



July 2011, Issue 30

Contact: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

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## ~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



**So you wanna be a Chargin' Charlie?** *“A young paratrooper with a mud-smeared face stares into the jungle in Vietnam on July 14, 1966, after fire fight with Viet Cong patrol in the morning. He is a member of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade. (AP caption and photo/John Nance)*



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# Chaplain's Corner

Sky Soldiers of the heroic  
HERD – the 2/503d Bn –  
Families & Friends: Grace and  
Peace to you and all Caring and  
Freedom loving people.



**“The Leapin’ Deacon”**

## **Psalm 46:1, 10-11**

*God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. Be still, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold.*

## **Galatians 6:2**

*Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

One of our wise and informed leaders of the 2/503d, speaking about suicide declared:

***“If we could just prevent one such happening, it would be a victory.”*** He is more than right. Troops and Veterans of the Herd, we need to help and assist in the prevention of suicide. We start with our “gifted ears” by carefully Listening, Listening, Listening for pleas and cries of Help!

In our beloved Country, when we address suicide we are dealing with huge numbers of our citizens, patriots, Troops, and Veterans. In the United States each year there are over 30,000 suicides. This is a direct challenge to our Military Community, families and friends of all ages. This calls for serious response and informed action by all of us, to include our entire Medical Team, Counseling Professionals, Emergency Room Teams, Police, families, friends, Pastors, trained lay leaders and Crisis Calls attendants, along with VA help and Crisis Intervention **(1-800-273-8255 – Press 1 for Veteran).**

Please let us increase our listening skills with our ears, minds, and our hearts to give help and hope and even “hand carry” the needy person to immediate suicidal care and assistance.

Let us not be casual about the crucial! Life and lives are of nerve-center importance to our Herd family. We are dealing with persons of deep pain, despair, and depression captivated by anxiety, helplessness and hopelessness, manifestations of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - mental illness with special needs. One of the most challenging struggles is to de-stigmatize mental health problems and their special acute needs.

Over more than half a century, a helpful discipline that has assisted me in shepherding and caring for Troops and Veterans and their families is Logotherapy. The founding father of this discipline was Viktor E. Frankl. It grew out of his experiences in Nazi death camps. He carefully listened and watched who did and did not survive (if given an opportunity to survive). He concluded that the Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had it right when he wrote, ***“HE WHO HAS A ‘WHY’ TO LIVE FOR CAN BEAR ALMOST ANY ‘HOW’.*”**

Frankl called his form of therapy Logotherapy from the Greek word “Logos,” which can mean study, word, spirit, God or MEANING. This last word became his centerpiece. In a death camp, a will to *Meaning*, a reason *Why*, and *Purpose* gave Frankl a spark of living hope and Meaning for living. His dear young wife and most of his family members were killed with the exception of one sister.



Viktor Frankl's classic book entitled, *“Man's Search for Meaning,”* published in 1959, reprinted many times, sold over 8 million copies in the United States, and is reported to be one of the most ten influential books in American history.

This living and most useful concept of Meaning, Reason for, Purpose is a bedrock of help and assistance for our citizens, Troops, Veterans, and families in dealing with suicide and other critical needs.

Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d and all Herd brothers and sisters, may we be great listeners “on the line” and alert helpers as we love and deeply care for one another and help in suicidal prevention, as we are able.

Blessings to you in the Name of our kind Heavenly Father, the Anointed One, and the winsome Holy Spirit.

**Chaplain Conrad (Connie) Walker**  
**“The Leapin’ Deacon”**  
**National Chaplain Emeritus**  
**173d Airborne Association and**  
**Military Order of the Purple Heart**



## WHODAT?

In our June newsletter we ask you to identify the troopers in this photo sent in by Chuck Dean, HHC/1/503d. Ed



This is a baptism in the South China Sea, Red Beach, Da Nang. The 4/503d was up there under the UPCON of the USMC. The officer on the right was LTC Michael D. Healy or "Iron Mike" and the Chaplain performing the baptism was Chaplain Smith from Clarksville, TN. We were up there from 7 Oct. '66 to 4 Dec. '66. General Order No. 32 was issued on 24 Sept. '73, and the members of Task Force Healy received the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy). I think that the USMC typed a little slow.

Chaplain Billy Smith of Clarksville, TN, is baptizing the 4/503d Sky Soldiers in the South China Sea. Steve Becsei of D/4/503d is one of the persons there. Steve now lives in Yellville, AR, and he was from Indiana. Two 4/503d soldiers were killed in action when we were in the I Corps in Da Nang, RVN. PFC George Belanger of C/4/503d was killed in a mortar attack on 24 Oct. 66, that hit the old French fort where C/4/503d was stationed. PFC Eleftherios Pantel Pappas of B/4/503d was KIA while on a patrol in the southwest area outside of Da Nang. One other member of the 4/503d drowned in the South China Sea while on his air mattress. Two days later his body was recovered.

**Ray Ramirez**  
Recon/4/503d

GEORGE BELANGER

ELEFThERIOS P PAPPAS

# Sound Off!



**VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, Inc.**  
*"Veterans standing up for each other"*

Here's a great newsletter which reports on matters before the Veteran's Administration and other issues of importance to vets. You can order your FREE subscription at:

[www.vuft.org](http://www.vuft.org)



**Handler Lee Brady of the 39th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) with Gus, reportedly 1970.**

*I am the Infantry, Queen of Battle!  
For two centuries I have kept our  
Nation safe by Purchasing freedom  
with my blood. To tyrants I am the  
day of reckoning, and to the  
oppressed I'm their hope. Where the  
fighting is thickest, there am I!  
I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!*

~ Unknown



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# Mornings at the Pentagon

By **JOSEPH L. GALLOWAY**  
*McClatchy Newspapers*



Over the last 12 months, 1,042 soldiers, Marines, sailors and Air Force personnel have given their lives in the terrible duty that is war.

Thousands more have come home on stretchers, horribly wounded and facing months or years in military hospitals.

This week, I'm turning my space over to a good friend and former roommate, Army Lt. Col. Robert Bateman, who recently completed a year-long tour of duty and is now back at the Pentagon.

Here's Lt. Col. Bateman's account of a little-known ceremony that fills the halls of the Army corridor of the Pentagon with cheers, applause and many tears every Friday morning. It first appeared on May 17 on the Weblog of media critic and pundit Eric Alterman at the Media Matters for America Website.

"It is 110 yards from the "E" ring to the "A" ring of the Pentagon. This section of the Pentagon is newly renovated; the floors shine, the hallway is broad, and the lighting is bright. At this instant the entire length of the corridor is packed with officers, a few sergeants and some civilians, all crammed tightly three and four deep against the walls. There are thousands here.

This hallway, more than any other, is the 'Army' hallway. The G3 offices line one side, G2 the other, G8 is around the corner. All Army. Moderate conversations flow in a low buzz. Friends who may not have seen each other for a few weeks, or a few years, spot each other, cross the way and renew.

Everyone shifts to ensure an open path remains down the center. The air conditioning system was not designed for this press of bodies in this area.

The temperature is rising already. Nobody cares. 10:36 hours: The clapping starts at the E-Ring. That is the outermost of the five rings of the Pentagon and it is closest to the entrance to the building. This clapping is low, sustained, hearty. It is applause with a deep emotion behind it as it moves forward in a wave down the length of the hallway.

A steady rolling wave of sound it is, moving at the pace of the soldier in the wheelchair who marks the forward edge with his presence. He is the first. He is missing the greater part of one leg, and some of his wounds are still suppurating. By his age I expect that he is a private, or perhaps a private first class.



Captains, majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels meet his gaze and nod as they applaud, soldier to soldier. Three years ago when I described one of these events, those lining the hallways were somewhat different. The applause a little wilder, perhaps in private guilt for not having shared in the burden...yet.

Now almost everyone lining the hallway is, like the man in the wheelchair, also a combat veteran. This steadies the applause, but I think deepens the sentiment. We have all been there now. The soldier's chair is pushed by, I believe, a full colonel.

Behind him, and stretching the length from Rings E to A, come more of his peers, each private, corporal, or sergeant assisted as need be by a field grade officer.

11:00 hours: Twenty-four minutes of steady applause. My hands hurt, and I laugh to myself at how stupid that sounds in my own head. My hands hurt. Please! Shut up and clap.

*(continued...)*



For twenty-four minutes, soldier after soldier has come down this hallway - 20, 25, 30. Fifty-three legs come with them, and perhaps only 52 hands or arms, but down this hall came 30 solid hearts.

They pass down this corridor of officers and applause, and then meet for a private lunch, at which they are the guests of honor, hosted by the generals. Some are wheeled along. Some insist upon getting out of their chairs, to march as best they can with their chin held up, down this hallway, through this most unique audience. Some are catching handshakes and smiling like a politician at a Fourth of July parade. More than a couple of them seem amazed and are smiling shyly.

There are families with them as well: the 18-year-old war-bride pushing her 19-year-old husband's wheelchair and not quite understanding why her husband is so affected by this, the boy she grew up with, now a man, who had never shed a tear is crying; the older immigrant Latino parents who have, perhaps more than their wounded mid-20s son, an appreciation for the emotion given on their son's behalf. No man in that hallway, walking or clapping, is ashamed by the silent tears on more than a few cheeks. An Airborne Ranger wipes his eyes only to better see. A couple of the officers in this crowd have themselves been a part of this parade in the past.

These are our men, broken in body they may be, but they are our brothers, and we welcome them home. This parade has gone on, every single Friday, all year long, for more than four years."



[Sent in by A.B. Garcia, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66]

## ~ REMEMBERANCES ~

Republic of South Vietnam,  
Central Highlands, Dak To  
area, 2nd Battalion 503rd  
Airborne Infantry,  
November 19, 1967, a Hill  
called 875.



Hill 875, minute details are difficult to recollect as are names and faces. The main event and its aftermath vividly alive. Most of us were **Augie with the D-handle** young, strong, bold, alive, conditioned to act. Fearing the unknown of when, of where, or who, or how? NOT of why?

Morning:

The slow ascent, the measured steps. The peculiar stillness of nature. The greenness of the place. Suddenly, the noise, the smoke, the smell, the sweat, the shouts, the short rounds.

At Dusk:

The errant bombs, the cries, the pain, the fight to survive. Hot, hungry, thirsty, dirty, almost at the crest, fearing and unable to move up or down. Less than half as many as when we started. Mangled dreams, lost pleasures, shattered hopes, odious faces, men barely alive. Moans, cries, pleas, reassuring words. Search for food, search for water among the litter.

*"Maintain the perimeter, friends are coming."*

Four days later:

Thanksgiving Day. Remnants aloft, fire base. "Turkey Dinner." *"You soldier, shave before you eat."*

*"Augie, welcome back!"*

Twenty-seven years later:

Older, heavier, slower, wiser, fortunate, more fortunate than many. Yet, less inclined to accept hype and make believe, less inclined to shout *"Yes Sir!"* with no questions asked. Time dulls and obscures the past? Time heals?

Some wounds are not visible. The healing process slow and incomplete. It may always be incomplete, for the survivors, surviving with their remembrances.

**Augie Scarino**

Recon/C/2/503d, '67-'68



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In memory of a  
 ~ Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~



**William A. Ross**  
 Private First Class



*Award of the Bronze Star Medal for Heroism*  
 (Posthumously)  
 21 January 1968

TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

William A. Ross, RA14921291, 2nd Bn (Abn) 503d Inf  
 Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device (Posthumously)  
 Date action: 19 November 1967  
 Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason:

For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Private First Class Ross distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 19 November 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, Company D, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, made heavy enemy contact near Dak To, Republic of Vietnam. Upon initial contact, Private First Class Ross rushed forward, constantly exposing himself to the intense enemy fire in order to place suppressive fire against the enemy positions. While moving forward from

position to position, Private First Class Ross shouted words of encouragement and aided the wounded to secure areas. It was during this assault that Private First Class Ross was mortally wounded. Private First Class Ross' outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1961 and USARV Message 16695, AVA-S, 1 July 1966.



# Rick Scott “Honors” Florida Homeless Veterans By Cutting Their Benefits

By: Inkberries



Gov. Rick Scott holds up his red veto pen to make a point during remarks before signing the state budget, during the outdoor ceremony in The Villages in Florida.

On Friday, just one day after signing the Florida budget in which he cut and vetoed \$615 million, Republican Governor Rick Scott put out a memorial Day message. Below is part of that message, taken from the Governor’s website:

***“This is also a day for us to pay respect to those who are currently serving in the Armed Forces and to show our appreciation for their bravery and the sacrifices they continually make. Let us pray for the safety of the courageous servicemen and servicewomen who are overseas, as well as comfort and strength for their families here at home.***

***I ask you all to join me in observing a Moment of Remembrance this Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time. This will provide us all with a moment to honor those who have served in the military and reflect upon the ultimate sacrifice some have paid to help ensure our freedom.***

***I would like to thank our military men and women, both past and present, for all that they have done and continue to do for us. May God bless you all.”***

Scott asks that we “join him” and honor, respect and pray for members of the Armed Services past and present because of the sacrifice they’ve made for our freedom. That all sounds nice as a message from the Governor, but “his” words are just that: words. The message rings pretty hollow when you compare his words with his actions concerning his “respect” for those men and women.

Honor? The day before Scott released this message he “honored” some of those military service members in a pretty strange and shameful way. He cut \$12 million from the budget for the *National Veterans Homeless Support Groups*. That’s how Rick Scott honors homeless veterans. He cuts them off. On the eve of Memorial Day weekend....

A homeless veteran in Brevard County, Florida summed up his feelings on the cuts this way:

***“It’s just too bad he forgot about the ones that are still alive.”***



Homeless Vets saluting flag which is out of the picture.

There are an estimated 17,000 homeless veterans in the State of Florida, which ranks the state second only to California. Facing Scott’s \$12 million budget cuts, the group will have to find other ways to raise money. In response to Mr. Scott’s veto, the group is launching a campaign to raise awareness and money....They said they will use the money to get homeless veterans off the streets.

Members of the group said they encounter many veterans who do not realize all the benefits they are entitled to. NVHS member Dorothy Walsh said,

***“It’s an absolute heartbreak. These men and women have put their lives on the line for us, so we can have our freedom. When you get in this cycle of living in the woods it is very tough to get out....”***

...So much for Scott’s empty message in honoring the sacrifice of those in the Armed Forces.

Source:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/05/31/980925/-Rick-Scott-Honors-Florida-Homeless-Veterans-By-Cutting-Their-Benefits?via=siderecent>

***“Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons?”***

(A Christmas Carol)



# Picked-Up at a Local VA Clinic

## VA CENTRAL OFFICE Office of Security and Law Enforcement

AWARENESS  
BULLETIN #:

2011-01

### Situational Awareness

**"Veterans Affairs Services" Group**

DATE OF  
BULLETIN:

22 Feb 2011

### Advisory from National Guard Bureau (NGB)

The following is an advisory sent out by the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in reference to a group called "Veterans Affairs Services"

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way. Websites with the name "VA services" immediately after the "www" ARE NOT part of the Department of Veterans Affairs; the real VA website ends in.gov. If approached or called, do not offer them any information concerning yourself or data on other veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs does not randomly call veterans, nor does it ask veterans for information which it does not already have. If you have not dealt with the VA previously and in person, then you receive a call from someone saying they are with the VA or something similar sounding, hang up the phone. Do not respond to emails which suggest that they are from the VA. The VA never conducts official business nor asks for personal information by email.

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. NGB Legal Counsel has requested that the NGB Provost Marshal Office coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

*Sample of group's header*

<b>Veterans Affairs Services</b>	
PO Box 1778 • La Mirada, CA 90637-1778	
<b>Not Affiliated With The United States Government</b>	<b>Source: NGB Weekly Threat Update/Force Protection Advisory</b>

VA Police Services are urged to disseminate this information to in case of inquiries from veterans and to prevent their unwittingly release of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

**UNCLASSIFIED**



Following Roy Lombardo's note is a continuation of his report on the early days of the 2/503d. Ed

## Part III – Taiwan 1964

### From Ranger Roy:

On page 8 of the Special Edition of our newsletter, COL James Steverson is mentioned as the Cmdr of 2/503 but that conflicts with LTC Partain, who I think is correct.

I was grateful for several mentions of SFC Leon P. Hostack, a PSG in A/2/503, who I failed to mention in my brief summary. "Mo" Hostack was a PSG for me in B/2/503 and my most influential mentor on Okinawa

and during the initial deployment to RVN. He was scheduled for DEROS almost immediately after our deployment but the command guidance was to take everyone, so that a DEROS departure would generate a loss that required replacement. I complied but "Mo" wasn't happy about a few days of deployment. He did his job superbly and was replaced by SFC Eugene Davis in the 3d Platoon without any lost momentum. Both did their best to bring 1LT Ron Zinn (KIA) quickly up to speed after his early involvement and success in the Olympics.

Hostack survived the experience of A/2/503 and later worked for Great Lake shipping until prostate cancer developed. I spoke to him when I tracked him down in the 80's and he laughed when he told the story of being wounded. ***"Sir, I would have court martialed the NVA that shot me. The dumb SOB wounded but didn't kill me with several shots. He just couldn't shoot and should have been court martialed."***

"Mo" had fought with the 187 ARCT in Korea, as I have previously written in the *Static Line*. He was superb with his fists as many troops found out if they crossed him. In Korea, he broke the jaw of a N. Korean with a single punch, when he captured him. Back in friendly lines when interrogated, the PW was unable to speak because of the broken jaw. Hostack threatened to break his neck, which caused the PW to suddenly try harder to successfully speak. I have a million Hostack stories but the vignette about him in the hospital and NCO club in Japan was typical of the carefree life he lived.



Ranger Roy

The 173d generally deployed to Taiwan every Fall but in 1964, the deployment was an amazing full deployment of almost 2 weeks, including vehicle deployment by air and ocean vessel. The logistical sea-tail streamlined the procedures that would work so well in May 1965.

The tactical plan called for a Bde parachute assault and an attack to the south through mountains and across major rivers. This was the first opportunity for the Bde to exercise as a brigade, which could not be done on Okinawa because of limited maneuver space. The kicker was that the Drop Zone was adjacent to a major Nationalist Chinese airbase, which was blanked out on the map. So as we flew to drop from C-124's, the Commanders and Jumpmasters had no idea what the drop zone terrain looked like. Nevertheless, we had the C-124's loaded to the max, with 2 door bundles of mortars to go on the first pass and the remaining 64 personnel to go on the 2d pass.

The jump went as scheduled but the ground winds were high, banging up some of the troops and the few vehicles that were delivered by parachute. Few veteran paratroopers had ever seen such a massive display of airborne might. As the high winds were made apparent, the second pass was canceled and 1/2 of the Bde flew back to Okinawa. Upon arriving, the 1/2 filled the available aircraft, were consolidated and re-manifested as full loads, and dispatched back to Taiwan for a second try.



2/503d blast on Taiwan

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

Those of us on the ground seized the objectives with reduced forces, much like the airborne forces at Normandy in 1944, but unlike them, we had no real bullets coming our way.

(continued...)



We handled the unexpected well and fought with what we had. On D+1, the remainder of the Bde dropped and joined us on the ground. Almost immediately, Company B (Bravo Bulls) were ordered to attack to the SE to seize an objective on the far bank of a major river (Tainan River, but my memory may be flaky on this. It was at least 1000 meters wide).

We moved out at EENT toward an attack position on the near bank of the river, for a 0900 hrs assault on D+2. Almost immediately we encountered a sheer cliff, with a 10 foot drop. Using a nylon rappelling rope for safety, we descended as quickly as possible. By this time, darkness had fallen. We followed the ridge SE only to learn there was another sheer cliff about 100 feet in height. Rigging the MG's, mortars, and 90mm recoilless rifles to each individual, we used the hasty rappel to descend. Moving as quickly as possible we moved to a night assembly area to pause until my recon could place us where we had to be.

I selected the best reps from each platoon to accompany me to set up the crossing site. SGTs John Lopez, David Howard, and Gary Wright with the company net radio, SFC's Gene Rick, Mo Hostack, and Emmett Wheatfall, and SSG Jackie Siggers were the best that I had. Using engineer tape, each platoon marked its route from the village attack position to the waters' edge, so there would be no delay. The company would cross in company line with each platoon in column. The Weapons Platoon would follow the center rifle platoon and use the rappel rope as a safety line for the mortarmen struggling with the tube, base plate, and equipment/ammo.

With this done, SGT Lopes joined me in selecting a route across the river, which quickly became neck deep. Experimenting until we found a suitable, fording route across, we reconned the objective to find it occupied by sleeping aggressors from the 25 ID (Hawaii). Using the back azimuth, we rejoined the Recon Party.

Back in the assembly area. I briefed the platoon leaders and the company and we prepared to move to the Attack Position before BMNT, to preclude being observed by enemy air. Once in the village, we blended in with the people in the shadow of their huts. Our presence was not questioned but we shared C rations with those interested, as soldiers have always done.

At H-Hr we hit the LD (river's edge) and were off, while A/1/503 was doing the same thing about 1 Km upstream. BG Williamson later told me that he was on a mountain vantage point with his staff and control representatives from IX Corps HQ and applauded as both companies appeared from concealment to cross the LD **ON TIME**. Without incident we got across and surprised the aggressors who were eating an A-ration breakfast from a

mess truck. They fled to avoid capture but they were without their mess truck and cooks for the remainder of the days remaining.

I have gone into great detail to highlight the training and demonstrated skills that made us successful in this exercise and later in RVN when we deployed. We worked with the Nationalist Chinese Airborne regiment throughout and got good at liaison with foreign nationals which also led to success in RVN. For about 10 more days we were ahead of the aggressor decision cycle and were hitting and ambushing them at every opportunity, to their chagrin. BG Williamson also told me that the controllers commented that, ***"That damn Lombardo and the Bravo Bulls couldn't be stopped or easily controlled."***



The Lieutenants, all of which were changed/rotated before deployment in May '65, were in a learning role. The success of the company thereafter was primarily as a result of the NCO leadership. The officers changed, some faster than others, but the company NCO's made the difference and were the glue that bonded the troops into a successful team. It was my honor and privilege to have been the band leader of this great orchestra, who played and danced to their own music.

**Roy S. Lombardo, Jr., LTC Inf (Ret)**  
**CO, B/2/503d**

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### **~ RAFFLE...WIN \$500. ~**

173d Chapter 17 Fund Raiser. For those in your area wishing to purchase Chapter 17 raffle tickets contact Jim Haynes at (614) 746-5605, E-mail at [Jhaynes6@columbus.rr.com](mailto:Jhaynes6@columbus.rr.com) All essential information is on the ticket itself.



Winning drawing will be made in September at the Kokomo (Indiana) veterans' annual get-to-together.



**2011 RANGER REUNION, COLUMBUS, GA  
LRRP / LRP / RGR of 173<sup>RD</sup> AIRBORNE HERD**

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AT**

**DOUBLE TREE HOTEL**

**5351 Sidney Simons Blvd**

**(706) 327-0041**



**176 rooms**

**size of hospitality room**

**has elevator**



**“ N COMPANY RANGERS “**

**GROUP ROOM RATES: \$85 PLUS TAX**

**Group Contact between Double Tree and N Company Rangers – Robert Henriksen  
current rooms block for our company = 20**

**IF YOU NEED ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE RANGER REUNION  
CALL HOTEL**

**GROUP CODE: N COMPANY RANGERS**

**CONTACT COMPANY UNIT DIRECTOR**

**ROBERT HENRIKSEN email : novrgreo@gmail.com or call (360) 393-7790**



# 2011 RANGER REUNION EVENT

To: All Members, their spouses, family members and friends of the Company.

Subject: Come join us for the Company dinner and meeting at the Fort Benning Officer's Club.

After receiving many email requests for a gathering of our Company at this year's Ranger Reunion, I got together with Dave Cummings, and we have come up with a special gathering for everyone.

Here's a flyer about the event. We need everyone who plans to attend to contact me ASAP to get a head count. Please include everyone's name who will be accompanying you to the dinner.

**Date/Info:**

**July 29, 2011**

Doors open at 4 p.m.

Cash Bar

Buffet service at 4:40 p.m.

Cost per person: \$18.50

Registration deadline: Noon, July 27th

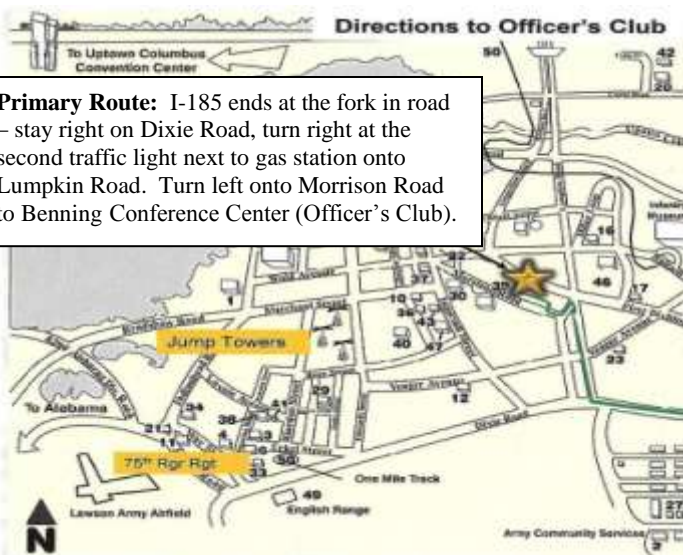
## Fort Benning, Georgia

New regulations just came out. You are no longer required to stop and obtain a visitor's pass before entering the Post. Just show your ID's at the checkpoint.

**FORT BENNING**  
**479 Fort Benning Road**  
**Fort Benning, GA 31905**

**Contact:**

**Robert 'twin' Henriksen**  
**Unit Director**  
**173d LURPS & Rangers**  
**75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment Association**  
**Phn: 360-393-7790**



N/CO Company – Dinner & Meeting at Ft. Benning Officer's Club  
 Friday July 29<sup>th</sup> at 1600 – 2000  
 All friends of the Company invited so make sure to get on list

Come join us at the Ft. Benning Officer's Club

Fort Benning Officer's Club was organized in 1919, the year Camp Benning became Fort Benning. In 1931 (then) Lt Col George Marshall headed the club's Board of Governors and engaged a prominent New York architect to design a clubhouse, which was built in the Spanish Mission Revival style like most of the post's early construction. The club was completed in 1934 at a cost of \$150,000, most of it private funds. It was considered one of the most modern clubs in the Southeast, with an expensive gallery, lounge for men and women, billiard room, gymnasium, kitchen and grill, transient quarters on the mezzanine level. Today, it serves as the conference center hosting various Fort Benning events.

" SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY BUFFET "

TOSSED GARDEN SALAD

GOLDEN FRIED CHICKEN OR BARBEQUE SPARERIBS

BRAISED CABBAGE / COLLARD GREENS SLOW COOKED WITH HAM  
 CREAMY MASH POTATOES WITH CHICKEN GRAVY  
 SOUTHERN CORNBREAD

WARM PEACH COBBLER      ICE TEA / COFFEE AND A CASH BAR

**\$18.50 PER PERSON (INCLUDES GRATUITY)**

Dinner Fee Due By Wednesday July 27<sup>th</sup>

To Be Added To The Dinner List

Contact Unit Director - Robt Henriksen - by Email or call (360) 393-7790



**Ranger Tab is received after completion of Ranger School.**

It was not until World War II when the modern Rangers were born, authorized by General George C. Marshall in 1942. The six battalions of the modern Rangers have been deployed in wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and saw action in several conflicts, such as those in Panama and Grenada. Of the current active Ranger battalions, two -- the 1st and the 2nd -- have been in service since reactivation in 1974. The 3rd Ranger Battalion and the headquarters of the 75th Ranger Regiment were reactivated in 1984. **RLTW**



## President Obama to Award Medal of Honor to 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger



**The White House announced May 31st that SFC Leroy A. Petry will receive the Medal of Honor**

On July 12th, President Barack Obama will award Sergeant First Class Leroy Arthur Petry, U.S. Army, the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry. Sergeant First Class Petry will receive the Medal of Honor for his courageous actions during combat operations against an armed enemy in Paktya, Afghanistan in May, 2008. He will be the second living, active duty service member to be awarded the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan. Sergeant First Class Petry's wife, Ashley, and other family members will join the President at the White House to commemorate his example of selfless service.

Leroy Arthur Petry was born on July 29, 1979. He is a native of Santé Fe, New Mexico and enlisted in the United States Army in September 1999. He attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Sergeant First Class Petry is currently assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment and attached to Special Operations Command (SOCOM) with duty at Joint Base Lewis McChord as a liaison for the SOCOM Care Coalition where he tracks and monitors injured Rangers returning from the Theater of Operations to the initial place of care to home station care.

Sergeant First Class Petry has completed multiple combat tours to Afghanistan and Iraq totaling 28 months of deployment.

His military decorations include: two Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, three Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, National Defense Service Medal, three Army Good Conduct Medals, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Combat Star, Iraq Campaign Medal with Combat Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, to name a few.

## Army Rangers



The Army Rangers were heavily influenced by the American landscape and the people who populated it before the Europeans. The rough terrain and forests of the newly settled land were much more conducive to the ambushes and raids carried out by Native Americans in battle than the traditional pitched battles fought in open fields by European armies. To have any sort of chance in war against the Native Americans, European soldiers had to adopt the same guerrilla tactics.

This was what Captain Benjamin Church had in mind in 1670 when he assembled the first Ranger-like team in American history. Church created a band of men who conducted hunting parties to find and kill "King Philip," the English moniker given to the Wampanoag tribe chief, Metacomet. Church's scouts and raiders spent long periods of time "ranging" -- quietly covering distances in search of the enemy. This gave rise to the term "ranger." Church's Rangers used the Native Americans' own methods against them, conducting short, sporadic surprise battles and ambushes resulting from the information gathered during ranging.

The man credited with establishing the first Ranger company is Major Robert Rogers. To help the British in their fight during the French and Indian War, Rogers assembled the first official Ranger group in the colonies in 1756. This regiment was made up of deer hunters who knew how to move swiftly and quietly through the woods and hills, how to track, and how to shoot precisely with the highly imprecise weaponry available at that time.

Rogers expanded upon the knowledge these men already had, adapting it to the context of war and creating 28 operational rules that included advisements on ambushing, marching formations, prisoner interrogation, retreat, scouting and reconnaissance. These were documented in Rogers' now-famous *Standing Orders for Rangers*, and 19 of the orders are in use for the 75th Ranger Regiment .

The most famous Ranger brigade of the war is arguably Colonel John Mosby's band of Confederate troops, who, according to Mosby's mode of operation, shared loot from Union Army camp raids with the local population. But it was Mosby's raids and guerrilla-style warfare that became the hallmark of Rangers. Mosby was very successful at striking the Union Army randomly, always catching them off guard.

Although they didn't make any formal appearance in the Spanish-American War or World War I, the Rangers were activated once again in World War II. In North Africa, Europe and South Asia they fought, forming the basis for the modern Ranger Regiment in existence today. RLTW



From: <http://science.howstuffworks.com/army-ranger1.htm>



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / July 2011 – Issue 30

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# Rolling Thunder XXIV Memorial Day Ride Rangers & Special Forces at Washington, DC



**2011**

**Bill "Wilkie"**  
Wilkinson N-75, C-75

**Bruce Cleveland**  
1-75

**Dave Cummings**  
N-75

**Carl "Milli" Millinder**  
N-75

**Rudy Teodosio**  
N-75, 2-75, 1st SFGA

**Ernie Rios**  
SF RGR, 1st SFGA

**Chuck Moseby**  
N-75



*Sky Soldiers well represented*

[Sent in by Robt. 'twin' Henriksen, N-75 Ranger]



## *~ a date which will live in infamy ~*



President Franklin Roosevelt's War Message delivered in a speech before a joint session of Congress  
December 8, 1941

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces.

Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounded determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

President Franklin Roosevelt

From Congressional Record, 1941, Vol. 87, Pt. 1.



# Letter from the President to his Soldiers, WWII

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY EXPEDITIONARY  
FORCES:

You are a soldier of the United States Army.

You have embarked for distant places where  
the war is being fought.

Upon the outcome depends the freedom of your  
lives: the freedom of the lives of those you love—  
your fellow-citizens—your people.

Never were the enemies of freedom more  
tyrannical, more arrogant, more brutal.

Yours is a God-fearing, proud, courageous  
people, which, throughout its history, has put its  
freedom under God before all other purposes.

We who stay at home have our duties to  
perform—duties owed in many parts to you. You will  
be supported by the whole force and power of this  
Nation. The victory you win will be a victory of all  
the people—common to them all.

You bear with you the hope, the confidence,  
the gratitude and the prayers of your family, your  
fellow-citizens, and your President—

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Source: 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site.





503rd PARACHUTE RGT ASSOCIATION, WORLD WAR II, INC.



503rd Parachute Regiment 462nd Parachute Artillery Battalion  
161st Parachute Engineer Company

**503rd DEEP SOUTH CHAPTER CORREGIDOR REUNION**  
**SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**  
**JULY 7-8-9-10, 2011**

The Deep South Chapter invites you to the *Corregidor Reunion* July 7-10, 2011, hosted by Chuck and Dee Breit and Charley and Edith Hylton. It will be held at the

**Quality Inn (Mid-Town)**  
**7100 Abercorn Street**  
**Savannah, GA 31406**

**Tel Reservations:**  
**912-352-7100**

**Room Rates:**  
**\$66.67 per night, includes taxes**  
**(rate is good for early arrival and stay over)**  
**Cutoff date for reservations is July 1st**

**Reunion Registration Fee:\***  
**\$90.00 per person**

\*Includes a hot breakfast each morning, hospitality room, trolley tour, riverboat harbor cruise and dinners on Friday and Saturday nights.



**TAKE THE TRAIN!**

The train is an inexpensive way to get to Savannah and we will pick you up at the train station if you let us know when you are arriving.

**TROOPERS**, we are without a doubt aging. Do all you can do NOW as time is not passing us by, it is RUNNING US OVER! Ask your children and/or grandchildren to bring you if you can't make it on your own. School will be out so invite Grandchildren to join us. ALL GUESTS ARE WELCOME.

**ALL MEMBERS OF THE 173d AIRBORNE**, you are our heritage and we welcome you to join us for our reunion.

Please assist the Reunion Planning Committee by completing and returning the following Registration Form as soon as possible which will help us make this a great reunion for everyone.

Also, don't delay in making your hotel reservations with the Quality Inn.

**~ Registration Form ~**  
(Please print & copy form for additional names)

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Your Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Guest 1: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Guest 2: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Guest 3: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Mail address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In the “#” space above, please indicate “1” for roast beef, “2” for grilled chicken, or “3” for salmon for the Saturday night dinner.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, at the rate of \$90. per person named above.

Please make check payable to Charles E. Breit and mail to:

**Chuck Breit**  
**34 Garden Mall Court**  
**Inglis, FL 34449**

Tel: 1-352-447-3983



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



# RECALLING MY WAR

By Verne White,  
HQ Company, 503d PRCT



Ah Lae, New Guinea, land of palm trees, forests, rain and mud all thoroughly overlaid with heat.

We landed there on the south east coast. Immediately boarded trucks called 6 by 6's. It had to do with the number of wheels. Anyway, they were big enough to have about 25-30 guys standing up in the back. We traveled over rutted muddy roads some distance into the interior. We were put into an organized area of tents. Each tent held 4 - 6 troopers. This was to be our home for a short spell. We were considered replacements for paratroopers who had been lost to active duty during battles fought in various areas around the South Pacific.



Verne at Basic Training

Most of the time we just sat around waiting for something to happen. One of the older men (about 30 if memory serves) taught me how to play bridge and chess. He got into the paratroopers by being pardoned from jail if he'd enlist with them. Don't remember what he was convicted for. This was not an uncommon occurrence back in the States, so many of the troopers were quite hardened to life. Compared to my sheltered life and education you can see that both types had much to learn from the other.

We were finally put out on details. One was to work in a food warehouse stacking and moving boxes of canned goods around. When the shift ended and we were to be loaded back onto the trucks we were required to stand in formation while an officer "frisked" us. The reputation of the troopers was not good as can be imagined from the previous remarks of their backgrounds. Lo and behold, a large quantity of canned foods were found hidden amongst the pockets of the platoon. We then were allowed to load onto the truck. Whoops, someone realized how sneaky we could be and off-loaded us to frisk us again. Another pile of food was retrieved. Finally we were allowed to return to our area, where we all shared in the canned goods which had escaped detection.

Just before Thanksgiving a couple of our company were detailed to deliver turkeys to each companies' mess tent.

As the truck passed our living area one of the deliverers accidentally dropped off a turkey to a waiting cohort. During the evening a turkey was spitted and turned over a fire back behind the company tents. It was basted in the canned butter, which wouldn't melt except under very high heat. The butter and chocolate bars were made of some compound that kept it from melting in the tropical heat. That turkey sure tasted good. It was quite a change from the so-called lamb we had for meat on most days. We claimed that the "lamb" was really billy-goat which had been too old to run very far and had been beaten with clubs. It tasted awful and was very tough and stringy.

The next assignment showed that the brass figured out that getting us next to food was not a great idea so they assigned us to load and unload ammunition. This ammunition was mostly artillery shells for 105mm and 155mm cannon. Very heavy when in the wooden crates.

That night as we were sleeping I was awakened and cautioned to remain quiet and go to the outside porch which surrounded the main building. This was because someone had seen Japanese infiltrators getting in position to attack. As luck would have it I also had a bottle of captured Japanese rice wine, so it went along with us to the porch where we laid quietly, waiting for whatever might be forthcoming.

Some grenades were thrown into the building, but since we were all outside no harm was done. I had one finger in the barrel of the rifle and another in the neck of the bottle to keep any dust and dirt from getting into the critical areas. At that point it came to me that while we fought during the day and rested during the night, the Japanese kept just the opposite schedule.

(On October 25, 1999, it was my extreme pleasure to meet with Harry Akune who had been attached to Regimental HQ as an interpreter. We talked of many people and experiences. During the discussion we reminded each other of the terrible fly problem. They swarmed and lit on everything. It was impossible to eat the food without having to brush the flies off it just as you would put it in your mouth. He had several papers and books and the photos on the following pages have been taken from them).

Next morning was the fateful day for a platoon of Company C, and for me in particular. The mission was to descend the south hillside via a roadway down to the road which circumnavigated the main part of the island. All went well until as we were going west on that perimeter road we came to a large cavern in the side of the hill.

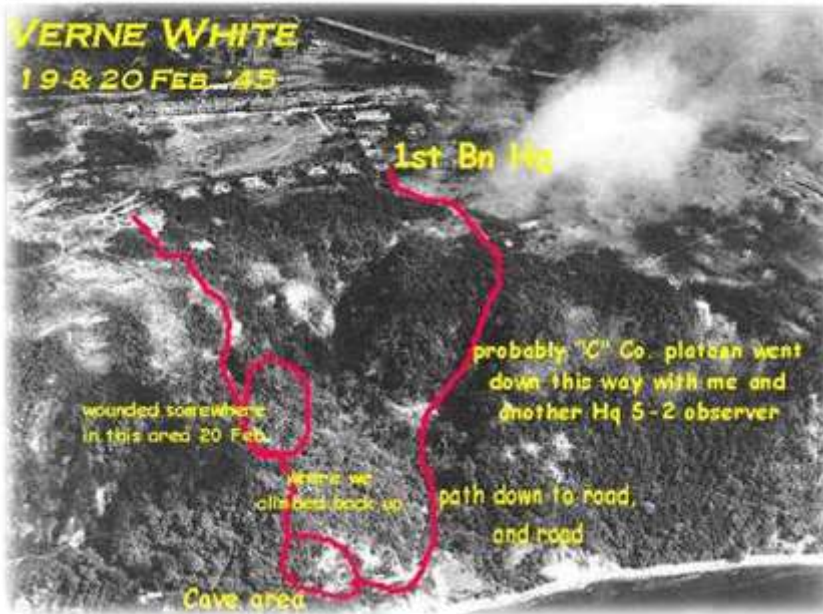
(continued...)



It was at least 20 feet tall. The lead squad had crossed in front of it and had fired rifle grenades into the area which contained several trucks.

They followed those with white phosphorus grenades. Suddenly from the cave three Japanese soldiers ran out across the road and down the remainder of the hillside toward the ocean. The undergrowth was so heavy that they quickly disappeared from sight. A moment of panic ensued but was rapidly brought under control by the Lieutenant.

Our force was divided on each side of the cave. Getting us back into a cohesive unit was of paramount importance. In small groups of two or three we ran across the front of the cave while covering fire was used by one or two guys stationed at the corners of the cave opening. A few of the platoon were wounded and some were killed, including my friend, the other intelligence man. He felt nothing as he was shot right in the head and killed instantly. Another was the radio man.



The route taken by the combat patrol of "C" Co., 1st Bn, on each of the mornings of the 19th and 20th February was down the east side of Crockett Ravine to the South Shore road, and then up towards Btry Boston, on the west side of the ravine. A little to the left of the center and near the bottom of the picture you can see a short white open angled line. This is a part of the road that the platoon was on. To the left of the intersection of the angle and against the side of the hill is a domed-like darker spot; this is the cave opening. We came from the right and passed across in front of the cave mouth. Where the dark shrubbery shows to the left of the cave is where we climbed the ridge to the path that can be seen as a white mark (a little obscured by the shrubs) above the shrub line angling off to the right from the somewhat oval white smoke from an explosion and leading to the top.

When we all were assembled on the other side of the cave the decision was to climb the hill and report back to HQ. We had to climb the hill as to cross in front of the cave to go back the way we had come would invite other casualties. We were somewhat protected from the cave's weaponry since we rounded a small point which put us on a more westerly side of that portion of the hill. Some of the platoon started climbing when it was noticed that we should get the radio from the body of our fallen comrade. I did that and began the climb. Part way up, one of the troopers from a squad took over the task of carrying the radio. It was a difficult climb because of the steepness of the hill and the undergrowth. Added to the arduous task was the fact that we were all scared that the enemy was below and our backs were exposed to any fire that he might wish to send our way. This added emphasis to the speed with which we got back to the top. That night was not a pleasant one for sleep, as you might imagine.

The next morning Col. George M. Jones requested that I lead him back down the "path" by which we had climbed the hill. Colonel Jones, an enlisted man who acted as a body guard, and I began the trek. Since I was the only one of the trio who knew where we were going, it was my job to be in the lead. Evidently, as a result of the previous day's action, someone had ordered the Navy to use their naval guns to bombard the area where the cave was located. Even though we were on the back side of a spine running down the hill, we could hear and feel the impact of the shells hitting the hillside. Some shell fragments were whistling close by our heads. Col. Jones with aplomb would stand upright and look over the edge at the barrage. Quite frankly, I was ducking my head with each explosion.

We had been able to walk some distance down the hill as we were not yet to the area which descended more like a cliff face. When we would have reached that point it would be impossible to stand erect and continue downward. The colonel decided to stop and observe more of the naval activity. So I told him I would go on ahead to make sure the way was clear. A short distance further on my feet slipped and I slid sideways down to another "trail" about 6 feet below the one we had been following.

As I recovered my balance the deadly sound of the double click used by the Japanese to arm their hand grenades came from my right and slightly up the hill.

(continued....)



There, lying prone and peering over the edge of the ridge were two enemy soldiers who had been watching the bombardment. Evidently my slipping had made enough noise to alert them to an oncoming danger. As soon as I saw them I hastily brought my rifle around about hip high and shot at them; simultaneously, I hollered as loud as I could, "Go back, Jones. Go back." Training had made me remember not to use his rank.

Something slammed into my head causing me to fall with my head downhill. Since whatever had struck me had hit me in the head (the hardest part of my body) it did not cause me to lose consciousness. There was blood draining down toward my nose as my body was lying on the left side. It seemed reasonable to assume that perhaps the two had not been killed, so prudence told me to lie doggo. If movement were observed by them a coup-de-gras was more than likely. During the time I was faking death it came to me that it was still a few days 'til my 20th birthday.

So as many other survivors of traumatic conditions will tell you, a prayer started to come to my conscious thought. "God, please let me live to be 20 and I'll go to church every Sunday."

After what seemed like 5 minutes, but was more likely one, it became obvious that if either of the Japanese had survived, my fakery was successful as witnessed by the fact that this document is being written. Consequently, I began making my way back to where Col. Jones had stopped. Upon arriving there, Jones had somehow achieved the presence of a few other troopers to protect him. He insisted that one of them accompany me up toward the top of the hill after first seeing that a quantity of sulfa powder and a bandage was put on the rather nasty looking wound. At least it was my suspicion that it looked nasty and serious.

Walking back up the hill was a little tiring and as we neared the top my escort suggested I sit down while he went for help. Soon some stretcher bearers arrived and carried me to the building being used as the hospital/aid station. My stretcher was placed on the floor and someone, a doctor or perhaps a medic, put more sulfa powder on the wound after wiping off dirt and blood. Next a heavy bandage was wrapped around my head which covered my right eye and from my cheek to what must have been near the top of my head. Of course to make sure the thing didn't slip it went clear around to the back of my head which caused my ear to be covered also. Now no one could tell how bad the wound was; it must have looked very serious indeed.

A kind soul asked what could he get me. My ongoing desire for lemonade came to the fore and I requested some of the powdered stuff, mixed with water, naturally. No joy, evidently the powers that be felt that it would

adversely affect my chance for recovery. I did get some kind of shots though that put me out for the rest of the day and night. The next morning they told me I would be transferred to a ship that was to take the seriously wounded to a field hospital. Sure enough, sometime in the early morning a bunch of us were taken, some walking, and others like me were carried down to the beach where we had landed not many days before.

Since there was no shade we laid out on our stretchers or sat in the sand waiting for some kind of transportation to a ship somewhere out in the bay. Probably we were all injected with some pain-killer medicine as there were no screams of pain from those around me.

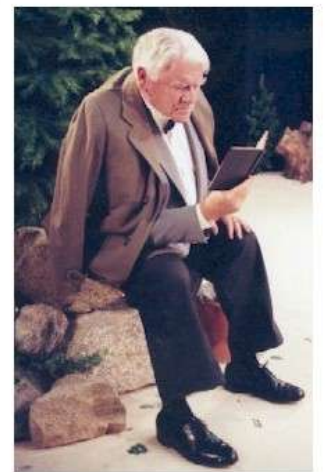
The next thing I remember was my stretcher being manhandled into a Landing Craft type boat and then being lifted onto the deck of what I believe was a destroyer. My horrible appearance was the cause of some priority handling. A sailor knelt beside me and asked if there was anything I wanted. Now you know what I asked for, don't you? If I could just have some of that powdered lemonade mix, that would be really great. The gob said something like "Of course," and went away. Don't you know that he soon reappeared with a "glass" pitcher of lemonade. Not only that but it had been made with "real" lemons and ICE CUBES. Neither of these things had been within my sight since leaving the states several months earlier.

WOW!! it was almost worth the hurt to get such nectar down my throat.

-----  
**The author:  
Verne White, 503d PRCT**



Verne as a "bum"



Verne as Mark Twain



# HONORING ARIZONA VIETNAM VETS



The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services and the Arizona Military Museum in conjunction with the Department of Defense 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War, will host a dinner *IN HONOR OF ARIZONA VIETNAM VETERANS*.

## Special Guest Speaker:

**General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret)**

- WHEN:** Saturday, October 22, 2011  
 No host bar: 5:30-6:30 pm  
 Dinner: 6:45 pm
- WHERE:** Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino  
 5040 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.  
 Chandler, AZ 85226
- PHONE:** 800-946-4452
- COST:** \$40.00 per dinner. No Host Bar.
- ATTIRE:** Men: Coat and tie or open collar with dress Shirt.  
 Women: Semi-formal evening wear.
- RSVP:** You must register to attend. Seating is limited. Please RSVP (form follows) before October 14 to assure your attendance. For further information call:  
**602-253-2378 or 520-868-6777.**

In Honor of Arizona Vietnam Veterans, I (we) will attend the dinner *In Honor of Arizona Vietnam Veterans* on October 22, 2011 at Wild Horse Pass and Casino. There are \_\_\_\_\_ (number in this party) who is (are) Vietnam veteran(s) (Note: recipient of the Vietnam Service Medal and /or Vietnamese Campaign Medal or served in civilian or intelligence agency in country or in AO or served in the Republic of Vietnam armed forces). Please legibly print names of attendees included in your check. (Please copy form for additional names)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

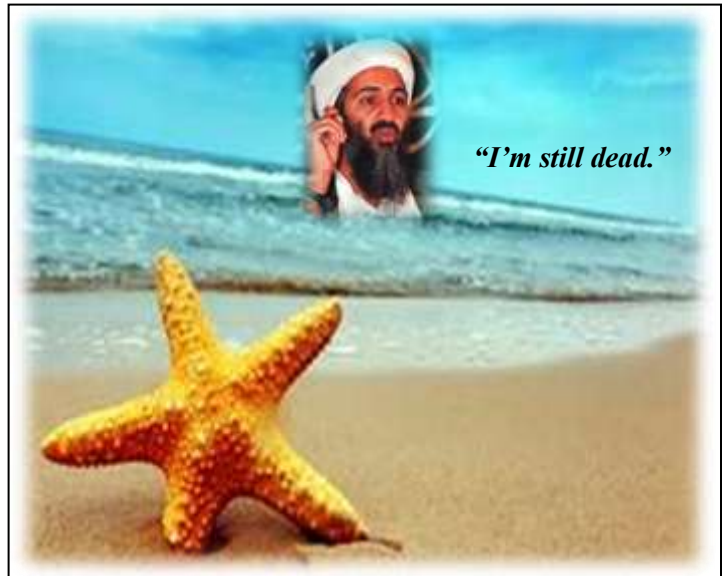
Contact Phone Number & Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner is \$40.00 per person. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for dinners in my group. Make Check payable to Arizona Military Museum, and mail to:

**Arizona Vietnam Veterans Dinner**  
**Attn: Joseph E. Abodeely, Director**  
**AZ Military Museum**  
**9014 North Wealth Road**  
**Maricopa, Arizona 85139**



## ~ Correction ~

In last month's issue we stated that is Rick Patterson, A/2/503d trooper and former DAV Executive Director, presenting the Louisville Slugger to President Obama. It is not.



*"The caption needs to be corrected. The man standing at attention in this photo is Rick Patterson. I'm blown away at the thought of one of us nasty grunts in the Oval Office."*

**Bill Reynolds**  
 A/2/503d  
 -----

***"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value."***

~ Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Supreme commander of allied forces, 1918



# Remembering the Wildcats



I don't know whether to say happy Memorial Day or solemn Memorial Day. On an unrelated note, do you think you could do a piece on 2/503d Recon, Wildcats? I was a member.

After 74th LRRP left LZ English, we completely took over their mission, which was Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol. In case there is doubt about what Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol means, it consisted primarily of deep penetration patrols up to the limit of our PRC-25s which was about 15KM. Some outstanding work was done by the Wildcats and I think it is slipping through the cracks of time and death.

My personal contribution consisted of defending the team, engaging enemy elements as they moved through or adjacent to our AO, conducting artillery ambushes, plotting and directing Defensive Harassment and Interdiction missions, conducting offensive zone and sweep fire missions, and on occasion calling for and directing air strikes or gunship fire support. The last two only occurred on three occasions. I did once, walk 10 meters into a Bouncing Betty Minefield which is a story in itself, and was tasked with plotting its location and dimensions. Other than that, we just sat around or slept in a circle to pass the time.

There is nothing noted anywhere about us, although there are short notes and Orders of Battle mentioned about 173d Recon, which was us as well, it is not about us. What does exist in the literature is

an aggregation of 174th LRRP, and references to after action reports of units outside the 173d such as the Recon elements of the 25th Infantry, the 101st Airborne Recon Elements, the 1st Cavalry Division and a few others. We are totally excluded even though we, the Wildcats, were tasked with participating in true-to-the-manual, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol missions. And the missions were non-stop.

There were no days when Wildcat Teams were not in the field. Ordinarily, we were supposed to conduct three day missions, but were often field tasked with four days or more without the benefit of additional batteries, rations or water. I, myself, participated in one such mission from approximately November 10, 1968 until November 15 1968. As you know, these were not company or platoon size patrol elements, but consisted of 3-6 day combat and reconnaissance patrols conducted by heavily armed six man teams plus an observer.

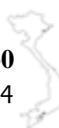
I don't know, but I think we are being passed by. My teammates and I made many significant contributions, and sometimes paid in blood and life for the privilege. Our missions saved countless American lives, while claiming substantial numbers of enemy KIA while disrupting operations directed against Americans and our allied forces. I would like my feather before I die. Feel free to verify any information I pass to you with any knowledgeable, independent person, including members of our teams.

Warmest regards as always,

**George Rivera, SGT**  
A/2/503d



2/503 Wildcats



(I cannot call them ‘Afghans’)



I've had a few inquiries lately for the throws we sold last year. I don't have any on hand but will place ONE MORE order for them. This is the LAST CALL for these so please spread the word.

When we first decided to make them available it was to raise money for a welcome home party after OEF X (that never developed). We donated all of the proceeds to charities which help the Wounded Warriors and used at least 85% of all funds towards helping the Wounded Warriors and not for admin costs. At that time they were available for \$40.00 plus \$9.95 for shipping.

Since we are not in fund raising mode anymore they will be \$40.00 each. If there are any proceeds over the cost of the throws and shipping they will be donated to Defenders of Freedom. Why Defenders of Freedom? Because they have supported many of the ROCK Paratroopers and continue to do so. And because they fall within the guidelines of not having admin costs over 15%.

If you are interested in one of the 2/503 throws please contact me.

Leta Carruth

[tankerbabelc@gmail.com](mailto:tankerbabelc@gmail.com)

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**Note:** On 11 January 2011, CSM Loren Storjohann and Honorary Colonel Ken Smith of the 503rd Regiment, announced the designation of Leta as **Honorary Member of the Regiment** *“for providing sustained physical, moral and substantive support to the warriors of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment from 2007 forward,”* by Order of the Secretary of the Army. Ed

### ~ Advertising Policy ~

Our policy remains to run no for-profit ads in our newsletter, with the exceptions of books written by Sky Soldiers about the Vietnam War, and books written by 503rd troopers covering WWII, which are run free of charge.

*"War hath no fury like  
a non-combatant."*

~ Charles Edward Montague



## GREAT WAR MOVIES

A couple of stories grabbed me in last month's newsletter.

First, the one guy talking about how one of his buddies killed himself. Over the Memorial weekend, I watched a lot of great war movies, among them was, *"The Best Years of Our Lives."* The film deals with soldiers who have returned home and the problems they face. I just saw an article in today's paper about some guy due to return home whose wife wants a divorce; she had cleaned-out their bank account and moved out. So, he gets to return to that and an empty apartment.

The other story, and this is not the first of these, was the sister seeking info on her brother who was killed in November '67.

Also watched *"Apocalypse Now Redux"* and noticed that the Martin Sheen character was in the Herd at one time; he wore the Herd's patch in the movie. Then watched *"Kelly's Heroes"*, one of my favorite WWII flicks.

When we were in the LURP company, my pards and I would go into Bien Hoa and around Long Bien and 'borrow' army jeeps. We would then take them to some jet jockeys we hooked up with on the airbase and would trade them for really nice survival gear which we used in the bush. Don't ask me what they did with the jeeps.

When we were in the LURP Company, our base camp was outside of Bien Hoa; we were responsible of course for guarding our section of the berm surrounding the Long Binh airbase. At our camp we had jump platforms with sawdust pits to practice PLF's, and, we had our own jump tower; it was kinda like a mini-bunji jump in harness.

Anyway, one time, we stole the eagle statue from the 101st (I had mixed feelings about this caper as I was One-O-One stateside). We put the eagle in the 'jump door' of our jump tower!! The Screaming Eagles failed to see the humor in that. We were basically juvenile delinquents with stripes and guns!

**Steve 'SGT Rock' Vargo**  
C/2/503d



The famous *Screaming Eagles* or, as those of us who served with the 101st Airborne Division occasionally refer to ourselves (beer is often involved)...the *Pucking Buzzards*. God forbid a Leg call us that. Ed

**Note:** "While filming *Apocalypse*, the 38-year-old Sheen suffered a heart attack, and over the next few years he reassessed his life, ending his use of drugs, cutting back on alcohol, and becoming much more politically active."



Sheen, in *Apocalypse Now* wearing Ranger Tab

### Dialogue from opening scenes in the movie:

(A hung-over Capt. Willard – Martin Sheen)

Soldier: *"Captain Willard? Are you in there?"*

Willard: *"Yeah."*

Willard (voice over): *"It was a real choice mission, and when it was over, I'd never want another."*

Willard: *"Whaddya want?"*

Soldier: *"Are you all right Captain?"*

Willard: *"How does it look like?"*

Soldier: *"Captain Willard of 505 battalion, 173rd Airborne, assigned SOG?"*

Willard: *"Hey buddy, are you gonna shut the door?"*

Soldier: *"We have orders to escort you to the airfield."*

Willard: *"What are the charges?"*



# And More Reunions of the Airborne Kind



**503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team  
Association WWII**, September 21 – 25, 2011, Denver,  
Colorado.

**Contact:**  
Yolonda Goad  
Tel: 303-682-0004  
Eml: [yolo@live.com](mailto:yolo@live.com)

## *“The Year of the Pathfinder”*

**July 19-23, 2001**

**2011 Convention**

*Sponsored by the  
National Pathfinder Association*



**Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada**

**Contact:**  
[nationalpathfinderassociation.com](http://nationalpathfinderassociation.com)



2/503d practice jump '66 in RVN.  
Photo by Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503d

**AIRBORNE....AND THEN SOME!!**



**11th Airborne Division Association**, 68th Reunion,  
September 25 - 29, 2011 Tucson, Arizona.

**Contact:**  
Charles Magro  
Tel: 256-247-7390



**506th Association Rendezvous**, (Fort Campbell),  
November 8 – 11, 2011, Oak Grove, Kentucky.

**Contact:**  
COL Sean M. Jenkins  
Tel: 270-439-1499



**82nd Airborne Division 65th Annual Convention**,  
August 10 – 14, 2011, Dayton, Ohio.

**Contact:**  
Tel: 937-898-5977  
Eml: [srgabn@aol.com](mailto:srgabn@aol.com)



**101st Airborne Division Association 66th Annual  
Reunion**, August 17 – 21, 2011, Lexington, Kentucky.

**Contact:**  
Tel: 931-431-0199

**Note:** If you're aware of any upcoming Airborne  
Reunions please send details to: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

See Pages 11-12 for Lurps & Rangers Reunion  
details.

See Page 17 for WWII 503rd reunion in Savannah,  
GA



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# An invitation to all Vets

## 4th Annual Tandem for Troops Skydiving Event!

If you have always wanted to skydive, here is an opportunity to do so. During this one weekend, disabled Vets get 1 FREE tandem jump, video, and pictures (of your experience), food and fun. All other Vets (and their families) receive a discounted rate.

This wonderful event is put on by Skydive Midwest. The owner, Keith, is a former Marine, yet again giving to his country.

**Location:**  
**Skydive Midwest**  
**Sturtevant, WI**

**Dates:**  
**16-17 July, 2011**

**Call now to reserve your time:**  
**Skydive Midwest at (877) 348-3688.**

[Notice sent in by Bob "Ragman" Getz, Task Force CO, 2/503d, but not the photo)]



Now, we're not sure if this is the jumpmaster, but I'm calling in my reservation now. *One-thousand one, one-thousand two, one-thousand three.... Can we count to a hundred?* Ed

*I wanna be an Airborne Ranger,  
I want my wife to yell at me  
and call me an idiot cause I got  
drunk on cheap California wine  
and went out and had this tattoo  
put on my arm and I'll probably  
never get any again, ever.*



William C. Vose, Esq., Capt., A/HHC/2/503d, '66/'67, Chief Assistant State Attorney in Florida, displaying his new Ranger tattoo. His lovely bride, Roberta, was heard to say, "*He's such a cutie.*"

(Photo by Woody Davis, A/2/503d)



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## 23% of Disability Claims Processed Incorrectly

May 21, 2011 • Ben Krause

Ten years ago, the VA Inspector General didn't investigate veterans' allegations of VA misconduct. At that time the VA IG's office investigated only veterans that purportedly made false claims. Now, the VA Inspector General estimates 23% of veterans' disability claims were "processed incorrectly."

In that the VA's General Counsel recently admitted to a Supreme Court Justice that 60-70% of the veterans' disability claims denied by the Board of Veterans Appeals were "in error" and wrongfully decided, the VA IG's estimate would seem somewhat shy of the truth. The plain truth is that the VA's disability claims process is not the Due Process that the Constitution guarantees as *justice for all* citizens and non-citizens alike. When "damage control" and "stonewalling" are recognized as "conspiracy to defraud" and "obstruction of justice" it will be apparent to all that 100% of the VA's quasi-judicial disability decisions were wrongfully decided.

Source:

<http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2011/05/va-audit-23-percent-of-disability-claims-incorrectly-processed/>

## 2012 Retiree COLA Update

Terry Howell – *Military Advantage* - May 20, 2011

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the national inflation rate is still trending upward. Of course anyone who has been grocery shopping lately could tell you that, but, the BLS reports that the Consumer Price Index for April is up 0.8 percent over the March CPI, which bodes well for COLA in 2012. This is important for military retirees, and those drawing VA benefits, because the CPI is the indicator used to determine the annual cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) and adjustments to VA Disability and Compensation, Vets Pension, and other VA rates for the following year.

Source:

<http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2011/05/2012-military-retiree-cola-update/#ixzz1NNmdbCQ0>>

*"The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living."*

~ General Omar Bradley



Downtown Bien Hoa, January 1966

## Coming and going to Vietnam: A 1970 documentary

CBS News May 26, 2011

In 1970, five years after the troop buildup in the Vietnam War began, American servicemen were still being drafted and shipped to war at the rate of about 12 planeloads a week. At the time, the entire country was gnarled in a great debate over the war and whether the sacrifice of these young Americans was worth the fight.

So, Mike Wallace boarded a commercial Super DC-8, chartered by the military and bound for Bien Hoa airport near what was then called Saigon, to ask the freshly drafted soldiers what they thought of this war they were told to fight. After they arrived, he boarded a plane back to the U.S. with a group of war-weary troops who just finished their year-long tour in Vietnam. The result is a fascinating documentary-style look at the soldier's state-of-mind in 1970 America.

See the video at: [www.cbsnews.com/8301-504803\\_162-20066518-10391709.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504803_162-20066518-10391709.html)



Downtown Bien Hoa today



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# 404th Radio Research Detachment (Airborne) Operations 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)



**404th RRD (Abn) Base Camp Perimeter Sign**

Every time the detachment moved, and it moved a lot, it left two men behind to recover equipment. At least a dozen men were scattered throughout the Central Highlands (*An Khe, Ban Me Thout, Bien Hoa, Dak To, Kontum, Pleiku, and Tuy Hoa*) with that job.

Additionally, three PRD-1 radio direction finding sets were loaned to the Americal Division (Provisional) Radio Research Company. Another three PRD-1 sets were loaned to the 371st Radio Research Company in support of the 1st Cavalry Division. The 404th retained no PRD-1. The Americal Division was operating in the southern I CTZ and the 1st Cavalry Division operating adjacent to the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Vietnam. Two of the detachment's 5 kW generators had been traded to an engineer unit in the 9th Division operating in the Delta area of Vietnam in exchange for a refrigerator. A deadlined truck was hand-receipted to the Air Force on Tan Son Nhut Air Base located outside of Saigon in return for spare parts. And there was an AR 15-6 investigation for 512 missing classified documents.

In October, 1967, the 173d Airborne Brigade with the 4th Infantry Division moved (*Operations Greeley and MacArthur*) to counter troop concentrations by the 1st and 10th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Divisions near Kontum. This was a two-month battle in which reportedly 170,000 artillery rounds were fired by US artillery and the Air Force flew 3,000 air support sorties of which 300 were B-52 bombing runs. Tragically, one 500 pound bomb was mistakenly dropped on a 173d Brigade unit killing 42 paratroopers. One of the bloodiest battles of the war (*Operation MacArthur*) took place in the Central Highlands near Dak To, 03 to 22

November 1967. About 4,500 troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade and the 4th Infantry Division faced 6,000 North Vietnamese troops of the well trained and experienced NVA 174th Infantry Regiment entrenched in a complex of fortified bunkers on Hill 875, near the Dak To and Ben Het Special Forces Camps. (Photo at right is from *Life Magazine* - Memorial service with 98 pairs of boots, one pair for each man of the 2nd Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade who died on Hill 875).



On 19 November, the 2nd and 4th Battalions of the 503rd Infantry were ordered to "move onto and clear Hill 875." They captured the summit on 23 November. The ferocity of the action is the subject of several books about the battle. Three Medals of Honor were awarded during the eight day battle and both battalions received the Presidential Unit Citation. The North Vietnamese were forced to withdraw across the Cambodian border reportedly with 1,500 to 2,000 dead and 3,000 wounded. US casualties numbered 285 killed and 985 wounded. The 404th RRD (Abn) and other Radio Research units were acknowledged for accurately pinpointing and assessing the commitment of the 1st NVA Division's reserve 174th NVA regiment and its flanking maneuver well before the battle. The 174th end run was not a surprise to senior commanders.

The 173d Airborne Brigade fought in Dak To, Kontum, Pleiku, and Phu Bon Provinces in late October and throughout November. The 404th RRD (Abn) was with them. It was monsoon season during the November, 1967 battle for Dak To and the entire 173d Airborne Brigade was buried in mud. The detachment's equipment was submerged, the radio intercept operators often sat in mud inside the S-144 equipment shelters. Unit personnel stacked wooden pallet upon pallet inside the tents to prevent the equipment from sinking into oblivion.

The only vehicles able to traverse the red mire were fully tracked engineering bulldozers needed to pull the detachment's wheeled vehicles out of the mud onto roads and parking platforms. There was so much mud that unless an enemy mortar round scored a direct hit it did no damage, the mud absorbed the explosion.

(continued...)





**A 404th RRD (Abn) convoy in the vicinity of Mang Yang Pass, Route 19. Object lower center on hood of vehicle is fabricated to cut garrote wires strung across roads by the enemy.**

Fortunately, the detachment's soldiers, mostly young privates on their first enlistment, found gallows humor in their predicament and pulled everything together.

Fourteen detachment trucks among hundreds of other vehicles drove in a convoy 150 miles east from Dak To to Tuy Hoa on Route 19. Route 19 bisected the treacherous Dak Pihao mountains including the Mang Yang and An Khe passes. The Man Yang Pass, a narrow slit in the mountains, was the ambush alley written about by the French journalist Bernard Fall in his classic book *"The Street Without Joy"*. The Communists regularly ambushed military traffic on Highway 19 since 1953 when the French were fighting the Viet Minh. Every convoy passed the military cemetery at the top of the northern rim of the pass. The cemetery contains hundreds of graves from the ambush of the French Group Mobile 100 in June 1954. It was reported by Fall that the Viet Minh buried the French soldiers only to their waist, facing toward France, the upper portions of their bodies fully exposed before the French Army later conducted a proper burial. It was a story often repeated.

*Deadman's Curve*, named so because of the many casualties that convoys suffered there is located a few kilometers west of the Mang Yang Pass. It is a sharp, 'S' curve that forces convoys to slow to 5 mph. Tall gray tree trunks denuded of all branches and leaves by daily bombing, napalming, defoliating, and shelling, as well as seemingly millions of rounds of small arms fire, stood like eerie sentinels. Despite the daily pounding, a steep

thick jungle underbrush covered both sides of the highway creating the worst ambush site in Vietnam. South and immediately opposite the curve a forest covered mountain rising 1,000 feet over the road, offered the Viet Cong a perfect ambush site and they fired constantly on the 173d convoy. Only one detachment vehicle completed the convoy without being towed. Most were hit by small arms fire or shrapnel from mortars and roadside explosive devices or mines planted every night and swept every day. Fortunately, there were no hits by B40 rockets.



**A 173d Airborne Brigade M35 truck destroyed by enemy improvised explosive device or mine, circa February, 1968.**

The most frequent cause of breakdown during the convoy was burned out brakes caused because most drivers were not trained as truck drivers (they were electronic equipment operators) to engine brake with lower gears when descending the mountains. Instead they laid on the brakes when carrying three times the authorized weight for both truck and trailer. The front wheels fell off several trucks because the wheel bearings had not been repacked for at least six months, since submerged in the mud at Dak To, and probably not since they left Fort Campbell in 1965. That no one lost their life or was seriously injured was providential.

The 173d Airborne Brigade incurred considerable combat losses during the battles in the Central Highlands.

(continued...)



Losses were compounded by the exceptionally heavy monsoon rains that occurred at the same time. Combat support and service was overwhelmed. After the culminating battle for Dak To, in November and December 1967, the brigade was redeployed to Phu Hiep village near Tuy Hoa City on the coast of Vietnam. The chief purpose of the move was to allow the 173d to recover, rehabilitate, and repair from the battle.

It wasn't only the 404th suffering from a lack of maintenance. It took the 173d Brigade ten days to recover all of its vehicles strung out between the 200 miles from Kontum to Dak To to Tuy Hoa. During the operational difficulty at Dak To in which the brigade's commanding general directly addressed the executive officer of the 313th RR Battalion, the general pointed out that the brigade was in as bad a condition as the 404th and that there was no assistance that he could render, but the general demanded better cryptologic support – in particular the general wanted more airborne radio direction finding intelligence and LLVI teams. Combat creates such paradoxes.

Upon arrival at Tuy Hoa and with the seaside base camp barely established, a typhoon hit the area and destroyed most of the tentage and inundated the brigade's equipment with salt water from the storm surge. The base camp sat in 6 to 12 inches of salt water for over a week. The logistics was so poor that the damaged tentage was used for another three months which explained the jerry rigged canvas, cardboard, and plywood shelters erected inside the medium general purpose squad tents. That same typhoon also hit the adjacent Air Force Base at Tuy Hoa. Detachment personnel scrounged the base garbage dump and recovered better tentage discarded by the Air Force than issued by the Army. With a little mending by Vietnamese sail makers the detachment got by.

In late January 1968, about a month after the typhoon, with the brigade in the middle of refitting, the enemy launched their Tet Offensive. The enemy attacked the cities in Central Vietnam, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and Tuy Hoa / Phu Hiep as well as cities in the central coastal and highland areas that lay within the Communist 5th Military Region. The other cities to the south, that included Saigon, were attacked 24 hours later early on 31 January.

Radio Research and Military Intelligence units throughout Vietnam alerted their support combat commanders to pending local attacks, but MACV couldn't put the nationwide offensive together into a strategic picture until it was obvious.

Fortunately, the Tet Offensive lost its element of total surprise because the North Vietnamese changed calendars the previous August. North Vietnamese leaders ordered the offensive to be launched on the night of the first day of Tet and to take all objectives by total

surprise on the first day. For an unknown reason, the North Vietnamese Army Supreme Command was not aware that there were different dates for Tet between North and South Vietnam. Most North Vietnamese Army units in the Communist 5th Military Region (*adjacent to North Vietnam*) used the North Vietnamese calendar and conducted their attacks on 30 January. But the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units in the south attacked on 31 January.

A week before what was later called the Nationwide Tet Offensive, the 404th RRD (Abn) accurately analyzed and predicted that portion the Tet Offensive against An Khe and Tuy Hoa cities. The 173d was well prepared in defensive positions to counter the attacks. Several hundred Viet Cong were killed attacking the 173d positions near Phu Hiep village and hundreds more were killed fighting the 173d and especially Company D, 16th Armor, in bitter hand-to-hand fighting in Tuy Hoa city. The initial Tet attack was not a big event for the 173d. What remained of the enemy gave up and went away.



**404th RRD mascot – "Banana" circa April 1968**

During Tet, 173d Airborne Brigade task forces were also sent to relieve the Special Forces camps at Kontum and Dak To and then to the Pleiku-Ban Me Thout area. Two-man LLVI and ARDF relay teams from the 404th RRD (Abn) accompanied each brigade task force for weeks at a time. At one point the 404th base camp was the only 173d Airborne Brigade unit left at Phu Hiep and fortunately tied into and provided very sanitized intelligence support to the 26th Republic of Korea (ROK) Infantry Regiment's perimeter.

*(continued....*



The Commanding General of the 173d explained, *"I can leave Company D, 16th Armor, but I don't have any more troops; listen to this area (Phu Yen Province and Tuy Hoa city) and keep the Koreans out of trouble."*

During Tet, Tuy Hoa was the single major city in Vietnam which enemy forces could not penetrate the defensive perimeter. The 404th was cited by the brigade's commanding general for providing the early warning necessary to prevent an enemy success there. During the next several months, the enemy tried several times to capture Tuy Hoa city until his regimental sized unit was unequivocally destroyed. Remaining combat elements of the 5th NVA Division and its entrenched headquarters were annihilated during a single battle in April during which 200 NVA were killed and 17 taken prisoner. Not a single member of the regiment escaped. That victory was directly attributed to the 404th and earned an enlisted analyst assigned to the unit, the Legion of Merit Medal for Achievement. The medal was presented by the Commanding General, 173d Airborne Brigade, after the Colonel commanding the 26th ROK Regiment thanked the commanding general for the 404th help.

By late January, the brigade's rear element previously at Bien Hoa moved to the main brigade base camp now established at Camp Radcliff, An Khe, and the 404th moved its base camp from Tuy Hoa also to An Khe.



**A portion of the 173d Airborne Brigade's Camp Radcliff at An Khe (or the 4th ID's Camp Enari at Pleiku). The reddish tint is the result of red dust blown up by helicopters into everything.**

By February 1968, the 173d Airborne Brigade was located along the 100 miles of Route 14 from Kontum to Pleiku to Ban Me Thout and along 150 miles of Route

19 from Pleiku to An Khe to Qui Nhon as well as conducting operations to the west of Tuy Hoa. The 404th had elements located in Dak To, Ban Me Thout, Kontum, Pleiku, An Khe, and Tuy Hoa / Phu Hiep.

During April, 1968, the 173d Airborne Brigade was assigned expanded operational areas at Bong Son (LZ English), An Khe, Tuy Hoa and along Route 19 East. In addition to its airborne infantry battalions, an artillery and combat support battalion and other assigned and attached units of company and detachment size, the brigade included an armor battalion, a cavalry squadron, and an attached mechanized infantry battalion.

The brigade's personnel strength approached 6,000 men, half the size of an infantry division and frequently operated in a box-shaped area of responsibility 150 miles to a side (22,500 square miles – larger than ten states back home). The 404th supported the entire brigade and was spread so far that the mail runs took over a week and still missed many soldiers. At least twenty percent of the men assigned to the detachment had never met one another.

Aside from supporting the brigade in its several head-to-head tactical operations against the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, the detachment also provided area coverage (*general support*) for Phu Yen Province, of an NVA division headquarters, a separate regiment, a Viet Cong main force battalion, and local Viet Cong infrastructure units. The large area of responsibility, constant relocation, and untenable transportation combined to make the detachment unlocatable by either the 313th RR Battalion or the 509th RR Group for weeks at a time. For that matter neither the 173d Airborne Brigade headquarters nor the IFFV could locate battalion size units of the 173d for several days during this period.

Fortunately the detachment was able to refurbish with new and repaired equipment at Bong Son (LZ English) in May 1968. The detachment reported Readiness Condition C2. The 404th Radio Research Detachment (Airborne) is now thought to be one of the most decorated company size units in the US Army. The 404th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for Bien Hoa, six times awarded the Army Meritorious Unit Citation, and awarded fifteen campaign silver bands. When last seen, before ASA predictably lost it, the 404th Radio Research Detachment (Airborne) guidon staff was filled from top to bottom with silver citation and campaign bands. *[The lineage is passed to the 404th Military Intelligence Company activated in the Regular Army 16 June 2000 at Menwith Hill, England].*

*(continued...)*



Brigadier General Leo H. Schweiter, Commanding General of the 173d Airborne Brigade talked with 404th analysts practically every day. The general lauded the 404th RRD (Abn) for using COMINT and COMSEC operations to prevent a battalion of the 503rd Infantry from walking into a regimental size ambush and for its superb support during Dak To.

Brigadier General Richard J. Allen commended the detachment for allowing the 173d Airborne Brigade to constantly outmaneuver enemy forces and saving the lives of many Sky Troopers. Both Generals, Schweiter and Allen, approved SP4 Minnock's Legion of Merit Medal following the destruction of the 5th North Vietnamese Division Headquarters. Infantry battalion and company commanders routinely visited the 404th detachment to express appreciation and thanks for critical support by the LLVI teams and ARDF.

This report acknowledges the officers and NCOs of the 313th Radio Research Battalion for assistance rendered during the period of this report and also Captain John Moon, Military Intelligence, 173d Airborne Brigade, for his consistent support to the 404th RRD (Abn) as well as his exceptional use of the detachment's Special Intelligence. Generals Schweiter and Allen understood how to use the detachment to multiply combat power – they made the detachment's excellence meaningful.

#### **Footnote:**

Reportedly, it was determined years later that lacking sufficient storage containers for 3,400 classified documents, the missing 512 documents had been stored with another unit and subsequently certified destroyed. No one then in the unit recalled that transaction and there were no document receipts. That can't be worse than another Radio Research unit that used classified documents for toilet paper in pit toilets.

### **SP5 Edward Minnock 404th Radio Research Detachment 173d Airborne Brigade ~ Legion of Merit ~**

SP5 Edward Minnock enlisted in the Army in September of 1966 and deployed to Vietnam as a member of the 404th Radio Research Detachment, attached to the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). As a private, he was the acting Operations Sergeant for the 404th, a position normally held by a sergeant first class.



On 27 March 1968, he began to notice that the incoming information pointed to an enemy attack on Tuy Hoa City within the next ten days. He directed his soldiers to concentrate their efforts on the forthcoming operation. Within five days, Private Minnock had produced a comprehensive tactical analysis and prediction of how and when the enemy would attack. Private Minnock briefed the brigade and subordinate commanders, as well as the commander of a Korean regiment and his American advisor. In order to gain credibility with the Korean commander, Private Minnock impersonated a captain because he believed that the Korean officer would not listen to an enlisted man.

Private Minnock accurately predicted which units comprised the enemy force, their size, the time of the attack, the routes of advance and withdrawal, and the primary targets of the assault. The targets included two important bridges, the city prison, the American airfield, and a South Vietnamese artillery battalion located in the city. Private Minnock's information resulted in the postponement of an offensive operation by the Korean regiment, allowing them to act as a reserve during the enemy attack, and the repositioning of other key forces. He also accurately predicted the new location of the 5th North Vietnamese Army Division Headquarters. He then coordinated and directed the bombing of the headquarters by two 175-millimeter artillery shells and eight 500-pound bombs, thus seriously degrading the enemy's command and control capability. Subsequent intelligence gathered during and after the battle confirmed the startling accuracy of Private Minnock's predictions.

As a direct result of his efforts, the enemy was soundly defeated with minimal friendly casualties. His truly remarkable achievement is a textbook example of the difference that can be made in the outcome of a combat action by the initiative of one individual soldier. Private Minnock's contributions are doubly impressive given his relative age and inexperience.



**For his actions, Private Minnock was decorated with the Legion of Merit, the only private ever to hold that honor.**

Source:

<http://www.a2zcomputerworks.com/asa/asapgs/hg08.html>



## Learning How to Speak Aussie

This primer will prove invaluable should you ever again find yourself in a war (or bar) with Diggers on your flank.

**Digger:** Initially one who took part in the gold rushes in New South Wales and Victoria in the nineteenth century. Now the term for an Australian foot soldier under the rank of corporal. This second meaning came into general currency during World War I on the redoubts to Gallipoli. At the time the members of the opposing Turkish army were at a loss to understand why Australians were willing to needlessly sacrifice their lives for perfidious Albion. These days the new remaining survivors are at an equal loss. However, they strongly object to the feminist legions of Women Against Rape marching on **Anzac Day** (25 April), which commemorates Gallipoli, reasoning, "*They should march on their own bloody day.*" National Rape Day has yet to be officially gazetted.

**Raw Prawn:** If someone '*comes the raw prawn*', one has behaved in an extremely offensive fashion, hence, "*Don't come the bloody raw prawn with me, mate.*"

**Top Night:** One has been blind drunk. One generally has a '*top night*' in the company of friends whereas one can get shickered by one's self.

**Shicker:** If one gets '*on the shicker*' one intends to get drunk, hence shickered.

There will be a test.

### Source:

"*The Dinkum Aussie Dictionary*" courtesy of  
A.B. "Aussino" Garcia, HHC 2/503d

**Aussino:** A cross between an American Chicano paratrooper and an Aussie Digger.

**Aussie:** See Shicker.

## It's a Pisser

An Australian Combat Field Sergeant and a U.S. Paratrooper General were on exchange duty and were sharing the latrine.

The Aussie Sergeant finished first and walked out without washing his hands. The U.S. Paratrooper watched in disgust, finished his squirt, washed his hands and walked up to the Aussie and said, "*Sergeant! In the U.S. Paratroops we were taught to wash our hands after taking a leak.*"

The rather large Aussie Sergeant replied, "*In the Australian Army mate, we were taught not to piss on our hands!*"

## For our California Area Vets

Flyers/Fact Sheets on the Veterans Homes of Greater Los Angeles and Ventura Counties are available on line. There is immediate availability for the Lancaster [www.calvet.ca.gov/Homes/Lancaster.aspx](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/Homes/Lancaster.aspx) and Barstow [www.calvet.ca.gov/Homes/Barstow.aspx](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/Homes/Barstow.aspx) Veterans Homes for assisted living and independent living (in Barstow). Thank you for helping us spread the word about these wonderful Veterans Homes that were built as an expression of gratitude toward California's deserving Veterans. A veteran and a spouse can also apply! Thank you so much for your help!

**Jeanne Bonfilio**

**Public Information Officer - California DVA**

## Senators tell VA to reduce veteran suicides

**Rob Hotakainen**

*McClatchy Newspapers*

With veterans now accounting for one of every five suicides in the nation, the Department of Veterans Affairs is under pressure from the courts and Congress to fix its mental health services in an attempt to curb the death toll.

"*The suicide rate is out of control. It's epidemic proportions right now,*" said Paul Rieckhoff, the executive director of the group Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "*There are very few programs that are effective, and there's a serious lack of national awareness.*"

While the government keeps no official tally of veteran suicides, the VA said last year that veterans account for roughly 20 percent of the estimated 30,000 suicides annually in the United States.

Antonette Zeiss, the acting deputy chief officer of mental health services with the VA's Office of Patient Care Services, said the department's call center had received more than 400,000 calls since it began nearly four years ago. Of those, she said, more than 55,000 were referred to local VA suicide prevention coordinators for same-day or next-day service.

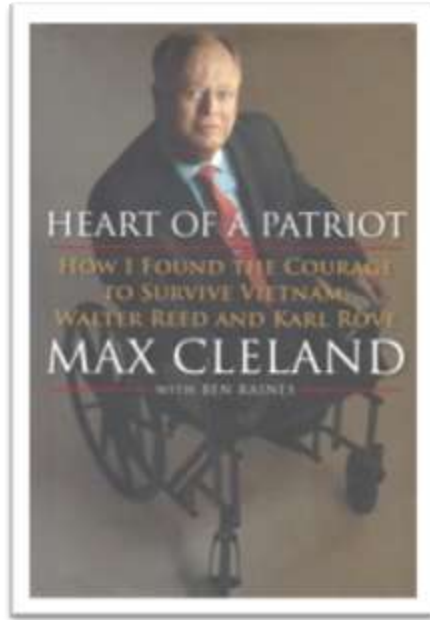
Read more at: [www.miamiherald.com/2011/05/25/v-print/2235085/senators-tell-va-to-reduce-veteran.html#ixzz1Ns4kTRRT](http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/05/25/v-print/2235085/senators-tell-va-to-reduce-veteran.html#ixzz1Ns4kTRRT)>



## No Combat Vet or United States Senator is Exempt from PTSD

An interesting book you might want to read is *Heart of a Patriot* by former U.S. Senator and Vietnam vet Max Cleland. It's a story of triumph over adversity, over life threatening wounds. While a story about the dirty side of politics, it's also a story about one veteran's fight with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Following are excerpts from this book by a Vietnam veteran. Ed



### Excerpts:

I lost my confidence and my sense of purpose. I lost a sense of meaning in my life...Depression began to a sweep over me. I grieved for the time I had once been whole, and I grieved for the time I had been a U.S. Senator. I was inconsolable, and Liz and I fought more and more. It wasn't her fault. I was simply coming apart at the seams. More and more I couldn't relate to her, and she became increasingly frustrated with my inability to cope with day-to-day life. This was not the life she had bargained for.

*"Sadness is a cold, Depression is cancer."* That was what I had, a cancer of the soul. It was deep and dark and real.

I wasn't recovering. What really sent me over the edge was the invasion of Iraq in April 2003. I couldn't believe I was seeing another generation of young Americans sent into a muddled situation with no serious plan to win and no exit strategy...To me, it was Vietnam all over again. I couldn't bear to watch the shock and awe of war broadcast right into my living room. I couldn't read newspapers or listen to the radio. It was just war, war, war, everywhere I turned. All of that war news triggered deep emotions about war in general for me, particularly anger at the people who start wars. Here, once again, was a war being waged by a bunch of old men who had never been in battle and didn't understand the terrible human toll involved.

One day after coming in the front door and finding me listless once again, Liz looked at me and screamed, *"Tell me you're on medication!"*

I wasn't. I hated the idea of medication. I hated the thought that my brain was out of control, that it wasn't working right and I needed medication to fix it. I thought the cure for depression was to read another inspirational book. Boy, was I wrong; I have a shelf of them to prove it. Without drugs, I couldn't concentrate.

With Liz urging me to do so, I sought psychiatric help for the first time...thanks to those sessions, I was soon to learn that I hadn't left my war years behind me like I thought. I had just buried them under layer upon layer of scar tissue. The Senate defeat and the war in Iraq quickly ripped all of that away, leaving the great trauma of my life as bare and raw as it has been in 1968. It all conspired to transport me right back to the days of being blown up in Vietnam and lying on the ground dying. For the first time, I began feeling the total hopelessness and fear of the battlefield, reliving again those first desperate moments after I was blown up. My body and brain reacted accordingly. On high alert, my adrenaline ran wild. My brain chemicals became depleted.

The day I sat down across from the top psychiatrist at Bethesda Naval Hospital for the first time, I cried bitterly...

Charlie had actually become a professional counselor to war veterans. After getting out of the Marines in Vietnam, he had turned around and joined the Air Force as a B-52 bomber pilot. He was a successful Air force major, but then started having trouble getting his life together. He finally walked into a VA Vet Center – the program that I had created when I was head of the VA – and sought help. He told me the Vet Center saved his life.

*"How are you feeling?"* he asked. *"Well, I'm tense, I'm filled with anxiety, and I feel like hell. I feel like something horrible is about to happen at any moment and there is nothing I can do to escape it."*

*"That's PTSD, Max. It's an anxiety disorder. It can be full of fear and tension. It was for me."*

For the first time in my life, I connected my own anxiety with PTSD. I thought I had avoided it. But I had it in spades.

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**No one is exempt. Not Generals, not Senators, nor Colonels, Captains or Privates. But, help is available. Contact your nearest Vet Center or DAV office now.**



## INCOMING!

We received a number of notes about the special edition of our newsletter covering The Battle of the Slopes (June 22):

*"Half way through...tough to read."*

Dr. Tim Cloonan, Col. (Ret)  
173d Surgeon, VN  
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*"Funny, but the way I recall the night before A Company's battle was different than some accounts...Jim Anderson was pointman leading us out to do an ambush, I was about 7th man from the point and I thought it was wrong to follow the trail that lead out of the perimeter. As we approached the ridge about 60 meters from the perimeter Jim decided to get off the trail and as he stepped into the jungle Jim saw an NVA and they both opened up on each other... neither was shot. I remember going to one side of the trail to the left, as I did I saw the CID who was with us go to the right side of the trail and as he moved to the left side where most of us were he was shot in the neck. Our Medic was on his knees trying to help him and he looked at me and shook his head. I remember helping the medic pull the CID just outside of our perimeter where he was declared dead. After that artillery was directed around our perimeter and as we waited for another attack by the group that ambushed us on the trail I remember being behind bamboo or something like that. Later Cook was killed when he went out in front of the perimeter to take a leak and instead of saying 'Friendly' he just hit the ground, one shot rang out and from my position I hear someone yelling that the new guy had gotten killed. We were all on high alert that night waiting for an attack that never came. That is why we had two bodies to carry down to A Company the next day.*

*Some things you remember vividly and some things you don't....but I remember the combat jump, Battle of the Slopes and Hill 875 very well, as I relive them often in my dreams....very vividly."*

Steve Welch  
C/2/503d  
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*"It was very informative for me. As in any action, the viewpoint of the individual soldier is small. You know what is going on around in, or in your squad etc., but rarely do you ever get or see the big picture. It was interesting to read the documented history of the action; read all the accounts.*

*I felt so sorry to see how bad the guilt has ripped the one Sky Soldier who took that cig case from the dead brother. Hell, in WWII it was common practice to strip whatever you needed from dead comrades. Nothing to be ashamed of at all. Good comments by you to try to ease his pain.*

*I just now ordered from Amazon the book Dak To by Edward Murphy (used-48 cents).*

*I never realized how fucking close us guys in Charlie were to really being in a meat grinder and how many of them motha fuckers there were around us!!!*

*Like I wrote in the issue, that night of the 22nd, they probed us good all night long but since we held the high ground and dug in, they didn't want any part of us. They would have paid dearly if they had tried to assault us in any strength no matter how many of them fucks there were.*

*I think it might be Wambi Cook (?), but I think he was one who survived the Battle of the Slopes but also the later big November battle -- geez, there is indeed a Sky Soldier angel on that brother's shoulders!*

*Was surprised and elated to read Steve Welch's recollection of the "Battle of the Slopes," and to see his Vietnam picture. We were both sent back to Kontum to be processed to go home. After supper, we stood for some time in front of our tent talking about all the things we were looking forward to doing when we got home. I left him to go lay down on my bunk.*

*Not more than a minute later I hear a rifle shot. I run out of the tent, the first thing I see is Steve on the ground. Someone had accidently fired his M-16 hitting Steve in the belly. Steve was rushed to the aid station and we all hoped for the best.*

*About six months later as a member of Fort Irwin's pistol team, we were at Fort Ord for a pistol match. One evening while walking the aisles at the PX, I turn a corner and meet Steve. We were both surprised and happy to see each other again. Steve was still recovering from his wound. He told me he married his girl friend, and we talked of meeting later. Unfortunately we did not meet again. My best wishes to Steve and his family. AIRBORNE! "*

Steve "Sgt. Rock" Vargo  
C/2/503d  
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(continued....)



**(Slopes)**

***“To all the Herd, special thanks and all who contributed to the Special Edition; 2/503, 3/319, B Company/Med, the Cowboys, and to our fallen heroes of all the 173d, their friends and families, a heartfelt thank you forever! Let everyone who knew Platoon Sergeant Hostack know he really deserves the MOH. He has passed on since, but I believe his family would be honored if we can accomplish that! Can never be too late.***

***I contacted Wayne Cleveland and asked him to check with Col. Smith, about a procedure for an award for Hostack, I'm sure he will pass it along. Also, as far as I am concerned, the whole company deserves the MOH. I will never be able to express the valor all our brothers displayed that terrible day....our newsletter was a sure tribute to them all; at last the dead brothers are recognized. I cried when I read all the personal testimonials, but want you to know they were tears of honor, respect and friendship, concerning all who participated and supported A/2/503, they were so to speak tears from heaven, not me....”***

**Randy Tenney, FO  
A/2/503d, '65-'67**  
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***“I too believe Sergeant Hostack was deserving of the MOH. His actions on June 22nd, '67 were nothing less than incredible.”***

**Wayne Cleveland  
A/2/503d**

**Note:** As a result of Randy and Wayne's notes, research is being conducted to determine 1) what, if any award(s) Sgt. Hostack earned for his heroic actions, and 2) to determine what, if any, award can be obtained for his family. Ed  
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***“Reading this one brought tears to my eyes. I am so glad I rotated out before 2/503 moved north. There but for the grace of God...***

***Good interview. Hindsight is necessary to try and avoid mistakes. No doubt in my mind the 173d leadership failed. Even Milton failed to make sure he had maps and some idea from someone, anyone, what his mission was and what backup was necessary.***

***When my Recon Platoon faced our big action on 5 Feb '67, we were already in a defensive ambush position. Our LT had badly sprained his ankle the day before and was of little use. The platoon often relied on Sgt. Powell to guide us right. Powell was not there as he had gone on R&R and had only arrived back the day***

***after. We failed to recognize the two VC we had killed the night before were an LP. If the VC had waited to come at us and instead, had set up an ambush on the trail, it may have had a different outcome. Instead, they sent a small patrol down the road and two of them were killed. Then they tried to surround us. As with any battle, once engaged, many of the guys tended to bunch up. Sorta natural I guess. Alpha Company came to our rescue. They were slow in coming because they were heading into an unknown situation where we didn't really know the strength of the enemy, and even today we have no real idea, although after Alpha arrived, we found a company size base camp. At least a platoon same as us.***

***Dak To losses were due to poor leadership, but more importantly, the enemy was so well situated, losses on our side were to be expected. Look at how many of the survivors actually thought they were fighting VC and not PAVN. Overall, it doesn't really matter as political leadership decided we weren't gonna win the war due to fear of the Chinese and Soviet Union. Same as the Korean stalemate.”***

**Jerry Hassler  
RTO S-2/Recon 2/503d, '66-'67**  
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***“I just glanced over the newsletter until I can get time to actually read it. There is a photo of one of the survivors captioned 'Red'. That man's last name is Burns, he was in 1st Platoon with me. Damn it, I'm glad I DEROSed instead of extending. Just thought I'd let you know his name.”***

**Woody Davis  
A/2/503d**



**“Red” Burns, A/2/503d. Survivor of The Slopes**

*(continued...)*



**(Slopes)**

*"Thanks for the "The Battle of the Slopes". I don't recall reading about the battle but probably did back then. I was commanding a Basic Training Company at Ft. Ord at the time."*

**Bob Sweeney, LTC (Ret)**  
HHC/C/2/503d

*"I would like to think that I have lived my life in such a way that I have honored the men whose tomorrow's ended on 22 June 1967. However, Doc Rick Patterson gave me a present that I treasure. This is a photo of Rick with his family. I look at that photo and feel proud."*

*My Father used me that day. I thank God and give Him the Glory. Nuff said!"*

**Bill Reynolds**  
A/2/503d



Sr. Medic, Doc Rick Patterson (C) with his beautiful family. Doc credits Bill for saving his life; *"He risked his life to save mine and in the process was saved from serious injury by his pocket Bible from a bullet that was meant for me."* Rick

*"It took me nearly three hours to get through this because I would stop and reread sections again and again, to put them into perspective."*

*Obviously, a lot of people remember different things and there are mistakes in narratives that you were provided (including mine because the Artillery Battery we had at Dak To on 22 June was Alpha Battery - and I believe I wrote Bravo).*

*Nonetheless, it is all out there for better or for worse."*

**Ken Smith, COL (Ret)**  
A/D/HHC/2/503d

*"For a long while The Battle of the Slopes made me hate Vietnamese. Most of the KIAs that I carried were executed, shot in the head. I remember treating a medic, Spec 5, I think, who was found the next day or that night -- the last man found alive on 1338. The NVA thought that they had killed the guy and he played dead with part of his left skull missing from a missed AK executioner's shot from close range. Often wondered if that guy made it. He survived the night alone, wounded, but made it to my medics. The guy was lucky the gook was in a hurry.....Doc."*

**Earle "Doc" Jackson**  
B Med

*"Thanks for the article, I will share it with the 42nd Scout Dog Platoon. We always are grateful when the other units send us things."*

**Jackie "Mom" McIntyre**  
Friend of the 173d & 42nd IPSD Scout Dog Platoon

*"Received your message but, some of my thoughts require a bit more time to put together in order to make good sense. It's been a long time since June, 1967; however, the events surrounding Hill 1338 and the culmination of that "battle" are vivid, to say the least. If, and when, I do submit to your newsletter, I'll make an honest effort to concentrate on, and write about the most magnificent soldiers with whom I've ever served."*

**Ron Leonard, COL (Ret)**  
CO C/2/503d

*"Please add a note that after being relieved of command Ron Leonard was transferred to the 4/503rd and while commanding a company on Hill 875 he received the 'Distinguished Service Cross' for heroism, our nation's second highest award. All these troopers did their best under the worst conditions."*

*Ken Smith and I were in a position to observe and hear, on a broader basis than those standing in triple canopy jungle, listening to one radio channel. I am so damn glad that I was not out there in the shoes of Deane, Partain, Willoughby, Milton and Leonard. I tip my hat to each of them. And to those who died I'm sorry we all couldn't have done more. ATW*

**Ed Privette, MAJ (Ret)**  
HHC/2/503d

*(continued....)*



(Slopes)

***"WOW. You guys made the reputation of the 173d. I am shaken by some of the words written by the men who were there. To know some of the guys -- Bob Fleming and Wambi Cook -- makes it even more personal and real to me. I can't tell you the respect I have for you guys, and the pride I have in being a member of the 173d Airborne. No finer group of men around."***

**Jerry Sopko  
D/4/503d**  
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***"You've broken my heart all over again. Thank you for continuing to give these stories a voice."***

**Ginny Gray  
Friend of the 173d  
Asst. to Rev. Ron Smith, B/2/503d**  
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***"I didn't get to read the issue until last night. It was all I expected and more. The reflections from Charlie Company were particularly priceless. I found nothing their accounts to be insightful. I was approached by a half dozen brothers at the reunion wanting to vent and express their continued grief and guilt about their inability to support us that day. I tried to assure them that we survivors empathize with their dilemma, but we want them to move forward. I don't think I was very successful."***

**Wambi Cook  
A/2/503d**  
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## Old Glory

As the legend goes, it was George Washington and two other members of the Continental Congress who asked Betsy Ross to sew the first American flag sometime in the late spring of 1776. The young widow was only in her early 20's when she completed the first flag with thirteen stars arranged in a circle.



## A Tip of the Hat

And hats off to our WWII, heroes; we would not have been fighting for the USA had they lost. My dad was a WWII soldier who served in Europe, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. He told me the men in the Pacific had it much worse, especially if they were captured. He has passed on now, but I grew up with those wonderful men of WWII. Thanks to Chuck Breit of the 503rd PRCT and all Vets this Memorial Day.

**Randy Tenney  
FO A/2/503d**  
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(enlarge)

**Pfc Clyde Bates of Evansville, Wisc. and T/5 Frank Guy Arrigo of East Chicago, Ind. hoist the Stars and Stripes whilst under sniper fire on 16 Feb. 1945. The previous Corregidor flag was burned prior to the surrender on 6 May 1942.**

[503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site]

## WHODAT?



**We don't have a name to go with this trooper believed to be 2/503 from the early years in Vietnam.**



## SAN ANTONIO 2011 / 173d REUNION

This year's reunion meant a little more than any previous gathering I'd attended. How privileged Gene Counselman (A/1/503d) and I were to share hallowed soil vials taken from Hills 875 and 882 with over a dozen survivors from these historic encounters.

I also had both participants and other select members autograph the Herd flag we brought to the Hill this past February. Their reactions upon receiving the vials were priceless. I may require chest x-rays resulting from the bear hugs employed by Gary Cucinniti and Mark Thurston. Or the numerous so-called hard core warriors who unabashedly cried on my shoulders when they realized what I had placed in their palm. These scenes will hold a special place in my heart and mind forever.

And for those remaining few who probably wanted to say more but could only manage a thank you, I understand and no apologies necessary.



**L-R: Gene Counselman A/1/503d, Wambi Cook & Les Fuller both A/2/503d on peak of Hill 875, in 2011.**



**Inscription on vial of soil: "Hill 875, Dak To, Viet Nam"**

I regret that there was too little acknowledgment for the 44th anniversary of the Battle of the Slopes. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, 6/22/67 will get the recognition it so rightly deserves.

On a brighter note, to the best of my knowledge, more No DEROS Alpha survivors (Dave Milton, Mike Deeb, John Smith, Jr., Clarence Johnson and I) were in attendance than any previous reunion over the past decade. I sincerely hope we gave some solace and comfort to those individuals who continue to bear

indescribable anguish and guilt over their inability to come to our aid that fateful day. They made it abundantly clear that they were ready and willing, but for any number of circumstances beyond their control, were unsuccessful. We assured them that it was just our time, and glad we're alive to tell them so.

I am humbled and honored to call myself a 173d Sky Soldier. Thanks to each and every one of my Brothers.

**Wambi Cook  
A/2/503d**

### ~ Special Thanks ~

We would be remiss if we failed to extend a special thanks to Wambi Cook for his idea and motivation behind inviting men of the 2/503d and our sister units to have their recollections of *The Battle of the Slopes* recorded for posterity in the June special edition of our newsletter. From all of us, thanks Wambi, and thanks to all the troopers who were there with you, and in memory of those who did not return. Ed

*All the way...*



## Her Name Was Winnie (Regina, May, Wilbie, Hazel Smith)

It was late at night, another hot, humid night in the jungle, RTO Lee Braggs and I, sitting elbow-to-elbow in a hole dug out of the ground, were on battalion radio watch in October 1966. Earlier that day I had taken *two* anti-malaria pills, having missed one the day before, thinking the extra dosage would make-up for the oversight. Upon reaching our laager before dusk, the commo guys had erected the long antenna outside this hooch. Nothing much was going on other than the occasional “*Sitrep negative, Out*” transmissions we’d receive from the line companies surrounding us, and then our passing those same preferred messages to brigade.

First Sergeant Sullivan, the boss in charge that night, sternly admonished me, “*Smith, ditch that comic book, you can’t do two things at the same time and do them both right!*” Have always remembered those words of his, and for decades have tried to prove him wrong, but never quite could.

Sometime after midnight I began to shiver, then turned to my RTO buddy and said, “*Lee, I’m freezing, man.*” Lee touched my arm then my forehead and replied, “*No you’re not, you’re burning up!*” A few moments later I left the hooch, went outside, dropped my draws, grabbed hold of the long antenna pole, and somehow survived a bad case of the drizzling shits. The severe chills continued, when a Medic was called over to take my temperature, 102 degrees.



Good buddy Lee Roy Braggs

Somehow surviving the night, a Dust Off was called in the next morning and they flew me to a nearby MASH unit where I stayed for two days. The Doc’s having found nothing worthy of note, sent this RTO back to Camp Zinn while our battalion remained in the field.

It was kind of neat to have our entire hooch to myself, especially with none of those mean, nasty Airborne sergeants around giving orders. I caught a ride to the Bien Hoa Air Base nearby in hopes of finding a milk shake. A milk shake was found but it tasted as if it were made with water and goat piss...I threw it away and returned to Zinn.

I vaguely recall one of our guys returning from R&R. He later told me he found me naked, pissing on someone’s cot (Xin Loi brother), and on the verge of delirium. A cloudy ambulance ride to Long Binh Hospital along Highway 1 followed, where an uncomfortable night was spent. Somehow I had my wallet with me but a Leg attendant determined it, and the few bucks in it, would be better off in his care....never saw that wallet again.



3rd Field Army Hospital, today an arms museum

Succumbing quickly to the affects of whatever was ailing me, another Dustoff flew three of us on stretchers to 3rd Field Army Hospital in Tan Son Nhut on the outskirts of Saigon. That first night there I recall begging for water as what seemed like the entire medical team there were surrounding my bed, but they would only dampen my lips with a wet cloth. Coming in and out of consciousness, I heard someone say they ‘*better send him to Japan.*’ I survived the night and what was later determined to be the falciparum malaria attack.

But that’s not what I’m writing about. I want to tell you about Don Hernandez and General Westmoreland and the kid with no genitals, and the kid who killed himself, and of course, Winnie.



Don was a sick or wounded soldier from the 25th Infantry, and in the bed next to mine.

Don and I on day pass in Saigon. The girl is probably indicating we are *Numba 1 G.I.’s*. No?

For the two months in hospital (no trip to Japan for this G.I.) we became good friends, both from California and both Chess players. And then there was Winnie.

(continued....)



Edwina, Regina, May, Wilibie, Hazel Smith, she told me her name was, although to this day I wonder if she had been having fun with this young G.I. about the number of her first names. She was new in-country, a 1LT nurse ready to do her part for the war effort, a beautiful young girl – although any American female round-eye was considered beautiful in those days, yet Winnie was indeed an attractive girl.

In the early days following arrival there (they later told me I had almost died from the malaria that night), I could barely move, having lost a lot of weight in a very short time frame -- probably down to about 110 pounds then. In spite of that, I had no interest in bed pans, and instead, would head to the latrine at the end of the ward, barely able to walk, holding onto the end of each bunkmate's bed lining the wall leading me to Nirvana, and somehow finding a comfortable sitting place without passing out....it's good to be King.

"Smith!" Nurse Smith yelled, "Get back to your bed!!" Yet, Winnie gave me ample time to enjoy my new surroundings before two aides carried me back to bed. It was during that very respite when General Westmoreland toured our ward and told all the guys there how proud he was of them. Had he known how difficult and dangerous it had been for me to find this toilet seat, I'm sure he would have been equally proud and perhaps awarded me a medal for superior bravery at the risk of fainting or shitting on one's self. A Bronze Star w/S?

Winnie was from the Carolina's, and asking her what her future hopes and plans were, she replied she 'hoped to return there and have twelve kids'. I couldn't help myself, and thought, now that's a lot of fucking.

Winnie would often play her guitar and sing to us on her ward. Off and on over the decades I would think of her, envisioning her at the foothills of the Smokey Mountains playing in the backyard with twelve little kids, all with four or five first names each, happy. But it was not to be, at least for a long time.



Winnie after the war

One day on that second floor ward it seemed as if the entire professional baseball league came prancing down the ward. Included in this entourage was Joe Torre, my

baseball 'hero' at the time. I had been a catcher in high school, and Torre, also a catcher, was that year's MVP and an All-Star. He sat on my bed and we talked for a few moments. A photo was taken of the two of us shaking hands, his large, battered hand engulfing mine. Sadly, that pic went missing over the years. It was a good war day, for me.



Visiting the U.S. base at My Tho in 1966, left to right are Joe Torre and Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves, Harmon Killebrew of the Minnesota Twins, Brooks Robinson of the Baltimore Orioles and former St. Louis Cardinals great Stan Musial.

In 1966, a number of celebrities invaded our hospital ward, smiling, shaking hands and making small talk. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans stopped by my bed to say hello. Dale sat on the bed while Roy stood there in his patented cowboy hat and get-up. I found them to be extremely warm, nice and caring people. Martha Raye also visited the hospital and performed for the sick, wounded and staff there in an outside courtyard.

Adjacent to Martha Raye's stage area at 3rd Field were two dining rooms, now used as rental facilities for banquets and weddings, yet during the war served as our mess hall. Down the hall was the bottom floor of the hospital which functioned as emergency and operating rooms while the entire second floor was the ward where soldiers recovered from their various wounds and illnesses. I remember standing in that very hallway as they wheeled in a wounded soldier fresh from battle. He had lost both his legs and his genitals; still conscious, still living, and he would live. I often think of him and what his life has been like.

(continued....)



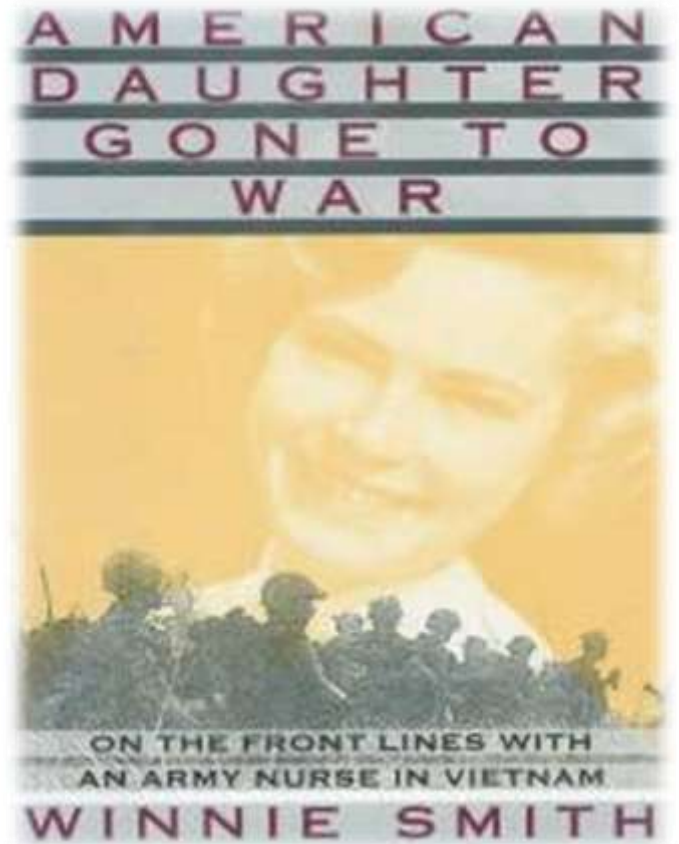
Years later Ms. Smith lobbied for the women's memorial in Washington, DC. During President Reagan's filmed speech at the dedication of the soldier's monument near *The Wall*, hers was one of the voices in the background calling out, "What about the women?! What about the women?!"



**Memorial in Washington, DC honoring women veterans of the war**

In 1991, Winnie would author the book, "American Daughter Gone to War -- On the Front Lines with an Army Nurse in Vietnam," an abundantly candid account of a young combat nurse's nightmarish duties during war. Speaking to her war experience Ms. Smith captured, perhaps, the very essence of what it is like to be a Vietnam vet when she wrote:

***"For us the subject is not history; it's a condition of our lives. In a country where youth is adored, we lost ours before we were out of our twenties. We met our human frailties, the dark side of ourselves, face-to-face, and learned that brutality, mutilation and hatred are all forgivable. At the same time we learned guilt for all those things. The war destroyed our faith, betrayed our trust, and dropped us outside the mainstream of society. We still don't fully belong. I wonder if we ever will."***



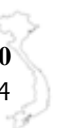
Excerpts from the preamble to her book:

*"Winnie Smith was an idealistic twenty-one-year old first lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps in 1965... Smith's days and nights blurred into the draining tropical heat and the numbing onslaught of casualties... The daily struggle to keep dying men alive, to heal terrible wounds and offer solace for ruined lives, undermined both Winnie's idealism and her strength. Only her dedication to the soldiers she served and the thought of returning to her life in the United States sustained her."*

Her book states Winnie cared for well over 600 wounded and dying soldiers during her year-long tour in Vietnam. Hers is an abundantly clear and heart wrenching story of what she and those in the medical corps lived with as a daily diet during our war. Sadly, the thoughts of those 12, multi-named kids playing with their happy mother in the foothills was not to be. It was simply too much to hope that our war would leave untarnished the young Miss Smith.

In 2005, Gus Vendetti and Bill Vose, A/2/503d, and I returned to Vietnam and visited Winnie's second floor ward at the 3rd Field Army Hospital. I wrote of that visit:

*(continued....)*



“Standing around before taking the tour, I again recognized the outdoor courtyard a few steps away where Martha Raye performed for the hospital staff, patients and others in November of 1966. Off to the right was the small 10’x10’ office where, in June of 1966 (my first stay at this hospital), the young U.S. soldier walked in demanding to be sent home. The hospital Administrator escaped through the only door just before the boy pulled the pin on the grenade he was carrying, killing himself. I walked into the small office and ran my hand over the wall which once was pocked-marked with holes, with pieces of body parts and bloodstains everywhere. I recall that day well and remember thinking then, he would be sent home.

The museum has been expanded to include this 2nd floor. Arms and war memorabilia now adorn the walls and floor of this ward. There are no screams here anymore, there’s no crying to be heard, there’s no dying going on, and music which once was a young nurses’ singing and guitar playing, soothing the pain of her charges, has long since drifted away. The bed which was mine was long ago removed, most likely melted into new steel used to build the new buildings going up throughout this town. In its place are standing two plastic palm trees which bookend weapons from our war on display here. I stood there looking at this space but came to no better understanding of why I was drawn here....it’s just a room.” (From *The Battle at Bau San*)



**Capt. Bill Vose, Maj. Gus Vendetti and RTO Smith on Winnie’s ward, 2005.**

Thank you Nurse Smith. Her name was Winnie.

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

**Hey guys! Bend those antenna’s down!!**

This photo was received too late to be included in our early June issue which featured RTOs of the 2/503d.



**Pictured here from L-R are Don Horger, Joseph Jackson and Roy Minchew, all A/2/503 Weapons Platoon RTOs.**

(Photo from Don Horger)

## **MEDICS OF THE 173d & SISTER UNITS**

Plans are still in the works to feature the brave Medics of the 2/503d and *all* 173d sister units. Please send your stories and photos to [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) As Bob Beemer, B/2/503d so rightly said,

***“How do you write a story about the greatest people in the world? Everyone of them should receive a lifetime achievement award.”***



## ~ Happy Independence Day ~

During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining this decision, which had been prepared by a Committee of Five, with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author. Congress debated and revised the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4. A day earlier, John Adams had written to his wife Abigail:

***“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.”***

Adams's prediction was off by two days. From the outset, Americans celebrated independence on July 4, the date shown on the much-publicized Declaration of Independence, rather than on July 2, the date the resolution of independence was approved in a closed session of Congress.

Historians have long disputed whether Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, even though Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin all later wrote that they had signed it on that day. Most historians have concluded that the Declaration was signed nearly a month after its adoption, on August 2, 1776, and not on July 4 as is commonly believed.



In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day: July 4, 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration. Although not a signer of the Declaration of Independence, James Monroe, the Fifth President of the United States, died on July 4, 1831. Calvin Coolidge, the Thirtieth President, was born on July 4, 1872, and thus was the only President to be born on Independence Day.

