whole project with the final pieces being the four vertical feathers at the top. The project was finished in early October, 2008. It was crated and stored until it was installed on the center column of the memorial on Tuesday, April 20, 2010. It was a challenging but fulfilling project.



I have wondered which part was the most challenging and have decided that the part that I was working on at the time was the most challenging. After a portion was completed it didn't seem like it was as much of a challenge as that which lay ahead.



I am both honored and humbled to have been allowed to actively participate in creating this memorial.

**Mike Elliott**

**Thanks to Mike Elliott for providing background information on the creation and construction of the memorial and the photographs depicting his work from concept, commencement of the project, to finish, presented here. Job well done Mike!**







Mike with his completed historic work.







# 173d Memorial Dedication ~ Fort Benning, GA

June 1, 2010

~ It Was a Great and Sad Day to be a Sky Soldier...and to Remember ~



**Young, old and older alike were in attendance.**

If you were unfortunate enough to miss attending the dedication at Benning last month, well, you missed something special. Until you have the opportunity to personally visit the memorial, here's a brief recap of the event along with photos provided by some of the Sky Soldiers and guests in attendance.

The morning began like any June jump school day many of us remember at Benning; hot and humid, with more than a few of us mentioning how pleased we were to not be doing PE, running in cadence step, jumping the towers or any other vigorous activity other than what we were doing....sipping cool water while sitting in shaded bleachers waiting for the program to unfold in front of us

-- yet while the body was protesting our minds were ready to join the next class. It was a great day to be a Sky Soldier, and to remember.

Ken Smith had earlier sent a note saying there would be about 1500 people in attendance; 173d vets and active duty personnel and their family members and friends -- a number which sounded suspicious for some reason. But, damn, if he wasn't right; we didn't count everyone there but the bleachers were full and overflowing, and no one should ever again question the Colonel's math.

*(continued....)*







### Sky Soldiers, Kiwi's and Aussies at Benning.

**F**or many of us (all of us?), emotions ran high that morning. A number of moving speeches by Vietnam vets, active duty soldiers and an Aussie and Kiwi, coupled with traditional army and U.S. patriotic musical performances left few of us with dry eyes.

It seems there was a flare of controversy regarding this memorial some time ago by a few in our ranks, the details which are unclear today. Yet after attending this event, seeing and touching the memorial, talking without words to the names of our buddies on that memorial, it's hoped any such controversy, like old soldiers, will simply fade away.



It is a fine memorial, a beautiful memorial in a peaceful setting and no better place to keep the memory alive of those kids we used to know.



### Some stayed late. Some are staying forever.

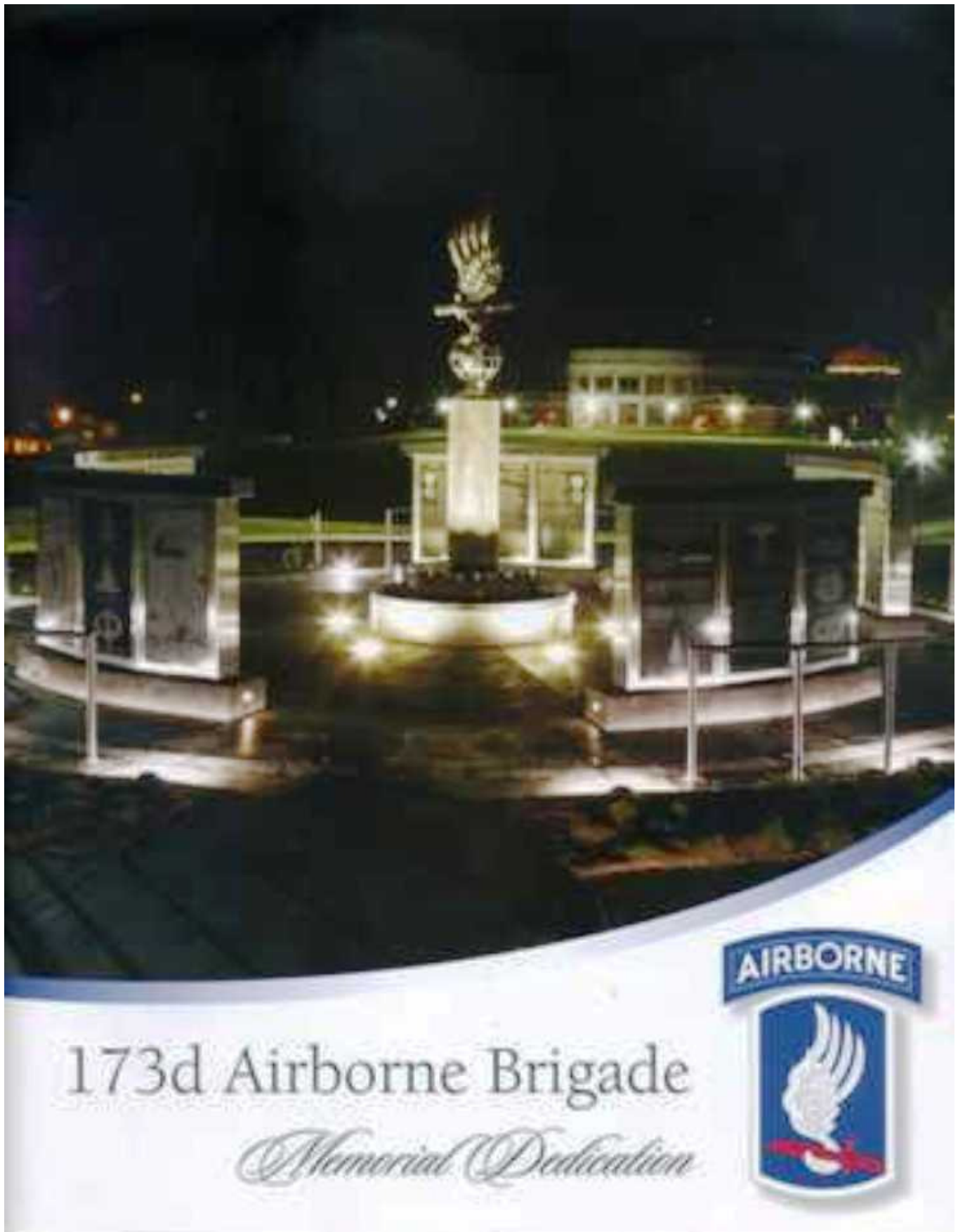
We had not forgotten the reason for us being there that morning. It was a sad day to be a Sky Soldier, and to remember.

Choppers flew overhead. It was a great and sad day to be a Sky Soldier, and to remember.

**Smitty Out**







Memorial Dedication Program cover.



## Some Photos from the Memorial Dedication at Fort Benning, GA



Sky Soldiers and guests at 173d Memorial dedication on June 1, 2010 at Fort Benning, GA. Photo by Wayne Hoitt, 2/503d



C/2/503d troopers in the Georgia woods, L-R: Sgt. Jim Bernarski, aka Ski; Sgt. Ernest Asbury, aka Nasty; MSG. Oscar Cruz, aka Top; Capt. Gary Prisk, aka Cap; Gen. Joe Jellison, aka Captain Joe; PFC Tommy Thompson, aka Drips.



Dedication

(continued....)





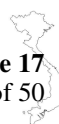
## 173d Memorial Dedication







Reunion Program cover.





# 173d Airborne Reunion ~ North Myrtle Beach, SC

June 2 ~ 6, 2010

~ A Reunion Like No Other ~



The Avista Resort in North Myrtle Beach, SC,  
a perfect venue for paratroopers to play.  
I think there was an "A" on there until the 173d arrived.

Now I've attended a number of 173d reunions over the years, the first a fantastic reunion in Rochester, MN about ten years ago -- everyone of us will never forget our first reunion; kinda like our first firefight, our first jump, or first love, something we'll always remember. Annual brigade reunions in Daytona, Ft. Worth, and at Bragg, and the two 2/503d reunions we put on here in Cocoa Beach, FL which I attended, all equally served the good purpose of providing exciting venues where brotherhood was enjoyed, where many buddies found buddies they hadn't seen in decades -- it doesn't get much better than that. This year's reunion in North Myrtle Beach was no different in that sense.

Yet, of the few reunions in which I participated, there was something demonstrably different about the event held last month in South Carolina. And kudos go out to the Sky Soldiers and their Sky Soldierettes of Chapter 30; and to reunion committee members Jesse Beacham, Ashley Bowers, Wayne Bowers, Art Coogler, Jim "Top" Dresser, Eddie Hair, Tom Hanson, Joe Marquez, Ramona Marquez, Bill Nicholls, Judy Nicholls, Hal Nobles and Robert Smith for a job well done...for a fantastic job!

The June reunion combined a number of special elements which, in my view, set it apart from all other reunions to date, at least all other reunions I've attended. This year's program offered the brotherhood we all find so important, plus the normal social activities we enjoy at these affairs. There were ample opportunities to honor our fallen as we always do, generally in small groups around a table or across a bar top, yet irrespective of the locale, never once forgetting.



In a word: *Airborne!*

As paratroopers we felt pride and even a longing as those young troopers with the Army Golden Knights touched down on the DZ on the beach to the cries and applause of soldiers and hundreds of civilians. We enjoyed listening to and watching the awards presented that day to deserving souls for their good work of one kind or another, and as they gave special recognition to the WWII veterans in attendance.

Unfortunately, there was one, single distraction by a man who inappropriately used this otherwise patriotic event to speak out against the president of our country, his bride, and the "Dinks" and "Gooks" of years gone by. Following his remarks a number of people, local civilians, walked away shaking their heads; I wanted to reach out to them, to tell them he is neither speaking for the Association nor me, yet I did not. I fear their views of the 173d were forever tarnished that day, and that is sad, indeed, and the only unfortunate outbreak at an otherwise perfect reunion.

(continued....)





So, what, in my view, set this reunion apart from all those preceding it? It well could have been the PTSD awareness sessions led by Dr. Scott Fairchild and Iraqi War Veteran Crystal Turman, two experts on the illness who devote much of their waking hours to helping vets from all wars past and present, and their spouses and partners, to better understand and deal with that devil. Speaking with the Doc upon return to Florida he mentioned upwards of 30 Sky Soldiers are now, finally, seeking the help and treatment they so dearly need and deserve and have earned. That alone, at any other reunion, would have been the centerpiece exceptional.

Watching the Golden Knights do their thang on the beach, the outdoor entertainment, the golf tournament, the neat 173d stuff offered by the vendors, the day trip to Charleston, the non-stop daily brotherhood, all made the week in North Myrtle Beach memorable. But the showcase at this event, the historical happening which set this reunion apart, was even more special.



**LTC Hal Nobles, 3/503d  
Reunion Committee Chairman**

Thanks to the forward thinking of the entire reunion organizing committee, the financial support of over 180 Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d, this year's reunion achieved something which had gone unachieved for well over 40 years.....fellow paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade came together formally with their paratrooper brothers of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team of World War II -- the original troopers of "The Rock."

With the exception of a few more earned wrinkles than have many of us, not a great deal more wrinkles than have many of us, these guys were and are hardly different than us. Like us,



**Charley Hylton ready to burst out in song. He does a mean Texas Two-Step too.**

In listening to and speaking with these men of the Greatest Generation, and by the way, they are all of that and more, it was if we were sitting for

the first time with long, lost buddies. They spoke their language which was also ours...a language only war vets understand. And many of us "young guys" (they call us young guys -- ya gotta love 'em!) agreed, it was unfortunate these veterans of different times and different wars took so long to finally join hands in brotherhood.

This bonding, this paratrooper thing we first learned about during jump school at Benning so many years before, was never more apparent than on two separate events I witnessed. The first occurred on the evening of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, while a group of us met with WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> troopers Chuck Breit, Paul Hinds and Charley Hylton and their wives in the Tree Top Lounge at the Avista Resort -- damn, they drink a lot of Scotch! An aside: Upon return home my wife saw the Amex bill and complained I spent too much money on drinks for my Sky Soldier buddies. I told her, *"Hell no! My guys drink cheap beer. It was those damn 503<sup>rd</sup> guys and their Scotch!!"* Greatest Generation my ass!

So there we were, drinking and toasting and laughing and lying and drinking and, etc., when, to keep a promise to a buddy, the late Bravo Bull John Nix, we broke out in a loud if off-key rendition of 'Blood on the Risers.' It was later pointed out Chuck Breit may have been the only trooper there not reading the lyrics! There's something special about singing that song with fellow paratroopers...but, you know what I mean.



**Chuck Breit in Tree Top Lounge teaching lyrics to "Blood on the Risers" to 1<sup>st</sup> Bat's Craig Ford.**

(continued....)





**The 503<sup>rd</sup> PRCT troopers at “Operation Corregidor.”  
L-R: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charley Hylton,  
Paul Hinds & John Cleland.**

The second memorable happening happened during “Operation Corregidor,” when the five 503<sup>rd</sup> vets spoke with us and shared some of their experiences during the war in the Pacific. Moderated by Maj. Tony Geishauser, Cowboys ‘65/’66, each guest recounted some of his memories from WWII -- and to the well over 100 people in attendance it was if we were watching a t.v. documentary on the Military Channel, but live! And then, Paul Hinds spoke.



**You could here a pin drop during Chet’s account of combat on Corregidor and throughout the Pacific theatre.**

Now, Paul is an unassuming even quiet sort of man. Yet, when he told the story of how he changed the records of his buddies who were KIA to indicate they had purchased the \$10,000. life insurance policy from the army, when in fact they had not, every trooper in the room stood and gave him a resounding applause!

The connection between the the WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> guys and the 173d troopers in attendance was cemented for all time at that moment -- and Paul will likely go down in history as the first ever WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> paratrooper to receive a standing ovation at a 173d Airborne reunion

for his now famous  
*“Paul Hinds’ Great Life  
Insurance Switch  
Speech!”*



**That sneaky insurance switcher, Paul.**

When the idea was first conceived to invite WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> troopers to the reunion, Cowboy Tony Geishauser emphatically stated, *“If you do this, do it with class.”* It seems the reunion organizing committee took to heart Tony’s edict. This was most evident during the closing banquet, when all our guests were called on stage and honored by everyone there. I even got to kiss Margee Linton, twice, the widow of 503<sup>rd</sup> trooper Maurice “Sleepy” Linton. Hell, it don’t get much better than that.

### Smitty Out

**Fortunately, the kiss photo could not be found, plus, Sleepy could be watching, and I don’t want to tangle with that dude!**



**The late Maurice “Sleepy” Linton, 503<sup>rd</sup> paratrooper extraordinaire.**





## Some Reunion Photos from North Myrtle Beach, SC



SC Chapter 30 and the Association of the 173d Airborne Brigade honor our guests at the closing banquet.





## A Few More Reunion Pics



L-R: Mike McMillan 4/503d, Chuck Breit 503<sup>rd</sup> PRCT,  
Mike Sturges 2/503d, Jerry Wiles 2/503d



Thanks to Jean O'Neil, Wambi Cook, Wayne Bowers,  
Jim & Barb Dresser and many others for sharing  
their photos.

# BLESS 'EM ALL

## ~ No Smoking ~

Francis X. O'Neill, Jr.



That first night on Corregidor I spent in the vicinity of the water towers . Stan Crawford, later killed at the graveyard on the end of island, and I shared a foxhole.

Lt. Leathers, the 3rd platoon leader, passed the word **"NO SMOKING."** About 11:00 p.m. Stan asked me if I wanted a cigarette. Together we got down as far as we could in the hole, cuped our hands and lit up.

Other fellows followed our lead. There was a metal pole about 5 ft in back of us. All of a sudden all hell broke loose. Bullets kept hitting the pole with a ringing effect. No one was sure where the firing was coming from, so we just fired in front of us as the rest of the fellows in our platoon did.

We suffered no casualties although we heard some calls in Japanese.

After about ten minutes the firing stopped.

Lt. Leathers came down to each hole and wanted to know who started the firing and who was smoking.

Stan, in his dry humour voice, said immediately that we did since he smelled cigarette smoke in front of us.

***"Those damm Japs were smoking, so I opened up and so did the rest of the line. Those bastards could smoke and we couldn't. That made me mad."***

Leathers, a tall, well-built man from California, and a capable officer, had all to do to keep his temper.

Of course I supported Stan's story. We both lost a stripe.

When he asked Leathers why, he was told his story, although good, was not good enough; Leathers had smelled American cigarette smoke. Stan did not question the Lt's sense of smell.

Later Leathers put Stan in for the Silver Star, which Stan was awarded posthumously. Crawford was a courageous man with a dry sense of humor and a good friend. I still pray for him. I'm sure many strange things happened that first night. This was only one of them.

[From the 503<sup>rd</sup> Heritage Battalion web site]



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / July 2010 - Issue 17

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# CREEPY CRAWLIES

## ~ An Army on the Move ~

One night, lying in my hootch on the ground somewhere in the jungle, I heard this noise which sounded like a snake wiggling its way on the ground. Pitch dark. Very awake, I listened, and even though I had never heard the sound before, I recognized it was an army of termites on the move and my hootch was in the way. I moved. In the morning, I discovered some dry blood on my side and my canvas magazine pouches had been chewed on. Those little suckers didn't cotton to anything standing in their path. Remember how we used to poke holes in the termite mounds and watch them seal it again instantly from the inside? Even took cover one time behind one. Of course, the worse, more fearsome enemy were the ants!

**Jerry Hassler**  
**Recon, 2/503d, '66/'67**



**In 2005 a 2/503d trooper inspects a termite mound (or VC firing position?) in the "D" Zone.**

## ~ With a Spoon Full of Sugar ~

I guess my story, as most, took place on some hillside in Dak To. I woke up on an ambush to find blood running out of my mouth and down my neck. I gagged because of the blood and simultaneously swallowed what turned out to be a leech formally attached to my tongue. It must have burst creating the blood flow and freeing it to easily go down my throat. We just drove on; another day in paradise.

**Roger Dick**  
**C/2/503d, '67/'68**



**Evil little bastards!**

## ~ He Held His Cool ~

It was the squad's first night out away from the safety of base camp and I had the job of hauling the radio. Our leader that evening was Sergeant Mercer, a soldier's soldier. When we settled into our night position before dark we had a bite to eat and now we were ready for action if it should come our way. It was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. While Sergeant Mercer took the first watch I tried to doze off, which wasn't easy with all the new sounds coming from the jungle surrounding us. While not in a deep sleep (I'm not sure there was such a thing when your in combat), I could feel something crawling up my leg. As I slowly became awake and more aware of something making it's way up my body I was so tense I didn't move a muscle. When it came close to my face, I swept it off my shoulder, jumped up and found myself looking down the barrel of an M-16. I scared the crap out of Sergeant Mercer, and if it was anyone else I probably wouldn't be around to write this but he held his cool, calmed me down and he then proceeded to get himself a good night's sleep as I assured him I wouldn't be going back to sleep. I never saw what was crawling on me but later on having numerous things crawling over me I came to the conclusion it had to be a scorpion.

**Steve Haber**  
**C/2/503d, '65/'66**



## ~ In the Dumps ~

May 5, 1965, our first day in Vietnam, we were walking down the road and took a break. I went into the jungle to take a crap and my ass was covered with fire ants. It was a quick initiation into them and I never had a problem after that because I paid better attention to whatever log I might be sitting over. And in our squad tent one day I dumped out my boot in the morning like we were told to do and out popped a scorpion, which someone with boots on immediately stomped to death. And in the same tent a green snake once came up through the wooden floorboards. I don't remember what happened to it, but I think it suffered the same fate as the scorpion. Leeches, of course, were a regular problem in the damp jungle. Not being a smoker I didn't have a cigarette to burn them off, but someone always was around with one. Or you'd squirt mosquito repellent on them.

**Larry Paladino**  
**B/2/503d, '65/'66**

*(continued....)*



## ~ No Good Deed Goes Unpunished ~

I have several of these stories but will only share one rat story. The rats in the Delta were sometimes as big as cats. There was one giant that inhabited the Ranger Advisor Team House in Ben Tre. At night we'd sleep with the battalion, but during the afternoon when the Rangers took a siesta, we'd nap in the team house. The senior NCO had gotten a rat trap which looked big enough to catch a coyote. While cutting ZZZ's, I came awake to a commotion that was going on in the open rafters of the house. This giant rat had one paw in the trap and was pissed and dragging this 1" x 4" x 8" trap around which limited his mobility. My resourceful RTO drew his trusty .38 Special (a gift from the Detroit Chief of Police) and drilled that sucker. The good news was a kill shot. The bad news was a major hole in the tin roof. No good deed goes unpunished.



**Vietnamese rats.....yummy.  
And the tails are so chewy.**

**Roy Lombardo  
CO, B/2/503d, '65**

## ~ His Special Purpose ~

It was late at night and we were all asleep tucked safely under our mosquito nets in our hooch along the HHC perimeter at Camp Zinn. Ours was the end hooch, a musty, old army tent with open sides, possibly WWII vintage, closest to the EM mess hall. While no doubt dreaming of milk shakes and shaking girls the man next to my cot awoke screaming. His screams not only woke everyone of us to rapid heart beatings, but they were so loud and terrifying we knew we were under attack. Everyone grabbed his weapon expecting bad guys with bayonets at the ready would soon be picking their way down the aisle of the tent. Shaking our heads and eyes awake and finding no enemy in sight, we turned our attention to our hapless and nameless buddy, groaning and holding his crotch, to learn a rat had been dining on his Johnson! The good news is, both he and his special purpose survived the ordeal, as the rest of us returned to our cots giving extra attention to tucking in the mosquito nets while holding our own.

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

## ~ Instant Ulcer? ~

My story is relatively tame. We were humping through the boonies as usual, I was an RTO. The side of the hill was pretty steep so was paying more attention to my footing than to the undergrowth. Happened to walk under a nest of those leaf cutter ants that make their nest by the warrior ants, the ones with the huge pincers, holding the edges of the leaves together into a ball. Well the top of my helmet brushed the thing and a crew of ants came spilling out on the back of my neck. I took off at a dead run down hill, tripped and ended up upside down against a tree with the radio still strapped to my back and my legs flailing in the air. It's a wonder that I didn't break my neck. Oh well, all in a day's work. I never had a leech. Guess they didn't like me. The closest I came was when I went on a water patrol and was filling a canteen. As the water poured in I saw this little black worm like creature swimming toward the canteen. I've since wondered what it would do if I hadn't noticed it and had swallowed the thing. Instant ulcer? (Joe: Talk to Roger).



**Joe Marquez  
C/1/503d/'69, N/75<sup>th</sup>/Juliet/'70, A/2/503d/'70,  
Chaplain: SC Chap. 30 & 173d Association**

## ~ Stories of the Creepy Crawly Kind ~

I have a few stories for you. 1st one was while we were still in the rubber tree orchard at Bien Hoa during Raymond Burr's visit. We were up early staging for an assault on Zone C. Was talking to Garcia and about that time one of those large black scorpions stung the crap out of me on the left elbow. Man did it swell up. Along comes Gerald Levy (KIA, Operation Marauder) by to adminster his fun-time medical magic. Needless to say I didn't make the air lift. This was early in June 65.

*(continued....)*



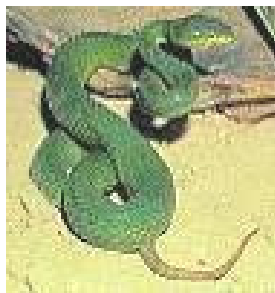
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Also while we were in the rubber tree orchard we would tie the end of our 2 man pup tent between 2 rubber trees. Seemed like every other day we would have ant wars. Red ants lived in the trees, Black ants lived on the ground. You could sit and watch the black ants go up and they would actually cover one side of the tree; half hour later they would come down holding a red ant. A couple of days later it would be the reverse of the order of the previous attack.

Once we ended up moving into the field in front of the rubber tree orchard, we moved into our 12 man squad tents. While sleeping on my cot under a mosquito net I awoke to see a large rat that I thought was on the outside top of my netting. So being the dumb ass that I was, I reached up to smack it off with standard issued 1911a. Well it was on the *inside* of my netting and it landed on my chest, ran under my light-weight poncho liner and as I kicked it the shit bit the hell out of my left ankle. Of course I had to let Levy know what happened and the fun he got out of that was not fun for me. I had to take rabies shots in a 1/2 inch area on either side of my belly button. Of course this had to be everyday as close to the same time as possible. I made it 4 days then told Levy to take the other 10 shots and put them were the sun don't shine too often.

While I was in 3rd Med Evac after being hit in the neck, I woke up the 2nd day to see Sgt. Rose in the bunk beside me. Asked him what had happened to him. I laughed so hard I thought I would break my stitches open. He told me he had reached down to pick up a



**Green Viper.....Vietnam**  
snake only it was faster than he was. Go figure.

Once we had set-up the 2/503 into square and built the berm around the perimeter, they then started setting up nite watches on the peremiter. Of course we had it mined for 75 feet and then concertine wire set up also, except for the roads coming into the 4 access points. Well, one Marvin Harper, Sugarman and myself had guard duty on the C Company's side. It was probably about 1am and Sugarman was up top on the berm. Harper and I were having coffee, when all of a sudden we heard this loud pop, like someone had slapped the shit out of someone. Then down rolls Sugarman; up on top of the berm there was this monkey/chimp going into to his strutting stuff. By the time Harper or I could react, off he went. We laughed so damn hard Sugarman was furious but we just couldn't stop. We never could figure how the hell that monkey made it into and out of that mine field. AIRBORNE!

**Jim Starrett**  
**C/2/503d, '65/'66**

## ~ Air Borne Shit ~

This "War Story" does not contain any creepy crawlies (although that pile of shit may very well have had some interesting inhabitants). Nor was it while I was with the Herd. It happened a year earlier while I was an Adviser to a Vietnamese Infantry Battalion. However, it is a "War Story" and does have the possibility of a number of creepy crawlies flying through the air and landing on my NCO and I. If it works, print it:

On my first tour, every morning, my NCO and I would drive into the 5<sup>th</sup> Railway Security Battalion's compound. As we drove in, we would observe the Vietnamese GIs, their families and those who lived along the railway hunkered on the railway tracks. Those French narrow gage tracks were just the right height to hunker down and take a shit without your ass touching the ground. And that's what they did each day of their morning constitutional.

Later in the day, a group of people went down the rails and collected all the shit for a dung pile across from the main entrance to the battalion's compound. As time passed by, that pile was loaded on carts and taken out to the rice paddies as fertilizer.



Now this ain't no bullshit.

**Caught ya!**

On the first night after Tet of '68, my NCO and I were lying on the ground at the main entrance to the compound waiting to see what the NVA Battalion that had been sent into Nha Trang was going to do. We had sporadic gunfire back and forth throughout the day but neither had attacked the other. During the night, we fired at one another. It went on that way until the NVA thought they should make life uncomfortable by mortaring our position. Eventually, a mortar round came into our area. It landed right in the center of that pile of shit. The shit went up into the air and came down – plop, plop, plop – throughout the area. It landed – plop, plop, plop – on each one of us in our positions on the ground. We smelled like shit for the rest of the night. AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!

**Bob "Ragman" Getz**  
**2/503d Task Force Commander, '69**

(continued....)



## ~ Fok Yu Lizard ~

Since arriving in Alpha's second platoon in February 1967, I had my share of periodic night ambushes, obligatory clearing patrols, and what seemed like daily OP detail. Why I didn't catch my first D Zone OP until late March, I attribute to pure luck. Until then, all the aforementioned were in concert with seasoned vets. On this particular night, I was paired with fellow FNG fresh out of the initial Jungle School class. I had no second thoughts about my night partner's abilities. One week of structured jungle training seemed satisfactory in my horribly screwed mind.

He never questioned me when I told him he'd be responsible for 90% of this duty that night....foolish boy! We settled in for what I expected to be a peaceful night's respite. I began my first (and only hour) shift with uneventful "sit reps."



**Maj. Watson, HHC/2/503d, '67**  
shift with uneventful "sit reps."

Just before the cherry was to take over, I heard what I later described as a "bold ass" gook sing-song jeer; *"Fuck youuuu! Fuck youuuu! Fuck youuuu!"* he taunted. Violating radio protocol, I asked specifically for the CO by name to inform him personally that *"Charley was too damn close for comfort and someone needed to get to our position ASAP before we're overrun."* It only took a second or two before we heard the entire perimeter erupt in raucous, uncontrollable laughter. The 'Fuk Yu Lizard' had struck again!

I pulled the entire OP that night without so much as a blink. I never again slept on OP, LP, or any other P. Lesson learned.

**Wambi Cook**  
**A/2/503d, '67/'68**

## ~ A Bright LT? ~

Keep in mind now that I didn't get to the Nam until 1970, so I'm not as old as you guys. Anyway, we worked out of LZ English but hardly ever saw the place. Once in a great while just to keep us from going looney I guess, they would pull us out of the field for a few days of rest but this particular 4th of July we were back at English pulling berm guard. It was already dark and everyone was at their assigned bunkers for the night and here came a 3/4 ton. The LT was looking for a couple of volunteers from each bunker to go a couple of miles out

of the LZ. It seems some helicopter guys were having fun right a dusk and clipped a plam tree and crashed. We were to secure a perimeter around it for the night and were vehemently promised to be choppered back in the next day after the downed bird was picked up. I went. They choppered us out and we set-up the perimeter. Now about this Lieutenant. He was a very scrawny, excitable kind of guy, so bad I think, that he was kept in the rear. He found a spot on a nice dry paddy dike and all was well until his leadership abilities took over and he stood up in the dark and announced in a loud voice *"Men, this is the Lieutenant, and if you need me I will be right here."* At that point he turned on a flashlight for all the world to see. The guy next too him whispered, *"Turn out that light and get down."* He did and about 15 minutes later we all hear slapping and thumping coming from his location. Then the flashlight came on again and the same guy told the LT to put out that light you dumb s.o.b....rhe Lieutenant said in a rather loud voice that he was being bitten by ants. At which the guy replied be quiet or I'm moving somewhere else, and this was the LT's RTO talking. Like I said, it was on the fourth and if you think fireworks are pretty here in the states, you should see all the real flares and things like that going off over a large LZ. We did luck out on that one though because as I understand it people also started celebrating with some CS. Glad I missed that part. The whole time this was going on, and all night long, I kept wondering where is the helicopter crew? Shouldn't they be out here helping US guard their downed bird too? But it gets better; the helicopter ride we were promised to take us back....can you believe we were lied to and had to hump back in? No step for a stepper though....by the way, I know I don't use capital letters and all, but I am retired now and don't have to go by all the rules anymore.

**Bud Sourjohn**  
**A/2/503d, '70**

[damn, bud, it took me 1/2 hour to capitalize all those letters! cut me some slack man! hee hee ed]



**"LT! Turn that goddamn flashlight off!!!"**



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## VA MAKES FILING CLAIMS EASIER AND FASTER FOR VETERANS

### **Simpler forms and new program reduce paperwork and speed process**

WASHINGTON – As part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to break the back of the backlog, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reducing the paperwork and expediting the process for Veterans seeking compensation for disabilities related to their military service.

*“These reductions in paperwork, along with other improvements to simplify and speed the claims process, symbolize changes underway to make VA more responsive to Veterans and their families,”*  
said Secretary Shinseki.

VA has shortened application forms to reduce paperwork for Veterans. The new forms, which are being made available on VA's Web site include:

A shortened **VA Form 21-526** for Veterans applying for the first-time to VA for disability compensation or pension benefits. This form has been cut in half – from 23 to 10 pages. It is immediately available to Veterans via Web download, and will be available through VA's online claim-filing process later this summer.

**VA Form 21-526b** for Veterans seeking increased benefits for conditions already determined by VA to be service-connected. This new form more clearly describes the information needed to support claims for increased benefits.

In order to make the claims process faster, VA has also introduced two new forms for Veterans participating in the Department's new fully developed claim (FDC) program, which is one of the fastest means to receive a claims decision.

Gathering the information and evidence needed to support a Veteran's disability claim often takes the largest portion of the processing time. If VA receives all of the available evidence when the claim is submitted, the remaining steps in the claims-decision process can be expedited without compromising quality.

To participate in the FDC program, Veterans should complete and submit an FDC Certification and **VA Form 21-526EZ**, “Fully Developed Claim (Compensation),” for a compensation claim, or a **VA Form 21-527EZ**, “Fully Developed Claim (Pension).”

The forms were designed specifically for the FDC program. These six-page application forms include notification to applicants of all information and evidence necessary to “fully develop” and substantiate their claims. With this notification, Veterans and their

representatives can “fully develop” their claims before submission to VA for processing.

Along with the application and certification, Veterans must also submit all relevant and pertinent evidence to “fully develop” their claims. A claim submitted as “fully developed” may still require some additional evidence to be obtained by VA, to include certain federal records and a VA medical examination.

[Thanks to 173d Ranger Ron Thomas for sending in this report]

## THE STATUE

This statue currently stands outside the Iraqi Palace, now home to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. It will eventually be shipped home and put in the Memorial Museum at Fort Hood, TX.

The statue was created by an Iraqi artist named Kalat, who for years was forced by Saddam Hussein to make the many hundreds of bronze busts of Saddam which dotted Baghdad.

Kalat was so grateful for the American's liberation of his country, he melted 3 of the heads of the fallen Saddam and made the statue as a memorial to American soldiers and their fallen warriors.

Kalat worked on this memorial night and day for several months.

To the left of the kneeling soldier is a small Iraqi girl giving the soldier comfort as he mourns the loss of his comrades-in-arms.



Sent in by Harry Cleland, B/2/503d.



## ~ CORRECTION ~

In the June issue of our newsletter on the top of Page 11 an incorrect photo appeared in connection with our final salute to the late Bravo Bull, **John Wills**. My deepest apologies to his family and buddies. The following photo of John should have appeared. Ed



Sky Soldier John Wills  
Vietnam

## ~ MORE INCOMING!! ~

**Norman Samples** served with Charlie Company in Vietnam 1969-1971. He's looking for his friend, **Victor Rosales**, same years. If you have any information please contact Norman at: [grocker@peoplepc.com](mailto:grocker@peoplepc.com)

## Military's Mental Health Treatment Leader Steps Down

By **Katie Drummond**  
June 24, 2010

The director of the military's top center for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries is resigning, after ongoing criticism of the facility's inability to cope with the thousands of troops suffering from the "signature wounds" of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Brig. Gen. Loree Sutton announced the decision to staffers at the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) on Monday, *ProPublica* is reporting. The center is at the crux of the military's massive efforts in bolstering both psychological and brain injury-related diagnostics, treatment, prevention and research. Sutton was instrumental in creating the DCoE in 2007, and has held The top job ever since.



**BG Loree Sutton**

The timing of her departure, which has yet to be publicly announced, is another indication of the armed forces' messy, mismanaged mental health program. Even as the Defense Department unveils a 72,000 square-foot facility dedicated to mental health issues, some legislators are wondering why the military still can't get a grip on ailing troops.

"This is a total failure," Rep. Bill Pascrell, co-chairman of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, said last week. "We're failing to find TBI and post-traumatic stress disorder in an era when the military is trying to find and assist folks who need it." And, with the bulk of a 2007 influx of \$1.7 billion for mental health-care going to the DCoE, it makes sense that Sutton would shoulder the brunt of the responsibility.

Even worse for public perception were ongoing media reports, including those from the *Washington Post*, ABC and NPR/*ProPublica*, that exposed gaping holes in the military's abilities to spot traumatic brain injuries and PTSD, which are estimated to afflict one-third of returning troops.

Despite the bad press, the military has made progress in diagnosing and treating both conditions. In 2007, the Pentagon initiated pre and post deployment brain injury screenings, and a study in 2009 pinpointed cognitive rehabilitational therapy as an effective mode of treatment for TBIs.

(continued....)





But questions persist as to whether the screenings are good enough, and whether sick troops are even being seen for treatment.

Sutton, who'd been planning to retire next year, didn't respond to requests for comment. A representative told *ProPublica* that the move was "*part of a routine command rotation.*"

No matter the reason for Sutton's departure, it's increasingly clear that troops — whose suicide rate this year threatens to match war-zone fatalities — need help. But the research that'll lead to solutions isn't exactly cut-and-dry, and glossy facilities won't instantly unravel exactly how the injuries affect the brain, and how they're best treated. Much of that science is still in the lab, and probably years from completion. Sutton, no matter how hard she tried, was largely being asked to find answers without knowing the right questions. Toss in a center in its infancy and two ongoing wars, and the dilemma gets even messier.

Sadly for troops, though, Sutton seems have been one of the more committed leaders in the field. During her three years at DCoE, she's worked under four different brass filling the top spot of assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

And given that Sutton was with the DCoE from the start, and, in a farewell to staff, recalls "*scrambling to build our team, animate our vision, define our mission,*" her departure marks the loss of a leader dedicated to keeping troops healthy. The center's progress may have come up short, but Sutton's commitment is exactly what decades of struggling troops are going to need.

[Thanks to Dr. Scott Fairchild of 'Welcome Home Vets' for sending in this article].

## WELCOME HOME VETS

### - Our Mission -



We welcome our troops back home to Brevard County, Florida.

We honor and assist our military personnel from all wars, recognized conflicts, peacekeeping or humanitarian actions and peace time missions.

Welcome Home Vets, Inc. raises funds for the care and support of Brevard County veterans and their families.

All funds collected are used for the sole purpose of helping veterans "re-unite" with the civilian community.

Welcome Home Vets, Inc. connects vets with community services, financial assistance, job opportunities, medical and educational opportunities, and guiding our veterans to programs in the VA system.

**Please contact us:**

Phone: 321-253-8887

Email: [webmaster@whvets.org](mailto:webmaster@whvets.org)

Web: [webmaster@whvets.org](http://webmaster@whvets.org)

## FROM A COBBER

Here is a picture of the badge of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PRCT). It sits just outside a pub in Gordonvale, North Queensland. The 503rd trained in Gordonvale and are well remembered in that area. The pub was a Red Cross canteen during WWII.

I thought it may be of interest to the guys....it would be interesting to know if any trained Down Under.

**Ray Payne, 1RAR**

[raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au](mailto:raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au)



Floor entrance to pub in Gordonvale, Australia, 2010.

Thanks Ray! Yes, a number of our 503rd WWII buddies trained in Gordonvale before heading out to the Pacific islands. Ed

## BEER WAS INVOLVED.

At the 2010 reunion in North Myrtle Beach, SC these two Aussie bastards liquor-boarded me I tells' ya! And there's no truth to the rumor I removed my jockies and put them on top of Mike Sturges' head. Don't believe him. Ed



Mates Gordon Nielson, Smitty, Ned Kelly





# SAN DIEGO 173d AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION

~ Summer Gathering ~

August 19-21, 2010

Re-unite with Fellow Troopers

All Units 82<sup>nd</sup> ~ 101<sup>st</sup> ~ Special Forces ~ Aviation ~ Welcomed



The San Diego Chapter has put together a summer of enjoyment.

Hotel accommodations provided by Mission Valley Resorts.

Hospitality room with added outside accommodations.

Dinner, Soft drinks & Beer provided.

A banquet Dinner with great music, where else but San Diego!

Restaurant, Hotel Bar and Liquor Barn for purchases.

## San Diego's Sight seeing Tours!

We start our departure from our Mission Valley Resort Hotel, a 32 mile loop that will allow us to get on and off at any of the 10 key tour sites. Daily ticket at \$25.00.

For route view go to  
( [www.trolleytours.com](http://www.trolleytours.com) )

Also View our Homepage sight for links to:  
U.S.S Midway Aircraft Carrier Museum,  
San Diego Zoo, Night lamp quarters, Sea Port Village  
and many more locations. San Diego's Registration  
page provides more info.



USS Midway

You can also drop me a line and I will e-mail info to you. San Diego Home page:  
( [www.myspace.com/chapter28sd173rd](http://www.myspace.com/chapter28sd173rd) )  
Chairman Gil Reynoso Home (1-760-294-8741)  
Cell 1-760-500-1944 ( [g\\_reynoso\\_r@yahoo.com](mailto:g_reynoso_r@yahoo.com) )

## Directions:

**North county:** South on Hwy 5 to Hwy 8 E. ¼ Mile then exit Right on Hotel Circle. At exit immediately turn Left on to Hotel Circle South, hotel on Right side.

**South county:** South on Hwy 15 to Hwy 163 southbound toward Hwy 8. At junction stay right and take Hotel Circle exit. It will become Hotel Circle N. for ¼ mile to underpass, turn left to Hotel Circle S. Hotel on Left side.

**Arizona:** Entering at California border you will travel Hwy 8 westbound. Just after passing Hwy 163 about ¼ mile to Hotel Circle, exit Hotel Circle and turn immediately Right on to Hotel Circle N. about ¼ mile to under pass to Hotel Circle S. The hotel will be on your Left.

*Airborne....All The Way!*

**SEE YOU THERE!**



(continued....)







# SAN DIEGO 173d AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION

~ Summer Gathering ~

August 19 – 21, 2010

Registration Form

(copy form for additional names)



First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse/Guest First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to:

**SD173rd Airborne Association**

and mail to:

**Alex Quintanar, Treasurer**

**The SD 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Association**

**4597 Lyric Lane, San Diego, CA 92117**

Headquarters for the 2010 Summer Gathering is:

## MISSION VALLEY RESORTS

875 Hotel Circle South

San Diego, CA 92108

Please R.S.V.P. to the hotel by August 1, 2010 to get

\$79.00 +Tax room rate

Contact the Hotel at 1-619- 298-8281

(request 173<sup>d</sup> block)

Registration Fee per person for 2010 Summer  
Gathering R.S.V.P. By Aug 1, 2010 .....\$100.00

Registration fee covers the following 2 events:

1. Two Hospitality nights (Thursday & Friday) Food & Beverages provided.

2. Saturday night Dinner and Dance: Semi – Formal dress attire and Rock & Roll music by

**THE ORBITS!**

Circle meal choice for Saturday night's dinner:

Member: London broil or Chicken Breast

Chardonnay

Spouse /Guest: London broil or Chicken

Chardonnay

Daily participation options:

Each member or guest attending Saturday night  
dinner only, R.S.V.P. by Aug 1, 2010 ..... \$50.00

Each Member or guest attending Thursday hospitality  
only.....\$25.00

Each Member or guest attending Friday hospitality  
only.....\$25.00

Total amount for Registration.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

The following events are not included in Registration Fee:

- Site seeing tours, available tickets \$25 per person per day.
- Ten prime locations to see, get on and off all day.
- Airborne and military memorabilia will be offered for sale by invited vendors.

Free prize raffles Thursday, Friday and  
Saturday nights!!



For more information please contact:

Gilbert Reynoso

Phone: 1-760-294-8741, Cell 1-760-500-1944

E-mail: [g\\_reynoso\\_r@yahoo.com](mailto:g_reynoso_r@yahoo.com)

or visit

[www.myspace.com/chapter28sd173rd](http://www.myspace.com/chapter28sd173rd)

**AIRBORNE....ALL THE WAY!**



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## Some Good News From the Front

MG Jack Leide, former CO C/2/503d, '66/'67, reports his son, LTC John Leide, has returned home safe from his tour in Afghanistan. Now there's some good news.



*Welcome home trooper!*

## SEPTEMBER AGENT ORANGE HEARING SET

Tom Philpott, June 17, 2010

### September Agent Orange Hearing Set; Webb wants answers.

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki will get the Senate hearing he didn't want.

Sen. James Webb (D-Va.) says he will use a Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing -- rescheduled now for Sept. 23 -- to have Shinseki explain his decision to compensate Vietnam veterans, and many surviving spouses, for three more ailments Including heart disease.



**VA Secretary Eric Shinseki**

Shinseki announced last October that ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease and B-Cell leukemia will be added to the list of illnesses presumed caused by exposure to defoliants, including Agent Orange, used to clear jungle in combat areas during the war.

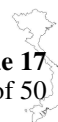
VA projects that the decision will cost \$13.4 billion in 2010 alone as it will qualify a few hundred thousand more veterans for service-connected disability compensation.

Those veterans, it now appears, will have to wait at least a few more months before claims can be paid. And there is at least some doubt now they will be paid. That will depend on whether Webb and enough of his colleagues are dissatisfied with the science behind Shinseki's decision.

In an interview in his Capitol Hill office Wednesday, Webb said he was surprised to find among line items in an emergency wartime supplemental bill (HR 4899) a few weeks ago \$13.4 billion attributed to "veterans." He asked staff to find out what it would fund.

*"It came back this was the Agent Orange law,"* Webb said. Webb, a highly-decorated Marine from combat service in Vietnam, said this deepened his skepticism over the soundness of that law and how it has been used.

*(continued....)*





*"When the law was passed there were two areas that raised questions for me," Webb explained. "One was the presumption of exposure for anyone who had been in Vietnam; 2.7 million people had an automatic presumption of exposure. And then the notion that the VA administrator, now the secretary of veterans' affairs, has discretion based on scientific evidence to decide a service-connection" to various illnesses. "It's very broad."*

Webb amended HR 4899 so claims can't be paid on the three newly-named Agent Orange illnesses until 60 days after a final rule is published.

*"This is an area where we have a responsibility to pump for more [information] to tell us specifically how they made the connection. The only appropriate way to do that is say, 'Let's fence the money for 60 days and get some clarification here.'"*

Webb said he was unaware on finding the \$13.4 billion in the bill that Shinseki had asked Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), chairman of the VA committee, not to hold a hearing on this issue. Akaka had scheduled one for April, then rescheduled for early May when VA declined to send witnesses.

One theme he ran on in 2006, Webb said, was restoring a proper balance of power between the legislative and executive branches. Too much authority had been conceded to, or usurped by, recent administrations.

Webb said he even fired off a letter to President Obama last December challenging a claim he made as he prepared for a summit on climate change that he would return from Copenhagen with a binding agreement.

*"I just felt compelled to say, 'You do not have the constitutional authority to bind the United States to an international agreement. The Congress does'."* Webb said.

Shinseki's decision on Agent Orange strikes Webb as more proof too much power has been conceded to the executive branch.

It was the Carter administration, he said, that adopted a presumption *"that everyone who was in Vietnam was exposed"* to Agent Orange. At the time, he said, the decision wasn't "onerous" on VA budgets because the department only had linked Agent Orange to some rare illnesses.

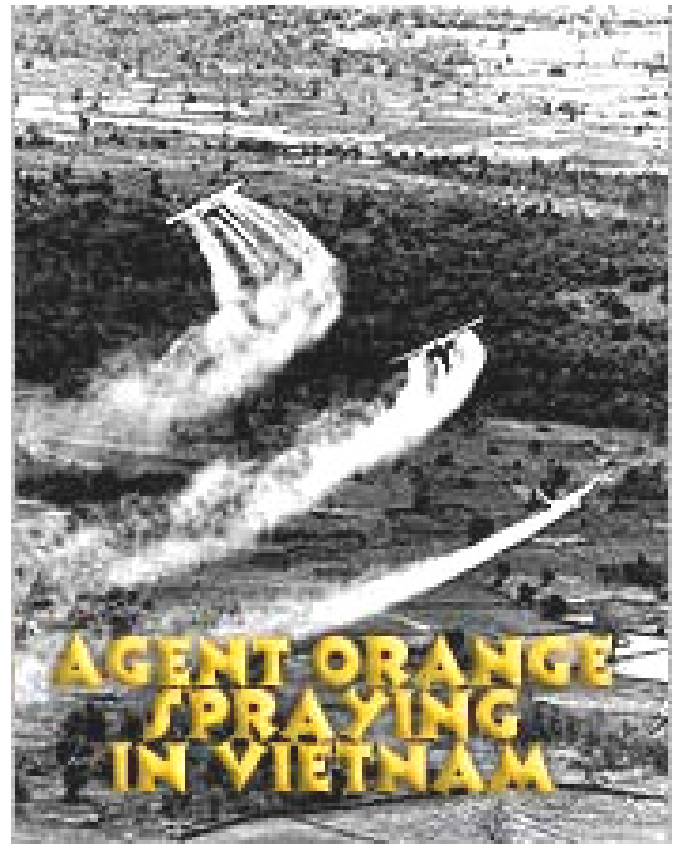
More recently, VA has found links to ailments generally associated with aging, committing VA to pay billions in additional compensation. Webb felt the scientific evidence linking Type II diabetes to Agent Orange in 2001 was soft. He is reluctant to say the same about the

three illnesses Shinseki has endorsed until he hears his testimony.

But Webb does intend to question the science behind presuming everyone who served in Vietnam was exposed to defoliants. He knows his own Marine Company was, he said, as were many other units who were engaged in combat in the countryside or handled Agent Orange directly.

*"On any given day in Vietnam they say about 10 percent of the people were actually out in direct combat. Percentages are actually higher than that because of rotations...But the majority of the people weren't in combat" where defoliants were used. "That's just the reality of it."*

The issue was handled with more precision, he suggested, in the late 1970s when Webb served as legal counsel on the House VA committee.



*"The discussions were you could develop a chronological map overlay of where defoliants had been used, and then develop a nexus in someone's service record on whether they had been in those areas. From that you could say whether these conditions would be presumptively acquired. Back then it was very small in numbers."*

(continued....)



"Everyone up here wants to help veterans -- no one more than I do. But a lot of people have asked about this. They want to make sure we're really (a) following the law and (b) taking care of people who are service connected. I don't want to be the one person out here doing this. I know Chairman Akaka has joined me in his concerns. The main thing is let's have Secretary Shinseki come forward and explain the causality."

In our interview, Webb said VA wouldn't publish a final regulation until after the Sept. 23 hearing. It was later learned the hearing might fall within the 60-day period, an indication VA officials plan to publish a final rule before the hearing. That would narrow Webb's window to try to block compensation payments if he and colleagues decide such action is justified.

To comment, e-mail [milupdate@aol.com](mailto:milupdate@aol.com), write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit: [www.militaryupdate.com](http://www.militaryupdate.com)



## ~ THE DOGS OF WAR ~ The 39<sup>th</sup> Scout Dog Platoon



**Pete Peters with his Scout Dog, 1966, Vietnam.**

From the beaches of Vung Tau, to the jungles of the Iron Triangle, through the rubber plantations surrounding Da Lat and Tay Ninh, sweeping the Ia Drang Valley west of Pleiku, then north, taking the NVA held mountains above Dak To, protecting the highly vital highway 19 corridor, and finally, securing the An Lao valley & the Bon Song coastal plains. For five years the Scout Teams of the 39th always were out in front.

*"We're moving out! Dogman, take the point!"*



Visit the web site:

[members.tripod.com/39<sup>th</sup>\\_scout\\_dogs/](http://members.tripod.com/39th_scout_dogs/)





# ~ The 4<sup>th</sup> of July ~

Independence Day, commonly known as July 4th or the Fourth of July, commemorates the Continental Congress' adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The document, primarily written by Thomas Jefferson, served as a formal announcement that the 13 American colonies were no longer part of the British Empire and would henceforth be free and independent states. Regarded as the birthday of the United States of America, the day is typically celebrated with parades, fireworks, ceremonies, barbecues and family gatherings.

The Declaration of Independence announced the

## **American colonies' independence from Britain. American Revolution**



In the second half of the 18th century, the American colonies rejected the British monarchy and won their independence.



## **The Continental Congress**

From 1774 to 1789, the Continental Congress served as the government of the 13 American colonies and later the United States.



## **Thomas Jefferson**

The third U.S. president and a renowned political philosopher, Thomas Jefferson played a significant role in drafting the Declaration of Independence.

## **Independence Day**

Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July, is the annual celebration of nationhood. It commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

The Congress had voted in favor of independence from Great Britain on July 2 but did not actually complete the process of revising the Declaration of Independence, originally drafted by Thomas Jefferson in consultation with fellow committee members John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and William Livingston, until two days later. The celebration was initially modeled on that of the king's birthday, which had been marked annually by bell ringing, bonfires, solemn processions and oratory. Such festivals had long played a significant role in the Anglo-American political tradition. Especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, when dynastic and religious controversies racked the British Empire (and much of the rest of Europe), the choice of which anniversaries of historic events were celebrated and which were lamented had clear political meanings. The ritual of toasting the king and other patriot-heroes—or of criticizing them—became an informal kind of political speech, further formalized in mid-18th century when the toasts given at taverns and banquets began to be reprinted in newspapers.

## **Early Years**

In the early stages of the revolutionary movement in the colonies during the 1760s and early 1770s, patriots used such celebrations to proclaim their resistance to Parliament's legislation while lauding the king as the real defender of English liberties. However, the marking of the first days of independence during the summer of 1776 actually took the form in many towns of a mock funeral for the king, whose “death” symbolized the end of monarchy and tyranny and the rebirth of liberty.

During the early years of the republic, Independence Day was commemorated with parades, oratory and toasting, in ceremonies that celebrated the existence of the new nation. These rites played an equally important role in the evolving federal political system. With the rise of informal political parties, they provided venues for leaders and constituents to tie local and national contests to independence and the issues facing the national polity.

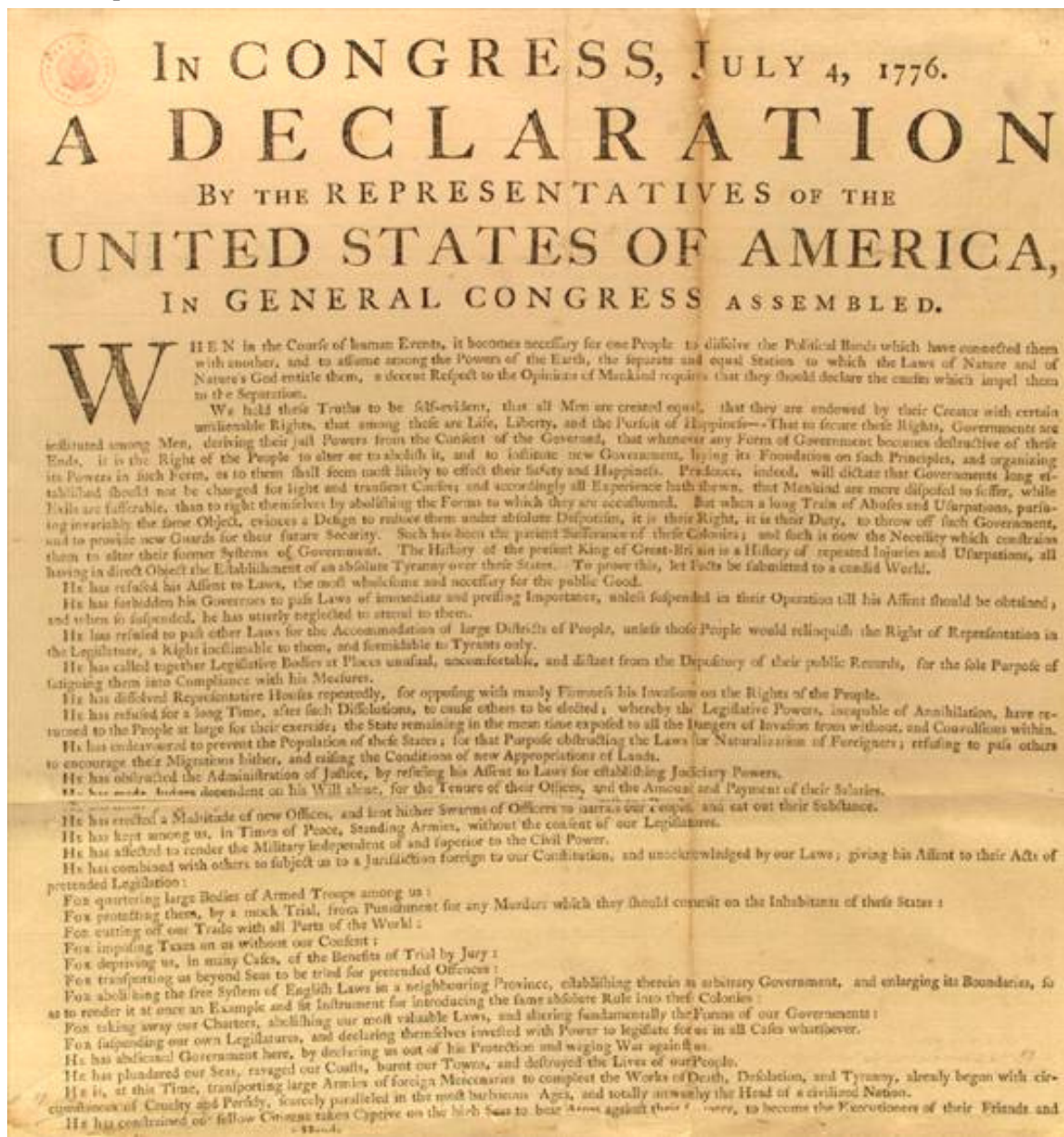
*(continued....)*



By the mid-1790s, the two nascent political parties held separate, partisan Independence Day festivals in most larger towns. Perhaps for this reason, Independence Day became the model for a series of (often short-lived) celebrations that sometimes contained more explicit political resonance, such as Washington's birthday and the anniversary of Jefferson's Inauguration while he served as president (1801-09).

claim. Abolitionists, women's rights advocates, the temperance movement, and opponents of immigration (nativists) all seized the day and its observance, in the process often declaring that they could not celebrate with the entire community while an un-American perversion of their rights prevailed.

### A Modern History



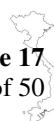
With the rise of leisure, the Fourth also emerged as a major midsummer holiday. The prevalence of heavy drinking and the many injuries caused by setting off fireworks prompted reformers of the late 19th and the early 20th century to mount a Safe and Sane Fourth of July movement. During the later 20th century, although it remained a national holiday marked by parades, concerts of patriotic music and fireworks displays, Independence Day declined in importance as a venue for politics. It remains a potent symbol of national power and of specifically American qualities even the freedom to stay at home and barbecue.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Celebrations

The bombastic torrent of words that characterized Independence Day during the 19th century made it both a serious occasion and one sometimes open to ridicule—like the increasingly popular and democratic political process itself in that period. With the growth and diversification of American society, the Fourth of July commemoration became a patriotic tradition which many groups—not just political parties—sought to

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.  
For informatino visit [Britannica.com](http://Britannica.com)

(continued....)





## ~ THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ~

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

### The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our

constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.





# 2010 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team Reunion

~ September 22<sup>nd</sup> - September 26<sup>th</sup> ~



## ~ Tentative Agenda ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

### Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>

Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.  
Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 10:00p.m.

### Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

\*Breakfast..... 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.  
Registration (room 704):.....10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.

### Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

\* Breakfast.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.  
Board of Director's Meeting,  
(Hospitality room 704):.....10:00a.m.  
Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.  
Hospitality Room (room 704/804):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

*Hospitality room sponsored by:*

***FORD ALBRITTON***

***ALL TROOPERS please come and lift a drink!!!!***

Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 5:00p.m.  
Dinner (banquet room BOND):..... 6:00p.m.  
Hospitality Room: (room 704 & 804),  
After dinner:..... 10:00p.m.

### Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

\*Breakfast: ..... 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.  
SW Chapter Meeting:  
(hospitality room 804):.....9:30a.m.  
Annual Membership Meeting:  
(hospitality room 704): .....11:00a.m.  
Hospitality Room (Open after annual meeting): 5:00p.m.  
Open after banquet:.....10:00p.m.  
Banquet: (banquet room LINDBERGH 1):.....6:00p.m.

### Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup>

\*Breakfast:.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.  
Check Out: anytime up to 12:00a.m.

\*Breakfast Buffet is for registered hotel guests only.  
ALL others must order and pay individually.

\*\*\*No food or beverage may be taken out of the  
Hospitality suites, per hotel request.\*\*\*



**Attention all Sky Soldiers!** The 503<sup>rd</sup> PRCT Association is inviting all members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association to join their fellow 503<sup>rd</sup> paratroopers at our reunion in Dallas, TX this September. We hope to see you here!!!

## ~ Hotel Information ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North  
4441 West John Carpenter Freeway (HWY 114)  
Irving, Texas 75063

Hotel Reservations: (972)-929-8181  
for special requests.

Toll free Reservations: (877)-999-3223  
specify hotel name.

Be sure to request the 503<sup>rd</sup> PRCT room block  
when making your reservations.

**Dates:** Wednesday, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> - Sunday, Sept 26<sup>th</sup>  
(stay longer if you wish!)

- **Room Rate** is \$79.00 plus tax for up to 2 people (king or 2 full beds), which includes full breakfast buffet (including omelets and the like!), and free shuttle service to and from DFW Airport and local restaurants.

**Hotel Reservation deadline** is September 1, 2010, after which room rate cannot be guaranteed.

### 503<sup>rd</sup> Reunion Registration Fee

**\$90.00 per person**, please make check payable  
and mail to:

**Marvin Edwards or;**  
**SW 503<sup>rd</sup> PRCT**

**1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, Texas 75103**

Phone number for any questions—(903)-848-7023

**Fee includes:** Catered Dinner on Friday and Saturday,  
Banquet Room both nights for Dinner,  
Hospitality Room for entire reunion with  
snacks and drinks.  
Name Tags.  
Free Parking at hotel.  
And other items.

Hospitality Room on Friday is sponsored by **FORD ALBRITTON!!!** All troopers please come and share drinks and conversation from 2:00-5:00 p.m.. Ford was attached to Headquarters and flew many support missions for you and would like to talk with all of his old friends.

***AIRBORNE.....ALL THE WAY!***



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# 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team 2010

## ~ Reunion Registration Form ~



Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>-Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup>

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

\*\*\*\*PLEASE PRINT and RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH PAYMENT\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ How many will be registered to attend reunion and banquet at \$90.00 per person?

Please print names

Unit

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ spouse

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

For information or  
questions, please call:

(903)-848-7023

\_\_\_\_\_ How many other guests will attend  
**ONLY** the catered meals with you at a cost of  
\$32.50 per person per meal? Please indicate  
meal: \_\_\_\_\_ Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday

Date you plan to check in: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you plan to check out: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ We will **NOT** be able to attend the reunion  
or banquet(s) this year.

(Please print)

(Name): \_\_\_\_\_

(Phone Number): \_\_\_\_\_

(Email): \_\_\_\_\_



Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
payable to:

503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Please mail completed form with check to:

Marvin Edwards

1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, TX 75103

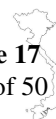
Registration deadline is Sunday, August 15, 2010.

Registration refunds will be given until September 10, 2010.



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# A FINE SOLDIER

By Bob Carmichael, LTC (Ret)

At Camp Zinn my sleeping quarters were on the main street. One day, about dusk, I noticed a platoon of men going up the street toward the wire, going out on security guard was my guess.



They were also, I noted, "C" Company troops. The next evening, once again, I observed the same platoon of men heading out.

**Bob Carmichael 2/66**

Now, Sgt. (Hammer) Jackson was the 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. of "C" Company, and an awesome soldier. A few days later I received a call from Maj. Roosevelt Wilson who was the Brigade LG. He was a friend of mine, and he said, "Bob, I need to come down and have a visit with Sgt. Jackson."

Shortly thereafter, he came down to Camp Zinn and went out to see Sgt. Jackson. Upon his return, he said, "Everything is o.k.," and no problems.

Several days earlier we were on a road clearing operation with a light tank section of the 1<sup>st</sup> Inf. Div. We had traveled up the road to a junction overlooking the area ahead. The tank parked and, as we often did, the battalion command group and the company command group met at the tank.

There was a large, bushy growth near the tank and, unknown to us, under it there were three VC....and out they popped! Fortunately, they got in only a few shots before Sgt. Jackson shot two with his weapon, which jammed; he then reached over, grabbed a bystander's weapon and killed the third one, who

would have most likely killed me. However, Sgt. Jackson, unfortunately, was wounded in the lower thigh.

As we were preparing to have him dusted off for treatment, he was heard to say, quietly but emphatically, "*When the 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant gets wounded, somebody is not doing their job....these men need more training.*"

Upon our return to base camp, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. set about fulfilling his promise by designating some of the troops who were prone to creating disturbances for extra training on guard duty. Additionally, to be certain they stayed awake in case of surprise attack, he took some of their rifles away from them...thereby initiating Maj. Wilson's visit to our camp. Sgt. Jackson agreed that, in the future all soldiers would have weapons while on guard duty.



**Hammer Jackson....A Fine Soldier**

(continued....)







### The Charlie Company perimeter at Camp Zinn

This story is in no way meant to be critical of 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Jackson; the men in "C" Company and our entire battalion were fortunate to have him. Hammer Jackson saved my life that day, and I have never forgotten it. I'd bet that today those guard duty "trainees," who are now granddads, laugh about the story as they did at our 2/503d reunion in Florida a few years back.



L-R: 2/503rd HHC RTO's Lew Smith & Wayne Hoitt with their old boss, Bob Carmichael. Cocoa Beach, FL 2006

At the 2/503d reunion in Cocoa Beach I had the opportunity to shake Hammer's hand, thank him for saving my life, and, thoroughly enjoyed a good visit with him and other soldiers from our battalion.

My thanks and my salute to 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Hammer Jackson, a fine soldier. We were all privileged to have served with him. I look forward to seeing and visiting with him again, and all our Sky Soldiers at our next battalion reunion.

-----  
LTC Robert B. Carmichael (Bob) served as Battalion Executive Officer of the 2/503d in 1965/66, until February 1966, when he took over as Battalion Commander when (then) LTC George

Dexter, Col. (Ret), was severely wounded. During his second tour in Vietnam, LTC Carmichael served as a Battalion Commander with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division during Operation Crook. Bob is retired in Austin, TX with his lovely bride Exie, and spends his time gardening, following Texas sports, fishing and giving his old 2/503rd RTO's a hard time at every chance.



*"Enough with the salutes, RTO. Where's the beer?"*

### Another 2/503<sup>rd</sup> Reunion in Florida???

Since we held the two 2/503<sup>rd</sup> reunions in Cocoa Beach, Florida some years ago, a number of our guys keep asking Don "Rocky" Rockholt (A/2/503d) and me when do we plan to have another one? And, sometimes, while sitting together at the VFW here over too many drinks, the two of us discuss the possibility -- in fact, the more we drink the more interesting the idea becomes.

Invariably, I'll suggest the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when the 173d went to Vietnam....that's the point at which we both begin laughing.

So boys, what do you think? Should the 2/503<sup>rd</sup> muster one more time in Florida sometime soon? Drop us a note and let us know if this sounds interesting to you -- you ain't gettin' no younger. [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) Ed





# 82nd Airborne Division

## A Salute to our Fellow Paratroopers of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division

The 82nd Airborne Division has had its share of famous soldiers from Sergeant Alvin C. York to General James M. Gavin. But that's not what the 82nd is really about. The real story of the 82nd is the thousands of unnamed paratroopers in jump boots, baggy pants and maroon berets, who have always been ready and willing to jump into danger and then drive on until the mission was accomplished.

The 82nd has become so well known for its airborne accomplishments, that its proud World War I heritage is almost forgotten.

The 82nd Infantry Division was formed August 25, 1917, at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Since members of the Division came from all 48 states, the unit was given the nickname "All-Americans," hence its famed "AA" shoulder patch.

In the spring of 1918, the Division deployed to France. In nearly five months of combat the 82nd fought in three major campaigns and helped to break the fighting spirit of the German Imperial Army.

The 82nd was demobilized after World War I. For more than 20 years the "All-American Division" would live only in the memories of men who served in its ranks during the Great War.



**All American Jump**  
redesignated the 82nd Airborne Division.

With the outbreak of World War II, the 82nd was reactivated on March 25, 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana under the command of Major General Omar N. Bradley.

On August 15, 1942, the 82nd Infantry Division became the first airborne division in the U.S. Army. On that date, the All-American Division was

In April 1943, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division set sail for North Africa under the command of Major General Matthew B. Ridgway to participate in the campaign to puncture the soft underbelly of the Third Reich.



**82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, WWII**

The Division's first two combat operations were parachute and glider assaults into Sicily and Salerno, Italy on July 9 and September 13, 1943.

In January 1944, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which was temporarily detached from the Division to fight at Anzio, earned the nickname "Devils in Baggy Pants." The nickname was taken from an entry made in a German officer's diary.

While the 504th was detached, the remainder of the 82nd was pulled out of Italy in November 1943 and moved to the United Kingdom to prepare for the liberation of Europe.

With two combat jumps under its belt, the 82nd Airborne Division was now ready for the most ambitious airborne operation of the war, Operation NEPTUNE-the airborne invasion of Normandy. The operation was part of Operation OVERLORD, the amphibious assault on the northern coast of Nazi-occupied France.

In preparation for the operation, the division was reorganized. Two new parachute infantry regiments, the 507th and the 508th, joined the division. Due to its depleted state following the fighting in Italy, the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment did not take part in the invasion.

*(continued....)*





On June 5-6, 1944, the paratroopers of the 82nd's three parachute infantry regiments and reinforced glider infantry regiment boarded hundreds of transport planes and gliders and, began the largest airborne assault in history. They were among the first soldiers to fight in Normandy, France.

By the time the All-American Division was pulled back to England, it had seen 33 days of bloody combat and suffered 5,245 paratroopers killed, wounded or missing. The Division's post battle report read, "...33 days of action without relief, without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained was ever relinquished."

Following the Normandy invasion, the 82nd became part of the newly organized XVIII Airborne Corps, which consisted of the U.S. 17th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions.

In September, the 82nd began planning for Operation MARKET-GARDEN in Holland. The operation called for three-plus airborne divisions to seize and hold key bridges and roads deep behind German lines. The 504th now back at full strength rejoined the 82nd, while the 507th went to the 17th Airborne Division.

On September 17, the 82nd Airborne Division conducted its fourth combat jump of World War II into Holland. Fighting off ferocious German counterattacks, the 82nd captured its objectives between Grave and Nijmegen. Its success, however, was short-lived because of the defeat of other Allied units at Arnhem.

The gateway to Germany would not open in September 1944, and the 82nd was ordered back to France.

Suddenly, on December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a surprise offensive through the Ardennes Forest which caught the Allies completely by surprise. Two days later the 82nd joined the fighting and blunted General Von Rundstedt's northern penetration in the American lines.

Following the surrender of Germany, the 82nd was ordered to Berlin for occupation duty. In Berlin General George Patton was so impressed with the 82nd's honor guard he said, *"In all my years in the Army and all the honor guards I have ever seen, the 82nd's honor guard is undoubtedly the best."* Hence the "All-Americans" became known as "America's Guard of Honor."

The 82nd returned to the United States January 3, 1946. Instead of being demobilized, the 82nd made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and was designated a regular Army division on November 15, 1948.

Life in the 82nd during the 1950s and 1960s consisted of intensive training exercises in all environments and locations to include Alaska, Panama, the Far East and the continental United States.

In April 1965, the "All-Americans" were alerted for action in response to the civil war raging in the Dominican Republic. Spearheaded by the 3rd Brigade, the 82nd deployed to the Caribbean in Operation POWER PACK. Peace and stability was restored by June 17, when the rebel guns were silenced.

But three years later, the 82nd Airborne Division was again called to action. During the Tet Offensive, which swept across the Republic of Vietnam in January 1968, the 3rd Brigade was alerted and within 24 hours, the brigade was enroute to Chu Lai. The 3rd Brigade performed combat duties in the Hue-Phu Bai area of the

I Corps sector. Later the brigade was moved south to Saigon, and fought battles in the Mekong Delta, the Iron Triangle and along the Cambodian border. After serving nearly 22 months in Vietnam, the 3rd Brigade troopers returned to Fort Bragg on December 12, 1969.

During the 1970s, Division units deployed to the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Greece for exercises in potential future battlegrounds.

The Division was also alerted three times. War in the Middle East in the fall of 1973 brought the 82nd to full alert. Then in May 1978, the Division was alerted for a possible drop into Zaire, and again in November 1979, the Division was alerted for a possible operation to rescue the American hostages in Iran.

On October 25, 1983 elements of the 82nd were called back to the Caribbean to the tiny island of Grenada. The first 82nd unit to deploy in Operation URGENT FURY was a task force of the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment.

On October 26 and 27, the 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry, with support units deployed to Grenada. Military operations in Grenada ended in early November.



**82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Trooper**



Operation URGENT FURY tested the Division's ability to deploy as a rapid deployment force. The first aircraft carrying division troopers touched down at Point Salinas 17 hours after notification.



### 82<sup>nd</sup> Jumps in Korea

deployment of armed and willing paratroopers to the Honduran countryside caused the Sandinistas to withdraw back to Nicaragua. Operation GOLDEN PHEASANT prepared the paratroopers for future combat in the increasingly unstable world.

On December 20, 1989, the "All-Americans," as part of Operation JUST CAUSE, conducted their first combat jump since World War II onto Torrijos International Airport, Panama. The paratroopers' goal was to oust a ruthless dictator and restore the duly-elected government to power in Panama. The 1st Brigade task force made up of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, parachuted into combat for the first time since World War II. In Panama, the paratroopers were joined on the ground by 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment which was already in Panama. After the night combat jump and seizure of the airport, the 82nd conducted follow-on combat air assault missions in Panama City and the surrounding areas.

The victorious paratroopers returned to Fort Bragg on January 12, 1990.

But seven months later the paratroopers were again called to war. Six days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the 82nd became the vanguard of the largest deployment of American troops since Vietnam.

The first unit to deploy to Saudi Arabia was a task force comprising the Division's 2nd Brigade. Soon after, the rest of the Division followed. There, intensive training began in anticipation of fighting in the desert with the heavily armored Iraqi Army.

In March 1988, a brigade task force made up of two battalions from the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment conducted a parachute insertion and airland operation into Honduras as part of Operation GOLDEN PHEASANT. The deployment was billed a joint training exercise, but the paratroopers were ready to fight. The

The adage or battle cry picked up by the paratroopers was, *"The road home...is through Baghdad."* About a decade later, that battle cry would become more of a fact than an adage.

On January 16, 1991, Operation DESERT STORM began when an armada of Allied war planes pounded Iraqi targets. The ground war began almost six weeks later. On February 23, the vehicle mounted 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers protected the XVIII Airborne Corps flank as fast-moving armor and mechanized units moved deep inside Iraq. A 2nd Brigade task force was attached to the 6th French Light Armored Division becoming the far left flank of the Corps.

In the short 100-hour ground war, the vehicle mounted 82nd drove deep into Iraq and captured thousands of Iraqi soldiers and tons of equipment, weapons and ammunition.

After the liberation of Kuwait, the 82nd began its redeployment back to Fort Bragg with most of the Division returning by the end of April.



Following the Division's return and subsequent victory parades, the troopers began to re-establish some of the systems that had become dormant during their eight months in the desert. On top of the list was the regaining of individual and unit airborne proficiency and the continuation of tough and realistic training.

In August 1992, the Division was alerted to deploy a task force to the hurricane-ravaged area of South Florida and provide humanitarian assistance following Hurricane Andrew. For more than 30 days, Division troopers provided food, shelter and medical attention to a grateful Florida population, instilling a sense of hope and renewed confidence in the military.

On the 50th anniversary of the Operation MARKET-GARDEN, the 82nd again answered the nation's call and prepared to conduct a parachute assault in the Caribbean nation of Haiti to help restore democracy. With the troopers aboard aircraft heading towards the island, the de facto regime capitulated, and the Division was turned back to Fort Bragg.



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82nd Airborne Division paratroopers were among the first ground troops sent into the war-torn Kosovo region of the Balkans in Summer 1999, when the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment moved in from neighboring Macedonia.

They were followed shortly by the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, who themselves will be followed by the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment in January 2001 as part of regular peacekeeping operation rotations.

When America was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, President George W. Bush called upon the American military to fight global terrorism. 82d soldiers deployed to Afghanistan and the Central Command Area of responsibility to support combat operations. In June 2002 the 82nd Airborne's Task Force Panther, comprised of elements from the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment and other 82nd units, deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Task Force Devil, comprised of the 504th PIR and other 82nd elements, replaced Task Force Panther in January 2003, where they currently maintain the division's mission until further notice.



In February of 2003, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), deployed along with the Division Headquarters to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Division conducted sustained combat operations throughout Iraq and the CENTCOM area of operations. In May 2003 the Division Headquarters returned to Fort Bragg. The 2nd BCT remained in Iraq attached to the 1st Armored Division and continued to conduct combat operations.

The Division Headquarters along with the 3rd BCT and elements of the DIVARTY, DISCOM, Aviation, and separate battalions returned to Iraq in August of 2003 to continue command and control over combat operations in and around Baghdad. In January 2004 the 1st BCT deployed to conduct combat operations in OIF.

The 2nd BCT redeployed to Fort Bragg, North Carolina in February. The Division Headquarters was relieved by the 1st Marine Expeditionary Division in March of 2004 and the remaining 82nd forces in Iraq redeployed to Fort Bragg, NC by the end of April 2004.

For the first time in two years all of the Division's units were returned to home station.

82d Airborne Division units have continued to support the operations in Iraq through 2004 to 2008, with

Battalion and Brigade Combat Team deployments varying in length from four to fifteen months.

The Battalion sized deployments have occurred with little notice and for specific missions. The initial deployments were for Iraqi Elections when the Central Command Commander decided he needed more forces to provide security for the election process.

In September of 2004, the 82nd's DRF-1, 1-505 was deployed to support OEF 6 in support of JTF-76 and the Afghanistan elections. The TF redeployed in October 2004.

The 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry deployed in support of the 2004 Iraqi National elections in northern and central Iraq, they provided combat security and surveillance. Additionally for the 2004 Elections the 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry and 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry both deployed.

These same units were recalled to Iraqi to provide a safe and secure environment for the 2005 Iraqi National Referendum and National Parliamentary Elections. The 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry was assigned an area near Tal Afar and facilitated the social, economic and political reconstruction of the region, enabling peaceful and successful elections. Task Force 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry was assigned the same mission in the Anbar Province Region.

Besides supporting elections, Battalions were sent to support full range operations. These include humanitarian assistance, presence patrols, raids, and cordon and search operations.

In October, 2005 the 1st Battalion 504th Infantry deployed to the Kurdish area, northern Iraq. They worked aside a multinational and inter-agency Task Force.

In July 2006 1st Squadron 17th Cavalry was sent into northwest Iraq near Lake Tar and 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry deployed to conduct full range operation in support of a inter-agency Task Force and returned in December 2006.

The 1st Battalion, 82d Aviation deployed to support attack operations with its Apache Helicopters; they were attached to the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade.

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The 82d Airborne Division also supported operations in Iraqi with Brigade Combat Team sized deployments. These were the first deployment for these new modular Brigade Combat Teams composed of six battalions.

In August 2006, the 82d Sustainment Brigade deployed to provide logistics support to combat units in Iraq. They provided command and control of logistics and support units from the Army Reserve and National Guard.

The 3d Brigade Combat Team deployed to Diyala Province where they conduct cordon and search operations to help secure the Iraq - Iran border to prevent the flow of weapons into Iraq.

The 2d Brigade Combat Team was deployed to support the “surge” and was the first US Army Brigade Combat Team deployed to the region; it was deployed to Kuwait and then moved into to Iraqi in January 2007. It supported operations in the Bagdad Region.

In addition the 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division deployed in July 2007 to provide theater security force in Iraq they were headquartered in Tallil Iraq.

Many of the Paratroopers and units have returned and are preparing for future deployment as needed.

Background information from:  
<http://www.bragg.army.mil/82DV/>



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