



October 2011, Issue 33

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~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



2/503d Sky Soldiers on Hill 875, Dak To, RVN, November 1967.

(Photo by Gilles Caron)



Chaplain's Corner

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29: 11-13



The Leapin' Deacon

Grace and Peace to all 2/503d Bn Troops, Family Members, and to all whom you hold dear. These are heavy-duty political times and interests for our Nation. Let us look at another urgent time of grave importance in our political and leadership history.

Our cherished country has many special and significant dates that deeply impact on us in a life-altering way. May 18, 1860 was such a day. It was the day when the Republican Party meeting in Chicago, Illinois nominated its candidate for President of the United States. It was an exceptionally turbulent time – in fact, the very existence of the "United" States was in serious jeopardy.

Four contenders had their "hats in the ring." The best known of the four was the popular former governor and senator, William Seward, of our most populace state – New York; followed by Ohio governor, Salmon Chase, and Judge Edward Bates of St. Louis. None of the contenders considered Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, Illinois as much of a threat to their high hopes and aspirations. He had little national recognition, having served once in Congress and twice lost in contests for the Senate. He had minimal administrative experience, but SURPRISE, SURPRISE, SURPRISE! Lincoln was nominated on the third ballot. This rustic, country, rail-fence-splitting lawyer would become the greatest President and political genius and leader in the nineteenth century and perhaps one of the two greatest in our National history.

Lincoln, like General/President George Washington was a person of profound destiny, chosen to lead our beloved Nation in a most critical crisis, the Civil War – the War between the States. This giant of a person (inside and out) was brilliant beyond measure; a political genius packed with wisdom. He was a storyteller par excellence.

He used humor for fun and laughter, character building and teaching. He was extremely kind, gentle and magnanimous. He loved soldiers, sailors and their families. He visited combat troops near the front lines and our wounded warriors in their pain, hurt, suffering and healing.

He was single-minded in the purpose of the war, to preserve the Union and to end slavery. He experienced considerable difficulty with the Union Army leadership (being out-generaled). He could not get them to move quickly in their mission; indeed, slow in pursuit of the Confederate Army when the timing was right to do so until he found the winning Combat Team of Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman who caused the brilliant and

remarkable Robert E. Lee and his Confederate Army to surrender. Lincoln was a master at forging a diverse and rival Cabinet that preserved our Nation and secured America from the terrible curse of slavery.

Lincoln was a person of trusting faith, prayer, and Scripture reading. Like Washington's mother's Godly teaching and mentoring, Lincoln's mother, Nancy, had daily reading of God's Word and praying together. She taught her son to read and write. Thank God for such blessed and loving Mothers! As Lincoln grew and matured, he exercised his mother's devotional practice of reading Scripture and prayer. His sharp mind was like a bear trap in his vast reading and self-taught ways. He loved to quote William Shakespeare.

In the short and powerful "Gettysburg Address" he declared, *"But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it,*



far above our poor power to add or detract . . . from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth" - - a majestic declaration of his living hope and trust.

In his second "Inaugural Address" his faith-life glowingly shines through. Lincoln speaks in kindness to both the North and the South: *"Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any man should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."*

Thanks be to our kind and Heavenly Father, Redeemer-Jesus, and winsome Holy Spirit that Abraham Lincoln was a person of destiny, wisdom and chosen to lead our blessed Nation at such a time of crisis – the terrible Civil War.

2/503d Sky Soldiers and Families – let us press on in mission, hope and destiny as we grow in Grace, Holiness, and Wisdom.

Blessings in abundance,

Chaplain Conrad (Connie) Walker
"The Leapin' Deacon"
National Chaplain Emeritus
173d Airborne Association and
Military Order of the Purple Heart



Over \$2.2 Billion in Retroactive Agent Orange Benefits Paid to 89,000 Vietnam Veterans and Survivors for Presumptive Conditions

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31, 2011 – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today that more than \$2.2 billion in retroactive benefits has already been paid to approximately 89,000 Vietnam Veterans and their survivors who filed claims related to one of three new Agent Orange presumptive conditions.

On August 31, 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) amended its regulations to add ischemic heart disease, hairy cell leukemia and other chronic B-cell leukemias, and Parkinson's disease to the list of diseases presumed to be related to exposure to Agent Orange.



“As the President said to the American Legion yesterday, VA is committed to ensuring Veterans and their families receive the care and benefits they have earned,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *“I encourage all potentially eligible Veterans to apply as soon as possible to preserve the most favorable effective date for payments.”*

For new claims, VA may authorize up to one year of retroactive benefits if a Veteran can show that he or she has experienced one of those conditions since the date of the regulatory change.

VA has reviewed, and continues to review, thousands of previously filed claims that may qualify for retroactive benefits under a long-standing court order of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in *Nehmer vs. U.S. Veterans Administration*.

“VA encourages survivors of Veterans whose death may be due to one of the three diseases to file a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation,” added Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. Secretary Shinseki’s decision to add these conditions to the list of Agent Orange presumptive conditions was based on a study by the Institute of Medicine, which indicated a positive association between exposure to certain herbicides and the subsequent development of one or more of the three conditions.

Potentially eligible Veterans include those who were exposed based on duty or visitation in Vietnam or on its

inland waterways between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; exposed along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971; or exposed due to herbicide tests and storage at military bases within and outside of the United States.

The Agent Orange Claims Processing System website located at <https://www.fasttrack.va.gov/AOFastTrack/> may be used to submit claims related to the three new presumptive conditions.

The website makes it easy to electronically file a claim and allows Veterans and their physicians to upload evidence supporting the claim. It also permits online viewing of claim status.

Beyond the three new presumptive disabilities, Veterans may file online at VA’s My-eBenefits web site at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>. They can check the status of their claim with a premium account (confirming their identity), and use a growing number of online services. Servicemembers may enroll in My-eBenefits by using their Common Access Card at anytime during their military service, or before they leave during their Transition Assistance Program briefings.

Veterans may also enroll through their myPay or MyHealthVet accounts by visiting their local VA regional office or Veteran Service Organization, or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

For more information about Agent Orange presumptives and disability compensation, go to <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/>. For questions about Agent Orange, Veterans may call VA’s Special Issues Helpline at 1-800-749-8387 and press 3.



Bravo Bulls deployment and the early days in Bien Hoa

By Roy Lombardo



Col. (then LTC) George Dexter, Bn CO 2/503d, '65/'66 in Vietnam

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

At a Commanders' and Staff meeting at Camp Kui, LTC George Dexter announced, in early April 1965,

“Gentleman, we’ll be deploying to Vietnam thirty days from now. This information is classified but initiate preparations for deployment....etc. You will not be able to tell your men until I release the info 24 hours before actual deployment on 5 May 1965. We will be deploying TDY for 90 days ”

John Manolakis, the battalion S-2, and I exchanged high fives as we left, because we had been training for this day since we were commissioned five years earlier.

As I returned to the company, I ran through the training activities that were possible and appropriate, without giving away the mission. I had these thoughts: marksmanship, physical fitness, and maintenance. The company was already qualified with the AR 15. We needed qualification with those other weapons, not used as frequently. All the pistol guys were gathered, trained, and sent to the nearby ranges behind Brigade HQ.



Mike Broderick

Mike Broderick, the FDC Mortar Sergeant had a hook-up with the IX Corps Logistical Command. His contact would call when they had a storage of mortar ammo that needed testing. PSG Jackie Siggers got the Weapons Platoon to go into testing mode with the mission of qualifying each man on the 81 mm mortar. I directed SSG Jack Schimpf to train the 106mm AT section (these weapons were being left behind) to qualify his section in the use of the 60 mm Mortar. The Log Group provided their own 60 mm mortars for the testing.



Jack Schimpf

PT was run twice each day, morning (at reveille) and afternoon (last event before evening chow). The Sukiran Obstacle Course was added to the course. Strong paratroopers became stronger. All wondered if I had gone crazy, increasing an already intense program. We maintained our weapons and equipment as thoroughly as if we were preparing for an IG inspection.

At 1800 hrs, on 4 May I had scheduled a company formation to announce the deployment. When I drove into the parking lot, pandemonium reined with cheering and laughter. President Johnson had just made the announcement, so the word was out. We were scheduled to move to Naha AFB at “0 dark 30” to enplane. The company had our own ammo point, which we had inherited from the Battle Group in 1963. This ammo was distributed and hand-carried aboard the C-130 aircraft with instructions to await our arrival at Bien Hoa Air Base before actually loading magazines and weapons.

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DEPLOYMENT

We were met by our advance party upon arriving and guided to the 2 ½ trucks for movement. The company paused for ammo distribution and loading, which took about 10 minutes. I received a call from MAJ William White, the Bn XO, "Get your company loaded and moved out." "Roger, we are loading weapons and will move in about 5 minutes." "Negative, Bravo 6. Brigade 6 is on my ass and wants you to move now." "Roger, we are loading weapons and will move as quickly as possible."

When the weapons were loaded, we loaded the trucks and moved, certainly not as quickly as desired but with SECURITY as our primary focus. This was Vietnam and not some parade field. We trucked to our location on a flat plain, east of Bien Hoa Airbase, where the 2/503 mission was to protect the base from ground attack. Flat red clay, not unlike the soil of Okinawa, was spaded and foxholes appeared in textbook fashion. There was no need to supervise or kick ass because the Bravo Bulls understood the necessity of doing it right and fast. The fatigue jackets are off and sweat flows profusely.

A message from MAJ Bobby Thorp, Bn S-3, "Prepare a platoon for an Honor Guard Ceremony in clean uniforms. You are the Commander of troops. A platoon will also be provided by Company A. Trucks will pick you up in 30 minutes." "Roger. WILCO. You are aware that the troops have been digging foxholes since we arrived." "Roger. Trucks arrive in 29 minutes." "Roger, OUT." The rest of my transmission was silenced in my head and remains there today.

Unknown to us, our arrival and Honor Guard was filmed by the BIG STORY, a regular military broadcasting studio. Copies are available on the internet. In the film, the company guidon was visible during the aircraft un-loading. In addition, PFC Roger Flowers is identifiable from the Honor Guard.



**Gary Davidson &
Roger Flowers**

We formed without rehearsal before a stand of Vietnamese dignitaries and Army Commanders. General Westmoreland was there as was Brigadier General Williamson, our Brigade Commander. After some brief speeches of welcome from the Vietnamese, thanking us for our efforts to save their country and defeat Communism, young Vietnamese women came forward and placed flowered wreaths around our necks. I prayed that none of my

guys would grab a female by the ass or whatever. God heard my prayers and protected those young women, who had already been undressed by the eyes of each paratrooper.



"We held the line. We stopped the falling of the dominoes," he said in 1985 at the 20th anniversary of the Army's 173d Airborne Brigade's assignment to Vietnam. "It's not that we lost the war militarily. The fact is, we as a nation did not make good our commitment to the South Vietnamese." Westmoreland died of natural causes on July 8, 2005 at the age of 91.

Back to our position we rode to pick-up the priority of work that had been set aside to prepare our defensive position. Dark approached and was on us without much transition. The troops were on edge and I certainly couldn't blame them. Their eyes appeared to enlarge to gather in all available light and anything that might be moving. Commo wire tied us in and we settled in for our first night in country.

Around midnight firing broke out in the 2d Platoon area. After the Platoon Leader got the fire closed down, I went down to check. I found nothing and urged the troops to relax and to not give their positions away by premature firing. Of course this advice, though previously offered, came too late. With first light, a recon patrol from the 2d Platoon found that a VC water buffalo had tried to penetrate our defensive position, was discovered, and destroyed by the combined fires of 44 paratroopers. No further attempts were made by any VC elements.

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Bravo Bulls homesteading in the Rubber Trees, May 1965.
 (Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d)

RELOCATION TO THE RUBBER TREES

The initial position on the flat plain offered very little for troop comfort and exposed our guys to a brutal sun. After proper reconnaissance, the battalion was relocated to a rubber tree plantation. LTC Dexter stated that he realized that the VC would know our location but would be unable to provide accurate fires because of our concealment. The Bravo Bulls defended the northern perimeter of the Battalion perimeter with Company A to our right and elements of HHC to our left. Our heaviest weapon, the .50 MG from the Mess Truck, anchored our left flank in the perimeter, with protective fires across the entire company front and the ability to traverse left to cover the open plain, which we had abandoned.

Each pair of troopers had a fighting position outside the rubber trees. They also had another foxhole at the foot of their tent, 15 yards into the rubber trees. The tent was elevated off the ground, with individual air mattresses atop pierced steel planking which we obtained from the Bien Hoa Salvage Yard.

The real masterpiece of the Bravo Bulls was the creation by SFC William Kimbrill, the Mess Sergeant. He had requested permission to cut some of the seams of the mess tent to create extended working space and to provide a canopy over the serving line to keep the rain from the mess kits. Kimbrill fought with the 511th Parachute Regiment on the drop onto Tagatay Ridge in the Philippines. He and a small contingent jumped before the main drop to blow the bridges, leading to the DZ that spanned the ravines and rivers. About a squad survived that effort and they each received a diamond earring from the President of the Philippines. Imagine, an NCO wearing a diamond earring in the 40's and 50's to the NCO Club. Kimbrill, though slight, was not someone that you would want to challenge, particularly after a few beers.



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Our mess hall was issued “ten in one” rations which was a box of chow to feed ten men. Kimbrill worked miracles with these rations and soon we had to limit the meals to only Bravo Bulls because everyone from the other companies were trying to get access. Using large jars of jam, Kimbrill had his cooks mix the jam with water, straining the mixture through a colander to eliminate the bulk and create a form of Kool-Aid. He was creative and I gave him a free hand. We nailed planks between the rubber trees, creating tables for standing, so the troops had a place for their mess kits; later metal mess trays, while eating. Canned bacon and dehydrated eggs for breakfast but it tasted like the Ritz. Ever present boiling coffee plus as many food tricks as a major chef would have, AND all in a jungled rubber plantation. Later, Kimbrill’s initiative almost landed him *and me* in hot water.

Before long, the monsoons started in earnest and the rainwater filled our fighting positions, every depression, and kept us constantly wet, even when the rain stopped. Of course the mosquitoes came to breed and to attack en masse at every opportunity.

LEARNING AIRMOBILE TACTICS

On day 2, I was alerted to provide one Officer and one NCO to accompany an ARVN Battalion into War Zone C by airmobile assault. I and my fellow company commanders would accompany the armed helicopters, which reconned the LZ and provided security and fire support. The sequence was air prep, followed by artillery prep, followed by a lone gunship to examine the LZ and to determine if the LZ was safe. John Manolakis (Bn S-2) and I were on the same gunship, escorting the first lift of H-34’s into this LZ. As we did a daisy chain on the right flank of the LZ, two VC .51 HMG’s, opened on the lead H-34, which burst into flames at about 200 feet. The ARVN soldiers in the first aircraft began to jump as the magnesium floor of the H-34 covered them with flames. The gunship, in which we were passengers, put suppressive fires on the VC HMG until all helicopters in that lift unloaded the ARVN on the ground. We escorted them back to the stage field where we re-armed with 2.75 inch rockets and 7.62 MG ammo, both for the UH-1 and its two door gunners. We now understood the sequence of airmobile operations but hoped that the preparatory fires on our future LZ’s would do a better job than what had been done by the fires on our first operation.

BIEN HOA AIRBASE

The very first Sunday after our arrival, while still digging company positions in the rubber trees, we heard loud explosions and saw smoke rising from what we guessed was Bien Hoa Airbase to our west. I passed the word to the Platoon Leaders to stop digging, occupy our

positions, and be prepared to move if we were ordered to do so. When the situation finally got untangled, we learned that an A1E aircraft had landed with a 250 pound bomb, still in the rack, which jettisoned upon landing and skidded into a parking bay, all of which had bombs, rockets, and 20 mm ammo in the quick-load position. The first explosion set off another explosion, etc. An SF Major went onto the airfield to place explosive charges to blow all of the exposed ordnance, which was feared to be unstable due to the possibility of sympathetic detonation. Happy Sunday, but the Bravo Bulls were content to have been to church services that morning before the fireworks. Finally a stand-down was ordered and we went back to digging while the daylight lasted.



Top secret photo? Bien Hoa AFB.

(Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d)

THE FIRST MOVIE

Several enterprising paratroopers painted a 4x8 sheet of plywood for a screen and placed empty ammo boxes for seats to create the battalion movie theater. Someone in HHC (maybe Commo Platoon) was the projector operator and the word went out that the first movie would start at 0 dark 30. I don’t remember the name of the movie (maybe THE AX MURDERS) but Joan Crawford was the lead female star. The movie started when Crawford observed her unfaithful husband and some other female in bed. She grabbed a nearby ax and chopped them both into pieces. I left after the third murder but others told me that the murders continued until the movie ended.



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Being unsuspecting, I sat in the Company CP writing letters, until a burst of MG fire lit up the company perimeter. The platoon leader reported that the machine gunner thought he saw someone with an “ax” and opened up. In hindsight, it has a ring of humor but that night no one in the chain of command thought it a bit funny as spooked troops would challenge and then fire several rounds until the fire team leader got them under control. Didn’t happen often, but once was too many times.

ALONG CAME THE 1/RAR



Under the watchful eye of a 173d MP, Diggers of the 1RAR arrive Vietnam in June 1965.

To round out the Brigade, the 1st Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment quickly joined the Sky Soldiers. I was impressed with their leadership, experience, and equipment. Their Company Commanders were senior Captains or Majors and had several years service beyond my 5 years and they had served in counterinsurgency slots in Rhodesia and little known countries of Africa.

Their gear was impressive. Their tentage had easily lifted sides and a canvas sunscreen layer above, to provide additional protection and ventilation. Their weapons initially were the FNL 7.62 mm rifles and the Owens submachine gun, both holdovers from times past. They did wear a “sweat rag” which had obvious possibilities for individual comfort. 1/RAR was a very welcome addition to the Brigade. I did my best to learn from their previous experiences and the ATOM (Anti-terrorist Operations in Malaya) Pamphlet.

I have already told the story of our presenting a decorated cake to Charlie Coy (their abbreviation for

company) to celebrate the Queen’s birthday at the end of June. In return, they reciprocated by presenting a hand-carved, engraved boomerang, made by a world-class boomerang athlete. When presented he offered to

demonstrate but I didn’t want the boomerang to be scratched. What I didn’t know, the boomerang had been tested in their area, before presentation to the Bravo Bulls. Their catcher missed the catch and got whacked in the head, requiring medical treatment. When the Aussie doctor asked the nature of the injury and was told, “*I got whacked by a boomerang,*” he threatened to press punishment charges against the injured trooper. That boomerang is still on display in my *Hall of Memories*.



The Queen’s Cake
(Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d)
See “Let em Eat Cake” in Issue 9, Pages 6-7

OPERATIONS

Our first search and destroy operation was to the east and was intended to clear the area adjacent to our battalion base. Each company did a horseshoe route, going out on a given azimuth and returning on the reciprocal azimuth. I had the lead platoon move in the wedge formation, with each of its squads in column; this meant the two flank squads were 25 meters off of center. Then I had the other two platoons move in column, each behind the flank squad of the wedge. Without excruciating detail, this shortened the company length to a squad with a follow-on platoon, rather than 3 platoons in column. If we got into a shootout, the company was already close to being in a perimeter. It worked for the Bravo Bulls but required the lead platoon to really control his squads because the natural tendency was for everyone to gravitate to the center.

For control we had the PRC 10 for commo. A decent radio but less than ideal in the jungle because the battalion’s radios were beat up by the tens of jumps that they had already made. I don’t exactly know how it happened but LTC Dexter commandeered the Forward Air Controller’s radio, which was a PRC 25.

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Until that time, the Brigade HQ would have an L 20 fixed wing aircraft overfly our operations to relay messages from battalion to brigade. With the PRC 25, that was no longer necessary. Very quickly thereafter the companies got the new radio and the biggest control problem was solved.

From our first operations on the south side of the Song (River) Dong Nai, we graduated to operations, inserted by chopper onto the north of the Song Dong Nai. BG Williamson's plan, which I later learned from his ADC, was to go everywhere and anywhere to prove that we could. Deeper and deeper we searched into War Zone D, with enemy activity, increasing as further we went.

Airmobile operations slowly gained shape and organization. The Brigade had never participated in an airmobile operation until we got to Vietnam. For jumps, the USAF would travel on an established route and the units could arrange their assembly areas, based on the direction of the aircraft's flight. Initially, we'd mount up in the choppers at Bien Hoa and know where the LZ was but the choppers didn't always land in the same direction upon arrival. That messed up a rapid assembly on the ground until after-action reports worked out the difficulty and got the chopper aviators on-board. Historians might recall that it was the navigation problems of WW II aircraft that contributed to the early airborne difficulties. US troops can solve anything if they can talk to the players.

RELOCATION OUT OF THE RUBBER TREES



Moving out of the rubber trees. (Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d)

LTC Dexter assessed the situation and learned that the TDY had turned into PCS. With this info, he decided to relocate a bit closer to Bien Hoa Airbase and a bit higher terrain that would reduce the water flowing into and under the tents.

The area selected was a former rubber tree plantation and it became obvious that the stumps would have to be removed. Now it just so happened that SSG Grifford, a former Special Forces NCO who had worked with the CIA in the early years, had an idea. He suggested obtaining additional explosives, since our basic load of 30# had been expended blowing LZ's for resupply while on operations. Grifford stated that if I would provide him a 2 ½ ton truck (the mess truck) with a driver and a 3 day pass to Saigon, he would obtain enough demo to clear War Zone D. True to his word he was back quickly with every imaginable form of demo known to the Army: dynamite, commercial dynamite, C-1 and C-2 plastic explosives, blasting caps and det cord. Using my Recondo graduate NCO's, plus Grifford, and a few trusty others, we organized a demo assembly line. It became obvious after a few tries, that if a ½ # charge was dug under two of the main roots of the stump, the explosion would rip it free. We used the commercial dynamite first because the nitro was beading in the heat, making it unstable. Next, the military dynamite, and lastly the plastic explosives. Our area was cleared in one day. What wasn't needed for stump removal became the plastic heating source for C-rations in the jungle.

Now it just so happened that I had some experience as a teenage builder/builder's helper. Our best scrounger was SSG Big Jim Edwards, who had hooked up with the crew from the civilian building contractor, maintaining Bien Hoa Air Base. From them, we obtained a small supply of 4 x 4's, which were used as floor joists. Not wanting to place the foundation on the ground, we obtained empty 20 mm steel boxes from the airbase, along with gravel to provide stability. With the 4 x 4's supported on the steel cases, 18 " from the ground, we were set to do the floor. Again looking to Bien Hoa, we were aware that they discarded the wooden pine boxes which were the transport packing for the 2.75" rockets. We would disassemble the pine planking, which was 1" x 3", using these first as solid flooring for the tent. Next we scabbed the 1" x 3" planks together to make into 2" x 3" approximating a normal 2" x 4" stud. Since the only support necessary was the canvas GP Medium tent, this method sufficed. In two days we put up four fully supported tent structures.

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With this success, LTC Dexter gave the Bravo Bulls more tents until the company was comfortably housed. Both Company A and C were waiting for the assistance of the 173d Engineer Company, who had skilled carpenters.

Simultaneously, another crew was doing a special construction for the Mess Tent, which really shaped up nicely to cook and serve while protected by canvas. As a piece d' resistance, SSG Kimbrill painted the mess hall flat black, which concealed the white pine planking. Colonel Duddy, The Brigade Deputy Commander, came, unannounced to view this tent city made by amateurs without engineering skills or tools, and applauded our ingenuity and success. In a later staff meeting, LTC Dexter mentioned that the MP's were looking for some missing non-reflective paint used on the U – 2 aircraft, based at Bien Hoa. The paint cost several hundreds of dollars per gallon. I sweated that investigation but the investigators did not find their way to the Bravo Bulls, and followed leads into the city of Bien Hoa and the possible Black Market that flourished there.

ESCALATION INTO COMBAT OPERATIONS



Bravo Bulls on early operation in 1965.

(Photo by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d)

The Bulls were learning fast. The mature, serious reaction by the young Sky Soldiers impressed me the most as well as filling me with pride. Previous discipline problems on Okinawa disappeared and serious mission focus became the norm. We still had some growing pains but we learned from every mistake.

From the first, I did everything “by the book” or as close to that as I knew. I listened to the NCO's with combat experience but leaned heavily on my training in Ranger School and the Panamanian Jungle School. We were experts in patrolling and got better as we went.

The battalion got intel that said there was a VC mortar team NE of our position and the Bravo Bulls were scrambled to be inserted by chopper and told to run the VC to ground. We landed minutes from our base camp, late in the afternoon and looked for evidence of enemy activity. At nightfall we went into our NDP to prevent stumbling into an ambush. We launched at first light and quickly found a trail through the grass made by a laden two-wheeled cart. Paralleling the trail, we moved as quickly as security would allow and soon found the bent grass springing back to normal. We were close but no cigar, as yet.

The trail led to a well-traveled dirt road and was lost. As we headed back to our battalion base, there was a major rice-planting operation in a paddy that we passed. Looking at the workers, there were about 30 females of varying age and one male. With a security detachment, I

moved over, accompanied by the Vietnamese National Policeman, one of which was attached to each of the rifle companies. After brief questioning, we took the male into custody and transported him to Bien Hoa, where it was learned that he was a member of a VC cell. Never found the mortars but had a minor catch for our efforts. One of the axioms of counterinsurgency is that a combined military-police effort is very effective.

Our first live fire exposure came shortly thereafter. Three Bulls had been sent off by their FTL and wandered near an enemy village, where we sustained our first KIA. It was about two KMs away and the firing was not

heard. Helicopters were alerted and came in to help with the search for the troops but found only two survivors, who had found their way back to the original LZ. They had the KIA's weapon and had hidden his body before they withdrew with the VC in pursuit.

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Pics of the Bravo Bulls

The Early Days

By Jim Robinson, B/2/503d

LTC Dexter ordered an immediate airmobile raid the next morning to recover the body and to attempt contact with the VC. We were to return to the original LZ and attempt to retrace the route of the 3 man patrol. Instead we landed about 1 KM away in a rice paddy. We came under mortar and small arms fire immediately but I didn't recognize the mortar fire for what it was. The 60mm mortar rounds fired by the VC were burying themselves in the rice paddy around us but not detonating. I thought some of the Bulls were firing their 40mm grenades amidst our formation. It then became quickly apparent we were under fire, as we closed into the jungle's edge.



Ranger Roy

I called for 4.2 inch mortar support but they were firing at max range and our FO was concerned about the accuracy of their fire. The firing stopped and I learned that we had two lightly WIA, which we quickly medevac'd by choppers. We proceeded on, guided by the two, but they couldn't retrace their route to their fallen comrade. Finally we were extracted in preparation for a major shootout which would occur on 7 July but that story remains for a future military historian to tell.

It was my honor and privilege to command the Bravo Bulls and to contribute in a small way to their success. They would go on successfully with the NCO's and paratroopers leading the way AND that is how wars are won.

**Roy Lombardo, LTC
CO B/2/503d**



Thoughts on a recent day at work

Written by a C-17 Pilot flying the Navy Seals back to Dover AFB.



Paying respects: U.S. President Barack Obama salutes during a ceremony for the 'dignified transfer' of U.S. and Afghan personnel who died in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan. (Reuters photo)

Subject: Thoughts on a recent day at work. I had an unforgettable day yesterday and wanted to share it with you. I know we've all sat around and discussed in detail why we do what we do and if we will be willing to continue to do what we do day in and day out regardless of deployments, retirement decisions, job opportunities, missed birthdays, missed holidays, etc. This is something I wanted to share and you were the people that came to mind. It's another reason I continue to serve. I guess because many others do and sacrifice a lot more, some even their lives.

My crew was alerted yesterday to find that our mission had changed. We were now a backup to a high priority mission originating from Afghanistan. When I asked where we would be going the answer was *"back to the states"*. Later I learned our destination was Dover. I was the aircraft commander for one of two C-17s that transferred the Chinook helicopter crash soldiers back home. The crew that started this mission in Afghanistan would end up running out of crew duty days and needed another crew to continue the soldier's journey. We just happened to be available.

After being alerted and going through our normal sequence, I found myself at the foot of the aircraft steps. Before I took my first step upward I noticed a transfer case close to the door. I had only seen one in pictures. The American Flag was tucked smartly, folded and

secured on top. I paused at the bottom of the stairs, took a deep breath and continued up with my mind and eyes focusing on making it to the next ladder leading to the cockpit. However, as I entered, I couldn't help but notice the remaining nineteen transfer cases in the cargo compartment. The entire cargo compartment was filled with identical transfer cases with American Flags.

I made my way up to the cockpit and received a briefing from the previous aircraft commander. After the briefing we exchanged a handshake and the other pilot was on his way. I felt a need to ensure the crew focused on their normal duties. I instructed the other two pilots to begin the preflight. I went back down into the cargo compartment to see what needed to be done and find the paperwork I needed to sign. The cargo compartment was now filled with numerous people from the mortuary affairs squadron. They were busy adjusting, resetting and overall preparing the cases for their continued flight. Before they began I asked who was in charge because I knew there was paperwork I needed to sign. I finally found a Staff Sergeant who was working an issue with the paperwork. After it was complete, he brought it up to the cockpit for me to review and sign.



Petty Officer First Class Michael Strange died serving his country. Strange was one of 31 U.S. special operations troops who died when insurgents struck their helicopter in the Wardak province of Afghanistan late Friday. His family says it is still hard to believe. They find comfort in memory. "He was intense, he was funny, he had that dry humor," said his father, Charles Strange.

(continued....)



There are moments in life I will never forget. For me, it's the days my son and daughter were born. Another occurred five months ago when I had to deliver the unthinkable news to a mother that her son was killed in Afghanistan and although I didn't anticipate another day like that this soon, yesterday was another. I looked at the paperwork I was signing and realized the magnitude of the day. I glanced over the paperwork and signed. In a way, I felt I had taken ownership of these fallen soldiers. It was now my duty to ensure they make it home.



Loyal to the end ... Hawkeye lies beside the coffin of US Navy SEAL Jon Tumilson during his funeral.

(Photo: Facebook)

After confirming the preflight was complete and the aircraft was fueled, I went outside to start my walk-around. As I walked down the steps, a bus had parked in front of the aircraft and unloaded eleven passengers. The passengers were fellow SEAL team members who were escorting the fallen back to the states. I stood at the front of the aircraft and watched them board. Every one of them walked off the bus with focus in their eyes and determination in their steps; just as I imagine they do when they go on a mission. I made eye contact with the lead SEAL, nodded my head in respect and he nodded back.

Finishing my walk-around, I stopped at the bottom of the stairs. I looked up into the cargo compartment; two American Flags and one SEAL Team Six flag hung from the top of the cargo compartment. Three of twenty transfer cases visible; one with an American Flag and two with Afghan flags. I looked up at my aircraft and saw, "United States Air Force" painted on the side and I stood trying to take it all in. I wanted to make certain that I never forget these images. That I never forget the faces of the SEALs, the smell of the cargo compartment

or the sun slowly rising over the landscape. It's important that I don't forget. We need to honor the dead, honor the sacrifice of the fallen.

I understand my role in getting these fallen soldiers home is insignificant compared to the lives they lived and the things they did for our country. Most of it we will never know. All I know is every American should see what I've seen. Every American should see the bus loads of families as they exit the freeway headed for Dover AFB to reunite with their fallen or witness the amount of time, effort, people and equipment that go into ensuring our fallen have a honorable return.

The very next day we took the same aircraft back overseas. We had leveled the aircraft at our cruise altitude and I walked down to the cargo compartment. No more American Flags hung from the ceiling. All the transfer cases were gone. Instead I watched a father lay with his son, cradled on his chest, on the same spot that only yesterday held a fallen soldier. I watched a young girl, clutching a teddy bear, sleeping quietly where the fallen had laid. I realized so many Americans have no idea where the fallen lay. I'm honored to be one that does.

[Sent in by Jaime Castillo, C/2/503d]



SPECT brain scans help Army doctors "see" traumatic brain injuries

by Kurt Niland

When Spc. James Saylor, a 31-year-old father of two, returned home from Afghanistan, he didn't believe at first that his short temper, vivid nightmares, and short-term memory loss could be the result of a concussion he suffered after a mortar exploded near him. After all, traditional CT scans and MRIs showed a normal brain unaffected by contusions, bruises, and other physical injuries.



But such is the nature of concussions, which are mild forms of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that can have severe and lasting effects if ignored, repeated, or not properly treated. Concussions and many other forms of TBI usually leave no physical trace on the brain, making diagnosis elusive and treatment tricky, especially when initial symptoms may be too subtle to recognize, even to the victim.

Faced with a record number of soldiers returning home from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with TBI (estimated to be at least 200,000 in the last decade), military doctors are quickly learning more about recognizing and treating these injuries.

Armed with a better understanding of TBI, Mr. Saylor's doctors turned to a single-photon emission computerized tomography (SPECT) scan, an imaging procedure normally used to study dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the brain. The color SPECT scans revealed the blood flow (perfusion) to Mr. Saylor's temporal lobes was diminished.

Maj. Andrew Fong, the Army radiologist treating Mr. Saylor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, told the Associated Press that normally in younger patients he could expect to see a lot of perfusion in the brain "because their brains are fresh." But SPECT images he ran on soldiers returning from war with concussions revealed the disturbing truth: "We are seeing these guys with decreased perfusion and they are in their 20s," Dr. Fong told the AP.

According to the AP, when Dr. Fong discussed the scans with Dr. David Twillie, director of Fort Campbell's brain injury center, "they wondered whether the scans

were showing them the effects of a blast injury." Fong said that the temporal lobes are positioned behind the eye sockets on either side of the brain and thus are in the path of the shockwaves produced by the blast. "We are thinking maybe that is related," Fong told the AP.

Unfortunately, Fort Campbell is just one of only two military bases that use the SPECT scan to study the effects of TBI in combat veterans, but that may soon change as military physicians make more headway in understanding TBI. And as doctors get a more complete picture of TBI, their patients get a better understanding of their injury and how to cope with it.

"When I first came in, I was like, 'Why am I going through this program?'" Mr. Saylor told the AP. "I've had a concussion before when I was younger, playing football."

Now, Mr. Saylor has some valuable tools in coping with dramatic mood swings and cognitive difficulties, including a Smartphone application that enables him to monitor and better control his temper.

According to the AP, "When he starts to get upset and lose focus, he pulls out his phone and starts tapping the screen in time with his breathing." "It's just deep breathing," Mr. Saylor told the AP. "I use that breathing technique to concentrate and clear my mind."

Source: http://articles.philly.com/2011-05-23/news/29574572_1_scans-brain-injuries-blood-flow/2

[Sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, LTC (Ret) 82nd Abn]

In Doc Scott's own words, "Finally, after all these years." And when did Doc Scott brief the DoD Center of Excellence in DC on SPECT? May, 2008.
Ed

A Question Raised

While without question the young troops in the Middle East continue to suffer an overwhelming number of blast-related injuries (TBI), it raises the question of how many Vietnam vets were similarly injured and have gone undiagnosed or misdiagnosed all these years?

"TBI can cause a host of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral effects, and outcome can range from complete recovery to permanent disability or death." Some of these symptoms seem to parallel PTSD. Ed



CLARITY

Sky Soldiers:

As many of you know, we have been working diligently and methodically at Baytree Behavioral Health (BBH) to launch efficient and quality researched-based assessments and non-medication interventions such as QEEG and Brain Retraining (Neurofeedback).

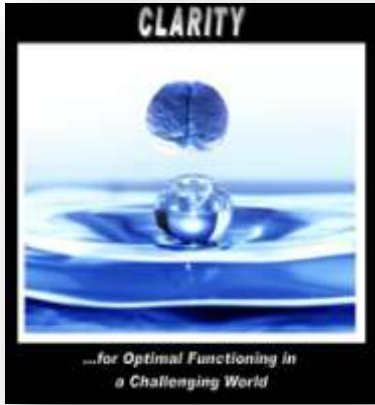
Neurofeedback (Brain Retraining) has internationally been shown to be clinically effective in the treatment of a variety of brain-based disorders like PTSD, ADD, ADHD, OCD, ODD, Anxiety, Depression, Addictions and Bipolar Disorder. Nationally, *Homecoming for Veterans* provides the neurofeedback therapy for returning veterans <http://homecoming4veterans.org/> and we at CLARITY have prepared and presented a White Paper to the Department of Defense on the topic.

Objective QEEG assessments also provide supporting evidence to appropriately assess applications for disability benefits.

After the considerable efforts of many, and the establishment of a solid foundation (we have done over 50 QEEGs and 100s of treatment sessions at our facility), we currently feel that we have met the necessary certifications and training to launch our CLARITY program.

We continue to consult and work conjointly with Cameron Allen of Brain Diagnostics, Asheville, NC <http://www.braindiagnostics.com/>.

Just this labor day weekend, Cameron and our CLARITY team labored in love and accomplished six QEEGs, and provided feedback to a number of clients already participating in the program. Additionally, we also developed an electronic address where referring clinicians can keep track of the progress of clients referred to CLARITY. We have also launched our new up front CLARITY office and Brain Cafe, which gives us the capability to see more than one patient at a time exposing them to effective researched-based interventions like Alpha-Stim <http://www.alpha-stim.com/> which 99% of users consider effective and veterans choose three out of four times.



Cameron Allen also left us with some new software regimens to try with our clients and has introduced us to a valuable new tool, the Comprehensive Neurodiagnostic Checklist (CNC), which we will be incorporating into our assessment and treatment regimens to further improve the fidelity of our clinical work at CLARITY. The CNC is amazingly robust and speaks to assessment, treatment and therapy of the future. The CNC assesses initial symptom clusters and diagnostics and ongoing neurological progress in working on those symptoms. Check it out: <http://www.eegprofessionals.nl/cnc1020.html>

If you or your buddies have questions about what Neurofeedback can do for your or their conditions, please contact us.

CLARITY...For Optimal Functioning in a Challenging World!

Cutting-Edge, Research-based Therapy.....*It just makes sense.*

Some related items....

In conjunction with Kim of AVETPROJECT.org, **George Taylor, 173d Deluxe** of National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS.us) and various representatives of the community, we met with the Honorable Judge John Murphy of Florida 18th District Courts to assist with their goal of establishing a Veterans Courts in Brevard County by January of 2012.

There are some 77 veterans courts across the country with the primary goals of 1) Improving access to needed mental health and addictions treatment for jailed veterans; 2) Reducing criminal recidivism through successful treatment outcomes and community reintegration; 3) improving long-term community reintegration through involvement; 4) Reducing jail time and resolving felony charges related primarily to mental health, PTSD and addiction issues; and 5) reducing costs associated with unnecessary incarceration

Scott Fairchild
Doctor of Psychology
LTC (Ret) 82nd Airborne Div.
Baytree Behavioral Health
1370 Bedford Drive, Suite 106
Melbourne, FL 32940
phone 321.253.8887
fax 321.253.8878
<http://baytreebehavioralhealth.com/>



Doc Scott, PTSD Guru

Note: Doc Scott has helped countless Sky Soldiers and other vets and their families throughout the country come to grips with their PTSD and brain disorders in support of their disability claims with the Veterans Administration.



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

In 480 BC, three hundred Spartans stood in a rocky mountain pass at Thermopylae and for seven days held off the mighty Persian army, allowing Greek forces to muster and eventually defeat the invaders. Three hundred warriors preserved the cradle of civilization. Three hundred Spartan Warriors made a difference.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation needs the support of 300 warriors to preserve and maintain our Memorial that was dedicated in June 2010 at the National Infantry Museum campus near Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Memorial Foundation requires a minimum of \$5,000.00 annually for basic maintenance costs (electricity, landscaping and irrigation). In addition to periodic costs of adding new information to the Memorial, funds will be required for maintenance, minor repairs, insurance and the Foundation's administrative costs. To ensure perpetual care for the Memorial, the Foundation has established an endowment fund goal of \$300,000., raised over ten years, in addition to annual donations received from other sources.

The Foundation is seeking 300 warriors willing to help preserve our legacy and maintain our memorial. This letter constitutes your invitation to become a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation's *Spartan's Club*.

We ask each Spartan Club Commander to pledge between \$200.00 and \$1,000.00 for each of the next ten years. We ask each Spartan Club Centurion to Pledge between \$173.00 and \$199.00 for the same period and each Spartan Club Lancer to pledge between \$25.00 and \$172.00 for a similar period. If the Spartans contribute an average of \$100.00 each for the next ten years, the Foundation Endowment Fund will achieve its objective. Each Spartan Club member will receive periodic communications regarding events held at the Memorial, as well as receiving recognition in our annual programs and reports.

As with the Spartans at Thermopylae, the burden of preserving our memorial and heritage is shared equally regardless of position, title and rank. Membership in the Club is open to all Sky Soldiers, their families, and military and patriotic organizations and friends of the 173d. As in the past, we hope that you will accept this challenge and support your memorial.

Ken Smith, Chairman
173d Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

I/We wish to share the honor of preserving our memorial and heritage as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation *Spartan Club*.



Beginning in 2011, and for nine succeeding years thereafter, I pledge to donate the following amount each year to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation:

As a **Spartan Club Commander** (\$200.00 or more)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Centurion** (173.00 to \$199.00)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Lancer** (\$25.00 to \$172.00)
\$ _____

(Please print)

Full Name: _____

Primary Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail your signed pledge form and your check (payable to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation) to:

173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation
1160 Lake Royale
Louisburg, NC 27549

Pledges may be paid electronically by going to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org and clicking on the tab, "Memorial Donations."

To assist you in remembering the timing of your annual pledge donation, the Foundation will send you electronically or by mail a brief reminder.

Note: The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Fund has been granted 501(c)3 status by the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions may be deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.



A Man of a Blue Words

Platoon Sergeant Leon Hostack returned to A/2/503 prior to "The Jump". He made *LIFE MAGAZINE* with a great photo. He was a great trooper and a really great Platoon Sergeant. He was profane, even more so than the rest of us and that is saying a lot. Sergeant Major Ed Proffitt rotated home, and was replaced by Sergeant Major Rogiers (later to be the Brigade Sergeant Major), who in no way was profane, not at all. After he was there a short time Sergeant Major Rogiers called a meeting of all the NCO's up in the battalion movie theater. The Sergeant Major made the statement that way too much obscene language was being used and he wanted it stopped, especially the use of M.F. "Am I understood? Any questions?" Up stands Leon Hostack, "Sergeant Major. What the mother-fuck do you mean by M.F.?" End of meeting.

**Jack Owens, Paragon Alpha 36
A/B/2/503d**



The outdoor movie theatre at Camp Zinn where all English language and other lessons were taught.

More on the Theatre

Shortly after arrival at Camp Zinn as an FNG in December '65, a handful of other Cherries and I were ordered one night to report to the movie theatre. We must have thought, "Hey, this is great, movies!!" Some Sergeant or Medical Officer, can't recall which or who he was, then began to explain to us the evils we should avoid in the nearby city of Bien Hoa, including such things as razor blades hidden in hidden places, which never quite made much sense. A black and white movie then began which graphically showed 10 ft. tall people suffering in ungodly ways from gonorrhea, syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases with strange sounding names – clearly, they had been to Bien Hoa. Had we had popcorn with us I'm sure we would have put it down. These Army scare tactics may have worked for some, but not all and perhaps not many. Gotta go. It's time for my shots.

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

2/503d Vietnam Vet Sky Soldier of the Year 2011

Don't forget to send in by December 1st your one-page write-up nominating a trooper for *2/503d Vietnam Vet Sky Soldier of the Year 2011*. There is no specific criteria to submit a nominee.

A selection committee of three 2/503 officers and three enlisted men from different years in-country will review all nominations and select the honoree on behalf of all of us. The editor of this newsletter will only have a vote in the event of a tie.

2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2010 was Colonel Ken Smith in recognition of his never-ending, ongoing support of paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). Upon receiving the award Ken stated,

"I am overwhelmed by the honor that I have been accorded -- selection as '2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2010'.

It is more meaningful to me than any of the Army's awards."



**Ken and Wambi Cook at
173d reunion**

Honor a deserving buddy and send in your nomination today to: rto173d@cfl.rr.com The honoree will be announced in the January 2012 issue of our newsletter.

All The Way!



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



Reunions of the Airborne Kind



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

Contact:

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



Recon, HHC, 2/503 '66-'67 is having a reunion in Liberty, MO June 15 - 18 next year 2012. Base HQ will be Recon's Bob Stamburksy's Retro Bowl Entertainment Center. Liberty is a suburb of Kansas City. So far, about 12 members have indicated they will attend. Watch this space for details to follow.



42nd Infantry Platoon Scout Dog, 101st ABN Div.
Vietnam 66-71. October 7-8-9, 2011, Branson, Missouri.

Contact:

Jackie McIntyre
Tel: (612) 522-9377
Eml: 42ndmom@comcast.net



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion,
June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by
Chapter 17. See early notice on Page 19.

Contact:

Dave Carmon
Eml: dcarmon@roadrunner.com
Web: www.skysoldier17.com

See Page 34 for details on upcoming Rakkasans' reunion.

Note: If you're aware of any upcoming Airborne reunions please send details to: rto173d@cfl.rr.com



The 2012 173d Reunion

Lexington, KY

June 6 -10, 2012

Hosted By Chapter 17

Room rate 115.00 plus tax per night with Free Parking

New/Registration fees:

Sky Soldiers 99.00

Spouses & Guests 75.00

Gold Star 75.00

Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner

The Hyatt is taking reservations now.

Call 800.233.1234

Ask for the 173 Airborne guestroom block or code G-173A.

Also use this code when making reservations on-line
at the Lexington-Hyatt website - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Information and Forms will be posted soon at www.skysoldier.org and www.Skysoldier17.com



~ REUNION PROGRAM ~

Hosted by Midwest Chapter 17



June 6 - Wednesday

0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2230 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1800 – 2000 President's Reception @ Jasmine-Franklin

June 7 - Thursday

0700 – 1230 Golf Outing TBA GC
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar

June 8 - Friday

0830 – 1030 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast @ Regency 1
0900 – 1100 Board of Directors Meeting @ Regency 3
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2200 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1000 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
1100 – 1500 Kentucky Veterans Memorial – Frankfort – VFW Lunch

June 9 - Saturday

0830 – 1000 Ladies Brunch @ Bluegrass Pre-function Area
0900 – 1130 General Membership Meeting @ Regency 1&2
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Regency 1 Foyer
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room

Banquet

1800 – 1845 Cocktail Hour @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1845 – 1900 Post Colors/Convocation @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1900 – 2035 Dinner @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2035 – 2115 Speakers & Awards @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2115 Retire the Colors

June 10 Sunday

0800 – 0900 Memorial Service @ Regency 1
1130 Reunion Closing

BE SURE TO ATTEND OPERATION CORREGIDOR II



173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION 2012 REUNION



JUNE 6-10, 2012, LEXINGTON, KY

~ Registration Form ~

Please print. Copy form for additional guest(s)

My Name: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Brigade Unit Served With: _____

Dates served: _____

Registration/Event Fees (Check boxes)

Per Sky Soldier Association Member \$99.

Per Each Guest. (Number of Guest(s) _____) \$75.

Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner

Per Child or all other extra dinner only guests \$40.

Per Gold Star Family Member \$75.

Per Active duty Soldier (Not on Orders) \$75.

Per Active Duty Soldier on Orders Free
(i.e. Command, Color Guard)

Per Vendor Table \$75.

Ladies Brunch (Number attending _____) Includ

Per player in Golf Tournament (No: _____) \$45

Enclosed is my check for this Total Amount: \$ _____

Please make Check Payable and Mail to:

Midwest Chapter 17
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209

Hotel Reservations:

Hyatt Regency – Lexington, \$115.00 + tax per night.
Reservations: 1-800-233-1234
Request group rate for 173d Airborne Assn. guestroom block or code G-173A. This is also the code to use if making reservations on-line at - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Overflow Hotel:
To be announced

"HISTORY, HORSES & HOOCH"



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The Tunnels of Cu Chi

~ Operation Crimp, 1966 ~



An Australian sapper inspects a Viet Cong tunnel discovered during Operation Crimp, South Vietnam 1966

Tensions between the specialist engineers and the infantry began to show early in Operation Crimp. In an official Australian after-action report, the following laconic comments were recorded:

In some cases, having secured tunnel entrances, infantry moved on to search other locations, leaving sappers underground with no immediate close-in protection. This does not foster confidence. One instance occurred where sappers were searching a tunnel under a house and the infantry commenced to burn the house. Sappers lose confidence under these circumstances.

There was some discord between the lanky Australians and their American comrades, too. Sapper (now Major) Denis Ayoub said quite bluntly, *“The Americans taught us nothing about tunnel fighting in an hour that we hadn’t already tried ourselves. Our determination to clear tunnels seemed to them to be little short of madness. They were quite surprised when our captain suggested that we were going to send guys down with a torch and pistol and a length of string.”*

While the Australians began to develop the earliest techniques for exploring and destroying some short tunnel systems, they had no real plan for dealing with the heart-stopping business of actually running into a

Viet Cong guerrilla inside a tunnel. Dennis Ayoub recalled the first time it happened to him, when he was behind another sapper who was leading the exploration of a narrow communication tunnel:

“One minute we were crawling through the tunnel, the next minute my mate, without a word, started to back up rather rapidly. No one could turn around in the tunnels we found on Crimp; you had to back out of the bloody things. So he started to back up, and I had to back up. No one said anything. When we got to the bottom of the shaft, he somehow managed to get past me and was first up and out. So I came up second, hoping to Christ that my legs weren’t going to be left behind. When we got out, and my mate cooled down a bit, he told me he’d seen a man down there.”

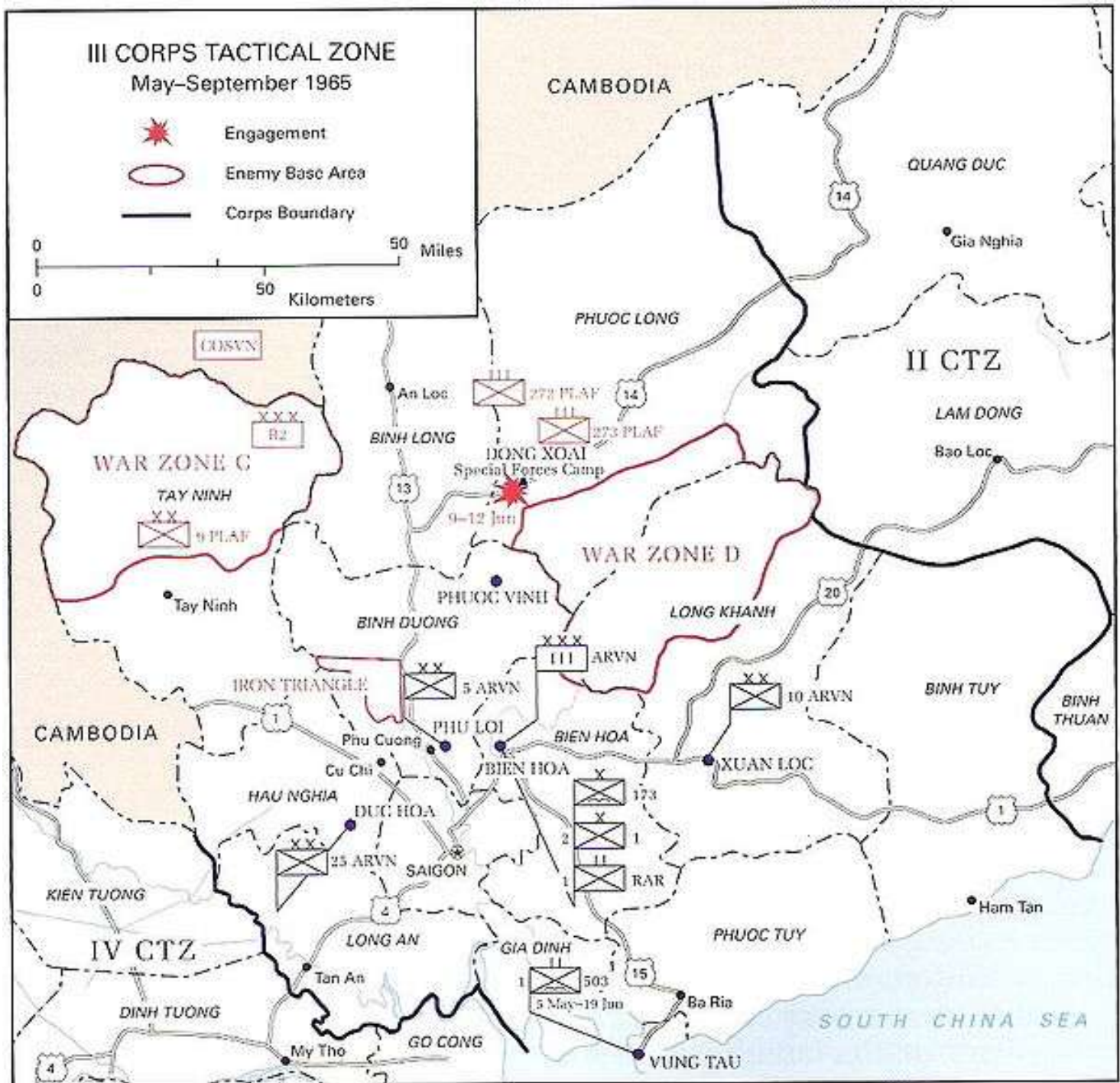
Fighting Charlie in his own tunnels was still a thing of the future. As American helicopters began to arrive to collect some of the thousands of Communist documents that had been found in the tunnels, Captain Alex MacGregor was ordering photographs taken of tunnel trapdoors and entrances, and of the booby traps found inside, and was busy making full notes of tunnel dimensions. Of all the tunnels intelligence assessments made during Crimp, the Royal Australian Engineers’ was probably the most accurate and the most prescient. Unfortunately, despite their success, the Aussies were never again to be so involved in the tunnels of Cu Chi.



An American B-52 on a bomb run over South Vietnam, similar to those used during Operation Crimp

(continued....)





Alex MacGregor was to win the Military Cross for his courage and leadership of his engineer troop during Crimp. When the operation ended on 14 January, Australian deaths in Vietnam had doubled from eight to sixteen. The tunnels they had discovered turned out to be the huge complex that was part of the Viet Cong's Military Region IV headquarters.

The Americans were learning about tunnels, too. Three days before the operation ended, they brought in a huge mechanized flame-thrower to support an infantry task force attack to the north of Ho Bo Woods. The flame-thrower was driven by Sergeant First Class Bernard Justen, then operations sergeant with the Chemical Section of the 1st Infantry Division. His flame-thrower,

mounted on an APC, fired liquid napalm out of the nozzle, using compressed air. The droplets were ignited by gasoline. This system was known as saturation firing. "You didn't waste any as it shot to the target that way," said Justen. The diminutive Texas was eventually to specialize in tunnel warfare, but he admits that during Crimp he didn't quite know what was happening. "We knew nothing about the tunnels, and we had the wrong equipment. Everything that was learned was learned the hard way."

(continued...)



Justen used his flame-thrower to burn away jungle and growth near trenches. If this expensive technique exposed a tunnel entrance – some had trapdoors, others not – then he would explore.

“We started going down checking tunnels out, and right in the middle of it, while we’re going into one tunnel, they (the VC) would pop up somewhere else and the shooting’d be going on up above you. You could hear them up above ground shooting and you never knew if you popped up out of one of these holes whether somebody from our side might take a shot at you. So you used to tell the guy – in them days we didn’t lay wire or nothing because we were working blind – we used to tell them to hold off if they saw us coming out from a different hole to the one we went in. Hell, you didn’t know where you were going to come out. I went down there, I got real close to Charlie – warm food, papers lying around, even found a calendar with the day’s date on, that’s pretty damn close. But truth is, I’d rather run them out than meet them down there.”

Justen was later to instruct others in tunnel warfare. He made drawings of what he found, including the tunnel water traps. The water traps, it turned out, were not to deal with drainage. They were rather U-bends in the tunnel system, and they prevented tear gas or CS riot-control gas from blowing all the way into a tunnel complex. The early tunnel explorers had to navigate the water traps the hard way. Most just waded in, held their breath, and swam up the other side, always assuming they could do it on one lungful of air. *“That really was the worst part for me,”* explained Justen. *“You never knew what was waiting the other side, you never knew if in that black hole you’d get to the other side, and when you did, you came out soaking wet and stinking rotten. It was the worst part of it.”*

The commander of the 173rd Airborne, Brigadier General Ellis W.

Williamson, was to write hugely enthusiastic after-action reports on Operation Crimp. Hindsight gives us all twenty-twenty vision, but history shows some of his optimism to have been either premature or hollow. *“Most of January 13th was spent destroying and*

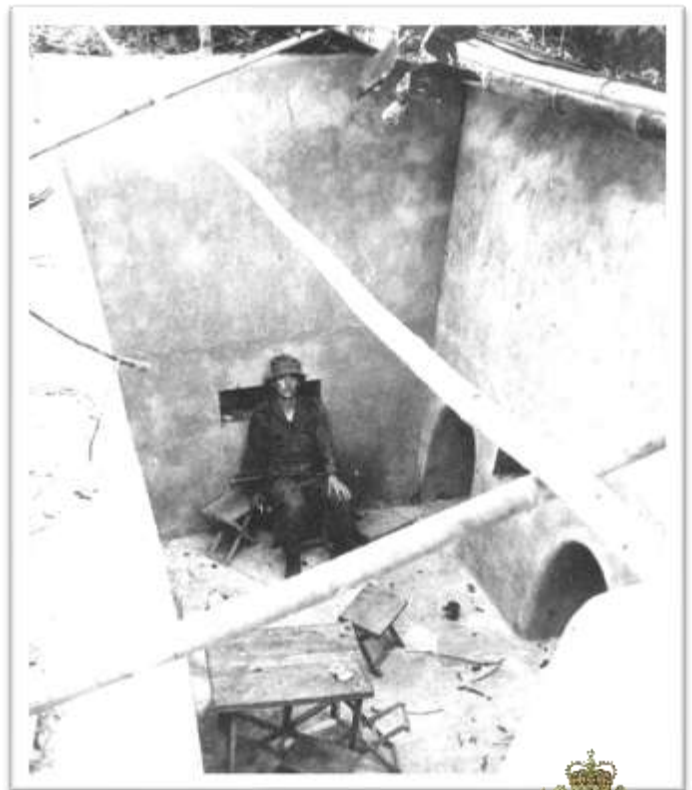
decontaminating the tunnel and bunker system,” he wrote eight days after Crimp had finished. *“CS-I, a powder contaminant with long-lasting effects, was used for the first time and should prove quite effective. It was placed throughout the tunnel systems by placing a long line of detonation cord where desired. Crystallized CS-I*



was then place along the detonation cord just prior to the explosion. It is hoped that this approach will prove to be a lasting deterrent.” It was an ill-founded hope. The water traps and the tightly sealed trapdoors connecting the various levels were to ensure that contamination usually failed.

In his after-action report, Colonel William D. Brodbeck of the Big Red One was considerably less sanguine, but more prescient. *“CS riot-control agent was used without much success.”* he wrote. *“Tunnels were baffled by the VC to prevent effective use of CS. Positive results were obtained when men went into the tunnels. A different combat technique is required when a man goes into a tunnel after a VC. However, the same amount of courage is required in this type of fighting.”*

As Crimp and Buckskin drew to a close the “Sky Soldiers” remounted their noisy winged horses and flew back to base; the trucks and the APCs ground out of the hostile woods, leaving burned and empty villages. Most of the local population had been evacuated by the Americans because *“they had lived under VC rule for many years, consequently they were thoroughly indoctrinated by the VC and willingly supported them.”*



Australian soldier in Viet Cong tunnel uncovered during Operation Crimp



Former Paratrooper Myth

Frequently people have talked about this mythical so called 'former paratrooper' or 'ex-paratrooper' and since Snopes.com hasn't busted this Internet myth once and for all, let me squash this one forever. There is NO SUCH THING. Once you earn your wings you are a part of the airborne and have forever shown the world that you lack whatever chromosome that allows us to actually enjoy a couple hundred pounds of equipment strapped on us while shuffling pathetically out a loud as hell Air Force airframe into total darkness after a 6 hour manifest only to land smack in the middle of a scrub brush filled DZ at the opposite end of whatever rally point you'll be running to (sorry, I digress). The only time you might legitimately hear about a 'former' or 'ex' paratrooper is if the individual is in polite company and has actually been a jump refusal and subsequently was ushered out of a jump unit never to put his/her knees in the breeze. Out of polite company we just call 'em quitter if we talk to them at all.

AIRBORNE!
from www.paratrooper.net

Once a paratrooper.....always a paratrooper!



101st U.S. Army Paratrooper
Corporal Louis E. Laird

All The Way!

About "Susan Oliver Visits the Herd in Vietnam"

(Newsletter Issue 32, Page 5)

Also in company was the actor Gary Merrill (12 O'Clock High, the movie not the TV Series). I remember asking her why she was there and can almost recite verbatim what she said, "Well, we believe in what you guys are doing here".



Jerry Lewis & Susan Oliver in *The Disorderly Orderly*, 1964

I did have a huge crush on her from having watched her with Jerry Lewis in "The Disorderly Orderly", and although sans makeup she still had "that certain something" that lurks in the loins of young men. What a day!!



Gary Merrill acted in *12 O'Clock High*, 1949

My many thanks to the Dave Colbert (HHC/2/503d) for the pictures....took me way back.

All the way brothers!

Mark Dunlap
E/2/503d, '69-'70

Celebrities in Vietnam

Do you have a story or a story and photos about any celebs you met in Vietnam? More often than not we would meet them in some hospital or MASH unit, but some, like Colonel Martha Raye, would venture into the boonies even putting themselves at risk.

Send in your celeb stories and pics to share with your buddies. Email to rto173d@cfl.rr.com





"BOOZE & BOOTY"

Don Abbott



There are so many facets to the Corregidor story, most of them will never be touched.

After I landed close to the parade ground in the morning wave, I made my way up to the lighthouse and reported to Erick (LTC John Erickson) the CO of the third Battalion. As had been discussed during the planning, I found out where his Battalion was located so when "E" Company landed I could let them know the situation. Then, with nothing definite to do, I wandered down to the Mile Long Barracks and through where the PX had been located.

On the North side of the Barracks I found a 462nd 75 mm gun set up. The men had found all the pieces and had it ready to fire. As I walked up to the gun one of the men held up a bottle of brandy they had been working on. He said, in a bit of drunken way, "Hey, LT have a swig of this--it's pretty good!"

We have not mentioned this before but there was booze to be found all over the place and some of it was very good. I remember Scotch, for example. There was Suntory Scotch with a label saying "the finest Scotch Whiskey available outside Scotland".

Battery Way was in our sector. We had been through the Battery many times but not all the way into all the rooms (you didn't poke your nose into some of these places). When the Infantry outfit arrived to take-over from us, one of their men went deep into the rooms and found one filled with San Miguel beer. Roscoe Corder, a beer drinker from wayback, had a fit.

There were all kinds of interesting Japanese goods to be found. For example, one squad room near the 503rd CP held hundreds of white shirts. The problem was they were Japanese sizes and not one of our men in a hundred would be able to get into a shirt (I tried). Another room held bolts of fabric, some of it very pretty. I cut off a few yards and stuffed it in my pack. I brought it back to the States and my wife had it made into a dress. At least two huge Jap Coast Artillery field glasses turned up. They weighed about a hundred pounds or I'd have brought it home. The objective lens was about 6 inches. You could see trucks moving on Bataan, for example.

John Lindgren, 503rd PRCT
6 Nov 99



I'm glad I didn't tell Al (McGrew) about the caches of whiskey, champagne and huge stores of first class canned crabmeat. I am sure Al didn't get into any of that either. You weren't in the Army in those days when it was bugger the enlisted swine and more whiskey for the officers.

The Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion mortarmen got into the spirits store and fired all kinds of mortar rounds as they celebrated. But those were the later days on the Rock. My company, hard luck "D" never found any of these bounties and in fact "F" Company not only found trucks but booze as well.



L-R: Don Abbott and Bill Calhoun

Calhoun writes that they found among other things some Bacardi Rum [the Navy always went first class]. "F" Company's Richard Lampman in a letter to Bill (Calhoun) had this to say:

*"I didn't even try and sell any of the drink I had!! There was one of our 75mm gun crews [i.e. 75mm pack howitzers] who I thought the most unlucky group on the island. They had to scrounge parts from three other guns in order to have one work. They kept taking it apart and setting it up, then taking it apart and setting it up again. I remember laughing at them about 'wearing the gun out taking it apart so much.' * They didn't beat "H" out of me so when I got the spirits I gave them four bottles to soothe their nerves. I got 'mouth' for giving it away. A group of 'Hard Luck D Co.' got a few bottles too."*

(continued)





This is a one of a kind historic photograph, showing Topside barracks upon re-occupation. Topside wasn't nearly as damaged as it is now, the scrappers have helped a lot – and also the fire in the ammunition store hastened things down a bit. Bailey probably took this from the walk at the top of the lighthouse.

Had I known, I would have given a month's pay for a bit of strong drink at the time and Bacardi at that. Unfortunately I didn't even hear about this bonanza until four decades later. A huge supply of San Miguel beer was found somewhere on Topside. Someone talked when they should have been listening and higher headquarters was alerted. In a trice, please pardon the expression, trucks appeared** and began hauling the beer down to Bottomside where it was loaded on boats and enjoyed by the straphangers at IX Corps and Sixth Army; a sad day for the Liberators indeed. I must say that I did sample the exquisite canned crabmeat. Unfortunately by the time the lower ranks got it the island was unbelievably infested with flies. It was utterly impossible to spoon out food from a can without it being covered with black flies. The unburied corpses of thousands of Japanese marines were being eaten to the bare bones by maggots soon to become flies. The corpses were literally covered with maggots that undulated like ripples from a stone tossed in a pond. I hate to think how many pounds of these flies our troopers swallowed with their meals.

It wouldn't do for Doug to be bothered by these nuisances and just before he was to have George Jones raise the colors some airplanes appeared over the tiny island dropping a magic white powder from their tails and miracles of miracles! No more flies!

John Lindgren

* The gunners set the howitzer on the second story porch of quarters 28 D [the westernmost set of officers quarters] that looked down on Battery Wheeler two hundred or so yards to the west. The guns had to be taken apart to be manhandled, they were too heavy to lift when assembled. - JL

** There has been some light-hearted controversy over whether there were trucks remaining on the Rock as at 16 Feb 1945, how many and in what condition, and whenever the word "truck" is used in polite conversation, it is advisable to genuflect or duck. - Ed



A Band of Brothers

two generations



A Band of Brothers at 173d reunion in N. Myrtle Beach, SC in 2010. L-R Mike McMillan, A/4/503d, Chuck Breit 503rd PRCT WWII, Mike Sturges A/2/503d and Jerry Wiles B/2/503d.

Have you ever heard the Band of Brothers theme song sung with words? Check out YouTube, "Requiem for a Soldier, Katherine Jenkins" -- hauntingly beautiful. The words to the song are shown below.

Jerry Sopko
D/4/503d

You never lived to see
What you gave to me
One shining dream of hope and love
Life and liberty

With a host of brave unknown soldiers
For your company, you will live forever
Here in our memory

In fields of sacrifice
Heroes paid the price
Young men who died for old men's wars
Gone to paradise

We are all one great band of brothers
And one day you'll see we can live together
When all the world is free

I wish you'd lived to see
All you gave to me
Your shining dream of hope and love
Life and liberty

We are all one great band of brothers
And one day you'll see - we can live together
When all the world is free





OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

Honoring our WWII Paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT



Midwest Chapter 17 is proud to announce we will be inviting paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought throughout the Pacific during WWII to attend next year's 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade. This is *troopers honoring troopers* and is not sanctioned by either the 173d or 503rd Associations. It's a paratrooper thang.

In 2010, at the annual reunion in N. Myrtle Beach, SC hosted by South Carolina Chapter 30, five (5) troopers of the 503rd attended as guests of men of our Brigade and friends of the 173d and 503rd. As honest Abe once said,

“Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure,”

and that's just what we'll be doing in Lexington.

Of the over 3000 men who served with the 503rd during WWII, sadly, less than 100 troopers are still with us. We hope you'll join in not only helping out with the funding (until sufficient funds have been raised), but attending our reunion next June and meeting these troopers personally and attending the WWII interactive presentations.

So far, these Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d and 503rd have made contributions getting us to about half-way to where we need to be. Our thanks to each of you! *Airborne!!*

Steve Aballa, 2/503
John Arnold, 1RAR
Jim Baskin, 4/503
Jerry Berry, 4/503
Wayne Bowers, 2/503
Bob Carmichael, 2/503
Chapter 27, Australia
Bob Clark, 5th SF
Harry Cleland, 2/503
John Cleland, 173d Bde
Dave Colbert, 2/503
Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP
Terry Davis, 2/503
George Dexter, 2/503
Roger Dick, 2/503
Tom Dooley, 2/503
Jim Dresser, 2/503
Frank Dukes, 2/503
Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn
Pat Feely, B Med
Paul Fisher, 3/503
Craig Ford, 1/503
Ross Franklin, 1/503
A.B. Garcia, 2/503
Tony Geishausser, Cowboys
Jim Gettel, 2/503
Johnny Graham, 2/503
Larry Hampton, 1/503
Nick Hun, 2/503
Ken Kaplan, 2/503
Ed Kearney, 2/503

Jack Kelley, 2/503
Bill Knapp, 2/503
John Kyne, 2/503
Joe Lamb, 2/503
Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503
Richard Martinez, 2/503
Jim Montague, 2/503
Joe Logan, 2/503
Bob Lucas, 2/503
Hal Nobles, 3/503
Bill Ostlund, 173d
Larry Paladino, 2/503
Ed Perkins, 2/503
Jack Price, 2/503
Gary Prisk, 2/503
Butch Nery, 4/503 N75
Lou Pincock, 2/503
Bill Reynolds, 2/503
Jack Ribera, 2/503
Jim Robinson, 2/503
Lee Robinson, 2/503
Graham Rollings, 2/503
Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Bill Shippey, 2/503 N75
Roy Scott, 3/319
Lew Smith, 2/503
Jerry Sopko, 2/503
Jim Stanford, 2/503
George Stapleton, 3/503
Mike Sturges, 2/503
Bill Thomas, 2/503
Alt Turner, 2/503
Steve Vargo, 2/503
Ron Woodley, 2/503
Bill Wyatt, 2/503



503rd Troopers honored in N. Myrtle Beach, SC 2010

Presently, we're raising necessary funds to cover the cost associated with inviting between 3 and 5 troopers and their spouses or a family member. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rt0173d@cfl.rr.com for details, and a donor form will be sent to you.

The *Airborne Spirit* is alive and well!



Terms of Endearment (including GDES)

'Flyboy' (Air Force), 'Jarhead' (Marines), 'Grunt' (Army), 'Squid' (Navy), 'Puddle Jumpers' (Coast Guard), etc., are terms of endearment we use describing each other. Unless you are a service member or vet, you have not earned the right to use them. Using them could get your ass kicked.

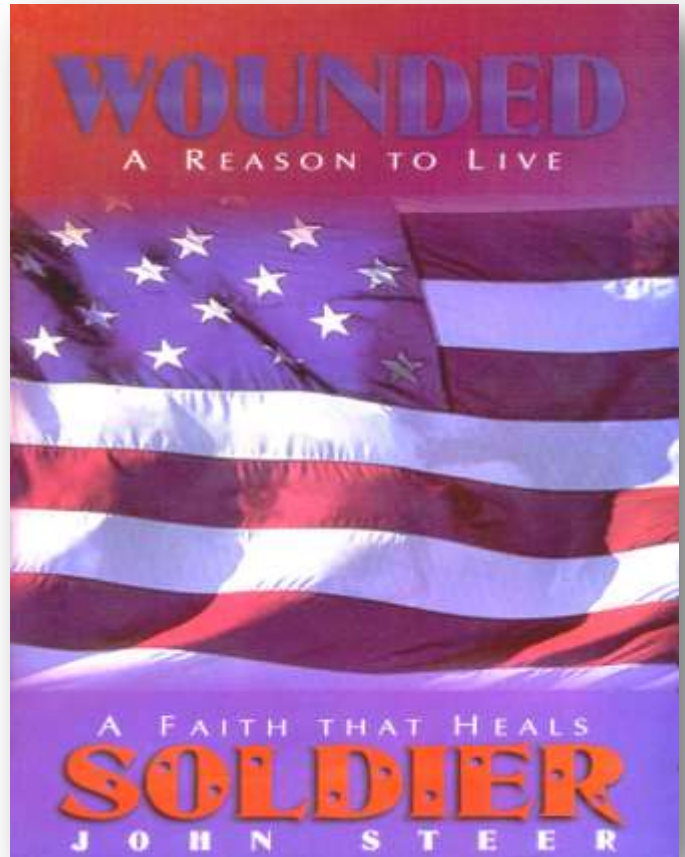


For the record: When Capt. Bill Vose, A/HHC/2/503d, uses the term GDES (God damn enlisted swine), he's really saying "I love you". I think that's what he's saying. Ed



L-R, A/2/503 troopers Maj. Gus Vendetti,
Sgt. Woody Davis and Capt. Bill Vose

Vendetti: *What did you just call him?*
Vose: *GDES.*
Vendetti: *What's that?*
Vose: *God damn enlisted swine!*
Davis: *He loves me.*



A book by John Steer, A/2/503d
www.angelfire.com/fl4/jlsteer/books.html



By Recon 2/503d RTO, '66/'67, gun seller and cartoonist exceptionale' Jerry Hassler



INCOMING!

Pertaining to the article/picture submitted by Joel Trenkle, B/2/503 (Issue 32, Page 37, photo below), "I don't know the name of the medic that replaced me". I was evacuated on November 23, 1965 and never knew my replacement. When I was evacuated the company medics were Griggs and Wolcott.



I arrived in RVN weighing 202 lbs. After evacuation to Japan I was down to 139 lbs. Hook worm infestation, amoebic dysentery, and bone marrow depression took a great toll on the old body. Still have lots of problems. But, I'm thankful because I made it back and so proud of all my old comrades.

Ken (Doc) Eastman
B/2/503d

We spent many weeks in preparation in San Antonio for the National 173d Reunion on the Riverwalk. The San Antonio Team did a most significant job day in and day out and I am most proud to be one of them. They assisted considerably for the Memorial Service on the Riverwalk Arneson Theatre. We went right from the 173d gathering to the National Convention of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in St. Paul, MN. I had the misfortune of having two serious falls during that event (PLF each time helped me to protect my head!). ER work and good medics patched me up nicely, stitches and all, and now a physical therapist twice a week is a real helper. Our youngest daughter, Gracia, had a cane waiting for me and I'm using it regularly.

On 2 March 2012, Texas Independence Day, I will hit the magic marker of 80 years old. On that special day I will take my lovely wife of 60 years on a drive all through S.A., the flags will be flying everywhere and my precious lady, Ann, will ask: "Why are all those flags flying?" and I will retort, "Sweetie, it's my 80th birthday."

Hangeth in there! Stay well.

Airborne blessings to you all,

Chaplain Connie Walker
"The Leapin' Deacon"

And advanced good wishes for your upcoming birthday, Connie. Alleth the Wayeth!

golden corral

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONDAY

Thank You Veterans....JOIN US

Golden Corral and the DAV are partnering for another great Military Appreciation Monday on November 14, 2011, between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

That's the day Golden Corral restaurants nationwide welcome our nation's veterans and active duty military men and women to a free buffet dinner and drink, and lots of camaraderie. Last year, DAV Departments and Chapters raised more than \$1 million in donations as a result of this decade-long annual tradition.



DAV

Military Appreciation Monday is Golden Corral's way of saying "Thank YOU!" to our nation's veterans and active duty military. Be sure to visit the DAV information table to meet with members of Chapters in your area and check out the free DAV information.

Source:

<http://www.goldencorral.com/military/default.asp>





ONE DAY IN 1967

By Steve Welch
C/2/503d

Each Airborne Soldier
knows the twitch
Adjusting the heavy rucksack
with a hitch
Nylon straps cutting deep into
your shoulder
Even with a towel it hurts and
made you feel older

Machete cutting the jungles
broad leaves
While elephant grass cut your
hands and made them bleed
Leeches attached at every chance
As the bites of a hundred red ants made you
do that funny dance

The rucksack got heavier as you forged the streams
Water would stream from the hole in your boots
Mud on the path would make you stumble and slip
on the roots

One moment it would rain making you miserably wet
An hour later you would be dry and be breaking a
sweat

Down the column you would hear "take a break"
Lighting a cigarette you thought it tasted great

A sip from your canteen and off you go again
Now it's your turn to pull that dreaded point
It didn't take long before you felt like a cooked
lobster

You finally stop and dig the foxhole then clear the
fire lane
You wondered to yourself as you cut the bamboo that
this is insane

You fill the sand bags and put them on the bamboo
roof over the foxhole
Then the word came down as you started to eat
To grab your gear because you were going on
ambush tonight
While the CP enjoyed your labor and took over
your foxhole

And that was one of the many days in Viet Nam 1967



Because so many sick and disabled veterans lack transportation to and from VA medical facilities for needed treatment, the DAV operates a nationwide Transportation Network to meet this need.

Through the Transportation Network, DAV volunteers drive sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical facilities for treatment. The Transportation Network is a clear example of veterans helping veterans. The DAV stepped in to meet a substantial community need when the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities. The DAV has 189 Hospital Service Coordinators around the country who coordinate the transportation needs for disabled veterans.



Use the **DAV Hospital Service Coordinator Directory** to contact your nearest HSC for information or assistance. Please remember that the DAV Transportation Network is staffed by volunteers; therefore, it is unable to cover every community. We hope we can help you. Contact your nearest VA medical center for DAV contact information in your area.

~ The Face ~



This photo was sent in by Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d. We have no idea who this guy is, he could be an old paratrooper for all we know. But, you gotta love that face -- looks like it's been around the world and back a few times on a rusty old scow. Ed



ONCE AN AIRBORNE INFANTRYMAN,
ALWAYS
AN AIRBORNE INFANTRYMAN

That's what I am and will always be. I have been recalled several times for periods of a few days to three weeks for specific tasks our mutual Uncle Sam thinks he needs a weak mind and strong back. Military Intelligence stuff. Actually been to Iraq twice. Thank God my tours have been a matter of days. Had a photo taken with my Uncle Billy while I was on temporary active duty a year ago. He's my pride and joy. I was doing PLFs from the barn loft to the cow lot when I was 9 years old. I have now met two Presidents and neither affair was as great a thrill as the look in Uncle Billy's eyes many years ago when he first saw wings on the nephew named for him. They gave me a promotion the last assignment to O6. A youngster I was sharing breakfast with said, "Col Thomas you don't act like a Colonel, Sir." I replied, "**Son, they can put all the rank on an old paratrooper they care to. Once an Airborne infantryman always an Airborne infantryman**". I had two tours of duty after the trip from Okinawa with the greatest fighting outfit to ever wear jump boots. I am proud of the service I had as an officer and the men I had the honor of commanding. However, make no mistake the proudest point of my military or civilian service to my nation was my tour with my beloved Charlie Company as an 11bush. I once made the comment at a command and staff meeting at III Corps at Hood, "**Nobody really outranks an enlisted paratrooper wearing crossed rifles.**" General Simmons commented to a couple of Captains who looked a tad puzzled, "*The Colonel means it fellows*".



SP4 Bill on right



LTC Bill

Your Brother in Arms. Bill

Bill Shippey, COL (Ret)
C/2/503d, N75 Rangers



Plans are still in the works to feature the brave Medics of the 2/503d and *all* 173d sister units. Please send your medic stories and photos to 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."

Last Month's Whodat?

This bespectacled trooper hungering down with his maps in the "D" Zone jungle wearing all those white patches which say "*aim here*", is our very own Maj. Art Martinez, of HHC/B/2/503d, '65/'66. The patches worked too! Art was wounded during Operation Silver City in March '66, when an element of Bravo Company unknowingly strolled into a VC base camp. Oops! Fortunately, Art survived his wounds while, sadly, others did not.



"One of the things that makes our military the best in the world is the certain knowledge of each soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine that they can always count on their comrades should they need help - that they will never be abandoned.

Jon Kyl



Looking for Buddies

I'm trying to find a **Doc Dopart...** and a **Doc Coward** (Texas). Does anyone have a handle on reprobates...?

Cap Gary Prisk
CO C/2/503d
garyprisk@yahoo.com

My name is **Dave Smith** and I served with A/2/503 from 10/68 to 8/69 at LZ English in the Bong Son area. Unfortunately, I didn't keep track of the guys I served with after I left country. Is there a way I can find out the names of those that served with me? Now living in West Linn, Oregon. Thanks.

Dave Smith
A/2/503d
davlsmith@yahoo.com



Dave at LZ English

Brother, it is good to hear from a Herd man. I have no contact with any of them, unless I go to the Kokomo reunion. I am missing the brotherhood.

Doug Larabel
C/2/503d, '72
dflarabel@sbcglobal.net

I was with "A" Co. 2/503 from June to November 1967, if anyone remembers me let me know. Oh, by the way, I was with B Med from 3/67-5/67.

Dennis Barbato
mbarb@comcast.net

This is one of those long shots. I am trying to get the names correct on three folks whose names have faded from me, but not the memory, they live on always.

1. **Larry Brantley**, WIA by a land mine, lost both legs, Operation Junction City. Trying to find out if he survived and what happened to him.
2. An artillery captain that was killed in a mortar attack during the same general operation and time frame. A Chinook was landing and almost was hit during this same attack. Air Force F-100s provided some air support. It was a large base camp where we stayed for several days.
3. A sergeant that was killed when a friendly grenade bounced off a tree and into his position. He was a former instructor at jump school (circa mid-late '65). I swear that I though his name was Copeland or similar, but I find no record.

All occurred during or about the Junction City time and with the 173d. Whatever you know or have records of would be appreciated. Thanks.

Bruce Deville
(aka, Lt John B. Deville)
C/3/319
bdeville@aol.com

We are looking to reconnect with **Jim Raney** – who lived in Caldwell/Nampa, Idaho or Nyssa, Oregon. Jim was an FO for quite a while, but can't remember the years. He wrote and sang a lot of songs about the 173d. Please contact either of us from C/2/503d. Thanks.

Ray Zaccone
rjzaccone@pinetel.com
Wayne Tuttle
tuttle@xplornet.com

“American soldiers in battle don't fight for what some president says on T.V., they don't fight for mom, apple pie, the American flag...they fight for one another.”



Hal Moore, CMDR 1/7 Cav,
Ia Drang Valley, Vietnam





FROM THE 173d CHAPTERS

~ Chapter XVI ~

Colonel Boland Chapter WA State, Oregon, BC, Canada

We need recruits to march! Veterans Day Parade in Auburn, Washington. We have dwindled to four members representing the 173d the last two years. Your participation is required. Contact Chris for details and to participate in this huge parade honoring our service.

The 173d has returned to Kontum. Chapter XVI has teamed with Vietnam Fund for Education, Music, & Infrastructure to provide two libraries/reading rooms in rural schools in Kontum. The first project was dedicated in June and the second is in process, funding secured. Go to www.vietnamemifund.org for details. Your donation, big or small, helps our chapter continue this worthwhile project.

Vietnam Veterans Era Remembrance Day. Chapter XVI members joined with veterans of the Vietnamese Special Forces, Washington Chapter, August 6th at the Veterans Memorial Museum, Chehalis, WA for recognition of Vietnam Veterans. The museum celebrates veterans of different eras throughout the year. www.veteransmuseum.org

Contact:

Chris Clewell

cclewell@aol.com 425-672-7486

More from Chapter XVI:

We need your help.

Searching For: Anyone knowing or having information or the whereabouts of a **Mr. Son - Cholon 1956.**

Bill Logan (of Washington State), served with MAAG Headquarters in Cholon, Saigon in 1956. He volunteered with the Vietnamese-American Association teaching spoken English night classes twice a week. There he met Mr. Son.

"His story as I remember was he was some sort of a technician and worked at the Hanoi Hospital until the communists took over. He went through some sort of interview/interrogation by them and as a result he ended up with both of his ankles broken. He escaped by raft to South Vietnam."

"My impression was that he worked at the hospital in Saigon, he drove a Fiat as a taxi cab, & was in one of the English Classes at the Association."

"His torture, escape, & determination to 'make I' impressed me to this day. He was a good man, I often wonder if I could do as well under the same circumstances."

Bill would like to learn of his circumstances and if he has survived. If you have information as to the whereabouts or information of the circumstance of Mr. Son, please contact Phan Thai at annafotovideo@yahoo.com

173d at Campbell

Many of us came back from Vietnam to serve with the 173d at Ft. Campbell, however, upon deactivation in 1/72, we became the 3/187th Inf. 101st Airborne. We maintained jump status while the rest of the 101st remained Airmobile. We proudly wore our 173d patch on our right side and the Screaming Eagle on our left. General Cushman, was our base commander, and CSM Huff (MOH) WWII highest ranking NCO. Deactivation ceremony was attended by Vice President Agnew.

Chuck Cean
HHC/D/3/503d

Hi Rakkasans!

Just in case you have not logged on the Rakkasan website, www.Rakkasan.net lately. I read a bit of information not printed in the Shimbun Reunion Issue regarding Thursday night festivities.

I clicked on the National Association tab, then clicked on the President's Message tab. For those attending the annual Rakkasan Reunion in San Antonio, the Thursday night banquet has a Western theme. So, do not forget to wear your Stetsons and western wear. Please advise other members. Hope to see you there!

Take care and God bless.

Hopie Novella
Secretary, Sun City Chapter
El Paso, Texas

Falling Down Umbrella Men

The **187th Infantry Regiment (Rakkasans)** is a regiment of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) of the United States Army.



The regimental motto is the Latin "*Ne Desit Virtus*" ("Let Valor Not Fail"). The nickname "The Rakkasans" is derived from the Japanese word for parachute. The name was given to the 187th during its tour in occupied Japan following World War II. When a translator dealing with local Japanese dignitaries was trying to explain what their unit was trained to do (and not knowing the Japanese word for "airborne soldiers") he used the phrase "falling down umbrella men", or *rakkasan*. Amused by the clumsy word, the locals began to call the troopers by that nickname; it soon stuck and became a point of pride for the unit.

Currently, the 1st Battalion - 187th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion - 187th Infantry are active in the 101st Airborne's 3rd Brigade Combat Team.



From the Archives

In response to SGT Rivera's note in the July issue (Issue 30, Page 22, *Remembering the Wildcats*), I would like to submit the following article out of the *Fire Base 173 newspaper* of September 28, 1970. It was interesting that SGT Rivera mentions the range of the PRC-25. In the spring of '70 I started running missions with the Wildcats as a radio relay operation known as Cat 5, letting us operate greater distances from LZ English.

Dave Colbert
HHC/E/2/503d



Recon Turns Tables

'Bush NVA Aces

LZ ENGLISH: *"Remember, those men are good. They're the elite of the elite and their job is to wipe you out,"* said the operations sergeant.

With this warning a six man recon team from E Co., 2d Bn, 503rd Inf. was sent on an "impossible mission." Their job was to find and destroy a 12-man NVA "Killer Team" believed to be operating in northern Binh Dinh Province.

The NVA had tired of U.S. recon teams sneaking into their base camps, killing messengers and capturing documents. According to captured documents their "trouble shooters," highly-trained and well-equipped 12 man team, were sent into the area to ambush the U.S. recon teams, cause casualties and force the recon elements to cease operations in the area.

The Americans had one big advantage...they knew the plan. An earlier ambush had turned up the necessary information. E Co. swung into action. One of their best teams was outfitted for the mission. Another team was readied as a five minute reaction force.

The team was inserted. Moving as quickly as possible, they waded up a river. The only noise was the gentle sloshing of water as they moved upstream. From the stream the team labored to a ridge. The purpose of this was to move down to the stream at another point, leaving the stream bed undisturbed so that no one would get suspicious.

The team leader checked the river out before he moved his men into position. Motioning quietly, Sgt. William Folk of McClure, Penn. positioned his men. One was rear security, two watched the stream, and one monitored the radio. The remaining two took turns with the others so the constant strain of extreme alertness wouldn't be too tiring.

They didn't have to wait long. Up the river they heard movement. Quietly Folk and his assistant team leader, Spec. 4 Al Volkides of Detroit, moved upstream. When they were within five meters of the NVA positions they opened fire. The NVA lost one man. They left him sprawled on the jungle floor. They took the wounded with them.

The two paratroopers continued the assault with automatic fire and hand grenades. The remainder of the team performed their pre-assigned tasks. Two men stayed with the equipment and guarded the rear. One of those was on the radio calling for support. Two men grabbed extra ammo and grenades and moved upstream to place fire on the fleeing NVA from another direction. Pouring lead at the NVA as they advanced, they swept through the area. The fight was brief and fierce...as suddenly as it started it stopped.

The recon team rejoined and reorganized. Picking up their equipment they pulled back 150 meters to an open grassy area.

By this time the gunships arrived. Their strafing runs ripped up the riverbeds and drove the enemy force uphill.



Dave with his "ears up" on this operation.

(continued...)



More helicopters landed, this time carrying the reaction force. The additional men piled out of the choppers carrying demolition kits, machine guns, and grenade launchers. The only other item they had was one canteen of water each. These “Wildcats” had come to fight.

The sweep up the river produced nothing. The enemy was good. He had escaped. New strategy was needed.

The next morning the reaction force was extracted, along with the Kit Carson Scout who had been injured in the frantic chase up the river. Helicopters buzzed around picking up people. Gunships gave cover and even fired up the pick-up area after the GI’s pulled out. To any observer it appeared all the men had withdrawn.

In the foliage near the river five men still waited. Faces painted green they blended in with the tropical growth and remained stationary the rest of the day. That night they slipped through the jungle searching for the NVA. Not finding the enemy by daybreak the men hid.

The decision was made early that afternoon to move back and ambush the same spot. This was dangerous. The area was a “bottleneck”. A stream fork and trail compressed the paratroopers. In addition, the enemy was always cautious in this area. Now they would be even more so. The first incident was still fresh in their minds.

The Americans moved into the area and set up. Three men covered the trail and stream junction. Two men moved upstream and around a small bend.

The trap was set. When the NVA moved off the trail and into the river bed they would be caught in a murderous cross-fire. If the NVA suspected nothing it would work. If the enemy was suspicious they might try to flank the GI’s...which would be disastrous.

All day they waited, silently. Darkness and the NVA arrived simultaneously. A head was seen looking through the brush. Silently the enemy point man dropped the four feet to the stream bed. Nothing broke the jungle’s silence. Quickly glancing both ways, he moved up to the stream a few feet. Equally silent, the next man dropped down, taking up a position to give flank security to the NVA column. The enemy continued to advance, making no noise; still unaware they were in a trap.

Recon waited, trying to get as many men into the kill zone as possible. This would be a tough fight. The enemy was at his best. The first few seconds would determine it all. They had to make it good.

Suddenly one NVA tensed up and squatted. He acted as if he was suspicious. The time had come. A burst of fire ripped the top off his head. The NVA point man was blown away by the GI’s upstream. The third man was killed by Spec. 4 Richard Celeya, who was repeatedly exposing himself to hostile fire to send tracers ripping up and down the column.

The enemy fired back with everything it had. Only darkness and well chosen positions kept the recon team from being seriously mangled.

The exploding grenades shattered rock and the air was filled with fragments. The firefight was at such close quarters that the fragments injured friend and foe alike. The NVA had gotten as close as seven feet to the team’s positions. That’s where they stayed. The paratroopers stood their ground and shot everything that moved.

The NVA pulled back; they were mangled. They had lost four men killed. An undetermined number were wounded or would die trying to escape.

Recon had the Redlegs lighting the area up with artillery illumination. The gunships were in the air. The reaction force was on the way. Recon decided it was time to move out.

They set up on a grassy knoll and welcomed the reaction elements, D Co., 2d Bn answered the horn this time, Casper, the 173d’s Aviation Platoon, did their best to get the men in close on the steep slopes. Still, it was a night jump with full combat equipment for the paratroopers. The long drop to the ground wasn’t even soft. A night helicopter assault is a frightening experience.



The Wildcats

The darkness, rain, and fog moved in to help the badly mauled NVA. The night searches turned up nothing. The sweep conducted the next morning was fruitless because of the rain. All signs of their escape had washed away. The tracker dogs couldn’t find a scent.

Sgt. Edward McLeod of Homosassa, Fla. summed it all up. He said,

“It’ll be a helluva long time before they send another team in for us. They can’t bear the losses.”



“Remembering” those who
 have left us is the same
 saying as
“No-One left Behind”

**2011 Lurp/Ranger Reunion
 Remembrance posters of those who
 had passed away since last Reunion
 in 2009.**

These posters were created by me, to look old and edited then printed by Gary Schulz (Ideation Design). These are created to remember those members who passed away since the last time we gathered at Fort Benning, Columbus, GA. The posters are signed by Company Lurp/Ranger members plus Company Family members and Friends of the Company and members who support us. Each member's poster will be sent to their Family.

Note: Ranger Leroy Petry, Congressional Medal Of Honor recipient personally signed the poster of Dave Dolby (MOH).

The 2011 75th Ranger Regiment Association Reunion is in the past, so if you have photos of the event please send them to me (email or mail). Our history can only be documented if you get your collection to me.



Contact me if you need assistance in copying your stuff. Also, the many Stories in our heads, need to be written and saved for our Company history. Posters can also be done in the name of any other fallen/deceased member, if you desire one contact me.

**Robt "Twin" Henriksen
 Long Range Patrol Ranger
 70-71 Teams Golf/Delta
 2218 Augustine Drive
 Ferndale, WA 98248
 Cell number: (360) 393-7790**

75th Ranger Regiment

To be a part of the 75th Ranger Regiment requires personal excellence across many Soldier and leader attributes. Rangers are more than just physically strong. Rangers are smart, tough, courageous, and disciplined. Rangers are self-starters, adventurers, and hard chargers. They internalize the mentality of a “more elite Soldier”, as the Ranger Creed states and as their intense mission requirements demand.

Rangers are role model Soldiers – mentally, morally, and physically – who use their minds as well as bodies to make sound judgments, reasoned decisions, and ultimately to never quit. Rangers demonstrate discipline both on and off duty, and their Regimental standards are enduring.

When then Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams envisioned the modern Ranger force, he emphasized the professional unit excellence stems from individual Ranger personal excellence and character. He directed that “*wherever the battalion goes, it will be apparent that it is the best.*” Members of the 75th Ranger Regiment live this charter both personally and professionally every day.



Our Buddy Phuc

In the special edition of our newsletter on *The Battle of the Slopes* (June 2011, Issue 29), I mistakenly referred to hooch buddy Sgt. Nguyen Phuc as a "Kit Carson" scout who served with the 2/503d in '65-'67.... he was not. Phuc was a career soldier, a Special Forces soldier in the South Vietnamese Army attached to our battalion as a scout/interpreter. Phuc was killed at Dak To during that battle in June 1967. For those of you who knew Phuc, you'll particularly appreciate this report by trooper Steve Konek who was tasked with escorting Phuc's body home. Thanks Steve. Ed



Good buddy Phuc, Sept. '66

Photo by Smitty

Phuc's Final Journey

By Steve Konek

Greetings:

The story gets complicated but I'll give it a try by e-mail and see if I can make any sense. The memory has stuck with me all of these years but things are beginning to get fuzzy around the edges.

I was at Dak To and received a call from Cpt. Noel, the Brigade S5 Officer. He told me to catch a plane to ? and go to the morgue there.



Steve in Bien Hoa

Whether in Dak To or at ?,

I don't remember which, but it's where I hooked up with a Vietnamese Lieutenant. We were to secure and escort Phuc's body to Saigon but with no real instructions beyond that.

I do remember that the LT and I were at the morgue together at an Air Force Base - they stated we could not fly the body to Saigon on a US plane as he was Vietnamese. I called back to Dak To and spoke with Cpt. Noel, he aptly pointed out and I relayed the

message that Phuc had flown up there on a US plane and he could sure as hell fly back on one. (Understand that I was a PFC with a VN LT. No one paid much attention to either one of us). Finally, it was decided that sometime in the middle of the night they would fly the body and we had a cargo plane with the three of us onboard, the only cargo on an otherwise empty plane.

We arrived at Tan Son Nhut about 2:30 in the morning. The crew got off the plane and the pilot told me they had radioed the tower a half hour ago and an ambulance should be there shortly. We sat there on the tailgate of the empty plane for about a half hour.

I walked over to the tower and found someone, asking where our ambulance was. They said they had called and it would be along. After another half hour wait we were becoming exasperated. The VN LT then took off and came back 15 minutes later with a military ambulance driven by a couple of Vietnamese. We loaded up Phuc and off we went. I thought, "OK, now we have this thing under control" - was I ever wrong.

They took us to a VN Hospital, I think on Tan Son Nhut air base or right outside the gate. The LT goes inside and chats them up and out comes a gurney and we load up Phuc and wheel him into the hospital. A bunch of discussion then takes place and it turns out they had not understood he was dead. They would not take him so out we go, reload Phuc in the ambulance and another discussion ensues with the drivers. Turns out they are not supposed to be off the base with the vehicle but would drive us, but we needed to buy gas for the ambulance! The LT agreed to purchase the gas and off we go.

We then drove to the National Cemetery somewhere within Saigon and they agreed to take the body. They then kept trying to give me the empty stretcher and I pointed out I didn't need the thing, keep it. The ambulance then, under the LT's instructions, takes off through Saigon and drops us on the street at the location he has indicated. He instructs me to stay there and off he goes up an alley/side street.

I had never been to Saigon, and am not a city boy. It is just barely getting light while I'm standing on the street at who knows where hoping this LT is going to come back. I have hand grenades hanging on my web gear, my M-16, my steel pot on - everyone going by is looking at me like I'm nuts. To my relief the LT comes back and retrieves me. Turns out his Major lives down the alley and we go back to his house. After introductions, etc., the Major's driver shows up and we all pile in his jeep for a ride to Bien Hoa.

(continued....)



Phuc's body was escorted or delivered to his home village for burial.

I do not remember why I was chosen for this duty and don't remember what good it did me to go back to Bien Hoa other than I still knew people there who were now working with the 101st and had worked with us when we were in Bien Hoa. I was either on my way to R&R or it was just easier for me to catch a flight back up country. I do not remember my return to Dak To - obviously I got there, damn!



Sgt. Nguyen Phuc

The above photo of Phuc was of him standing in the door of our barracks at Brigade HQ. I remember him as full of energy and he seemed to be a happy sort.

I will send this e-mail to Thai Phan also and he can add what he knows of the story as the interpreters usually had a pretty good idea of where each came from and their backgrounds. As I recall there were about 50+/- interpreters assigned to the Brigade and they rotated around to work with various units.

Thai is a very interesting story of himself and if we ever chat in person or by phone I'll give you the story about our relationship over the years. Thai can correct my facts as he knows them.



173d Scout/Interpreter Sgt. Phan Thai during Operation Robin, Highway 15, Forward Base Camp.

Hope this helps, we lost some good people but those of us who are fortunate enough to have survived can still get some good work done. We are not finished yet! All the way!

Steve Konek, Sr.
173d Bde
(photos by Steve)

WHODAT?



Anyone know who this 2/503 trooper is rendering aid to the little boy during *Operation New Life*?
(Photo by Col. George Dexter)

"Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to 'bind me in all cases whatsoever' to his absolute will, am I to suffer it?"

Thomas Paine
The American Crisis, December 19, 1776



LRRPS on the Prowl

The photo on the right was taken by Co Reentmeister, a Dutch photographer who made the combat jump as a *LIFE* photographer. He is one of the most renowned photographers in the world and had half a dozen *Life* covers. Jay Boyce is working on a large format book of photos on Lrrp. He has license rights from *Life* for three of Reentmeister's photos and he wrote that you have permission to use them. Since I am on all three of them and I have promised a stirrup of the action it sounds fair, a bit sad but I seem to appear on book covers but only because this world class photographer took the photos. Reentmeister rowed in 8-man sculls for Holland in the 1960 Olympics.



L-R: Mannie Moya & Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRPS

On to story behind the photo.

The first series of area patrols after the jump was to consist of four insertions to consist of teams 3, 4 and 8 (forget the other one). Patrols were to be placed east and west on border and recon inward with the others further south. The first two teams were engaged within 30 minutes with one severe WIA and one lightly wounded. Team 3 was fired upon while approaching primary and secondary LZs. They attempted a passage of lines through one of the battalions but were engaged with skirmished fire in two attempts.

Team 4 had gone through final officer check and was to go in on a second lift that night but all aerial assets were involved in getting the engaged teams out.

We were standing at the lift ship when the *LIFE* photographer, Co Reentmeister, came upon us and took a series of photos. One of these is found reversed on both Lanning's and the Osprey book on Lrrp. You don't have to be good, just get a good photographer. The photo of Mannie Moya (deceased) and myself was taken just as the rotors started turning and I was totally unaware of Reentmeister's presence. Going in after the previous 3 insertions have been shot up or shot out can get one focused on the task at hand

We were inserted on a tiny LZ about one km from Cambodia. We ran off the LZ onto a major infiltration route more than two meters wide covered with three-wheeled lambretta tracks. We were to have done a recon of the area but were told to stay in position for point recon of "trail" since it was an unknown trail. Infiltration was at last light and we found a nice hide. Movement of squeaky wheeled bikes and a few motorbikes was heard during the night

We moved back to the route just after first light and spotted guys each carrying an RPD but no hat or pack. We did not engage even though probably spotted:

1. They are GIs and don't want to explain to their sergeants and officers why they did not take us out
2. Most important, Sgt Guill had told us to absolutely never engage NVA without packs or hats since they are at "home". Guill had made the jump with the 11th in Philippines and both drops with 187th and did a second tour during Korea with 2ID. He got his third CIB during one of his multiple tours with SF as well as time with the Battalions. His rank reverted to E-8 upon his retirement three weeks later.

We ingloriously retreated and hid and were told to watch more and be retrieved early. Our CO, captain Phillips, said we were to "lean into the fire", "say what?" "We will put 18 rounds of 105 ahead of you and you will dash into the debris."

"SAY WHAT!" Ok, I did not say that, but said, "uh, yes sir." Interpret that as "You outta' your mind, Sir?"

It was loud and "amusing" with big branches falling on us but at least it was friendly fire.

We spotted the LZ and went on-line from in-file. Moya as point got to trail, three folks on bikes (who had waited for fire to lift) just about ran over Moya.

Moya fired a short burst which awakened the RPD team which fired at and past Moya. If we had been in-file, team 4 would have been history. The 3 on the trail were 10 meters away and we did them in first and then engaged the MG. They were totally confused and got fixated on Bimgardner 15 meters from them behind a tree and something blew them both a foot off the ground - leaving their right security whom Ray Hill put a WP Graf onto. We e&e'd for 90 minutes avoiding different occupied camp sites before finally doing a cable rope exfiltration.

Reed Cundiff
173d LRRPs



Alice's Restaurant

By Arlo Guthrie

This song is called Alice's Restaurant, and it's about Alice, and the restaurant, but Alice's Restaurant is not the name of the restaurant, that's just the name of the song, and that's why I called the song Alice's Restaurant.

You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant. You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant. Walk right in it's around the back. Just a half a mile from the railroad track. You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant

Now it all started two Thanksgivings ago, was on - two years ago on Thanksgiving, when my friend and I went up to visit Alice at the restaurant, but Alice doesn't live in the restaurant, she lives in the church nearby the restaurant, in the bell-tower, with her husband Ray and Fasha the dog. And livin' in the bell tower like that, they got a lot of room downstairs where the pews used to be in. Havin' all that room, seein' as how they took out all the pews, they decided that they didn't have to take out their garbage for a long time.

We got up there, we found all the garbage in there, and we decided it'd be a friendly gesture for us to take the garbage down to the city dump. So we took the half a ton of garbage, put it in the back of a red VW microbus, took shovels and rakes and implements of destruction and headed on toward the city dump.

Well we got there and there was a big sign and a chain across the dump saying, "Closed on Thanksgiving." And we had never heard of a dump closed on Thanksgiving before, and with tears in our eyes we drove off into the sunset looking for another place to put the garbage.

We didn't find one. Until we came to a side road, and off the side of the side road there was another fifteen foot cliff and at the bottom of the cliff there was another pile of garbage. And we decided that one big pile is better than two little piles, and rather than bring that one up we decided to throw ours' down.

That's what we did, and drove back to the church, had a thanksgiving dinner that couldn't be beat, went to sleep and didn't get up until the next morning, when we got a phone call from officer Obie. He said, "*Kid, we found your name on an envelope at the bottom of a half a ton of garbage, and just wanted to know if you had any information about it.*" And I said, "*Yes, sir, Officer Obie, I cannot tell a lie, I put that envelope under that garbage.*"

After speaking to Obie for about forty-five minutes on the telephone we finally arrived at the truth of the matter and said

that we had to go down and pick up the garbage, and also had to go down and speak to him at the police officer's station. So we got in the red VW microbus with the shovels and rakes and implements of destruction and headed on toward the police officer's station.

Now friends, there was only one or two things that Obie coulda done at the police station, and the first was he could have given us a medal for being so brave and honest on the telephone, which wasn't very likely, and we didn't expect it, and the other thing was he could have bawled us out and told us never to be seen driving garbage around the vicinity again, which is what we expected, but when we got to the police officer's station there was a third possibility that we hadn't even counted upon, and we was both immediately arrested. Handcuffed. And I said "*Obie, I don't think I can pick up the garbage with these handcuffs on.*" He said, "*Shut up, kid. Get in the back of the patrol car.*"

And that's what we did, sat in the back of the patrol car and drove to the quote Scene of the Crime unquote. I want tell you about the town of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where this happened here, they got three stop signs, two police officers, and one police car, but when we got to the Scene of the Crime there was five police officers and three police cars, being the biggest crime of the last fifty years, and everybody wanted to get in the newspaper story about it. And they was using up all kinds of cop equipment that they had hanging around the police officer's station. They was taking plaster tire tracks, foot prints, dog smelling prints, and they took twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy photographs with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one was to be used as evidence against us. Took pictures of the approach, the getaway, the northwest corner the southwest corner and that's not to mention the aerial photography.

After the ordeal, we went back to the jail. Obie said he was going to put us in the cell. Said, "*Kid, I'm going to put you in the cell, I want your wallet and your belt.*" And I said, "*Obie, I can understand you wanting my wallet so I don't have any money to spend in the cell, but what do you want my belt for?*" And he said, "*Kid, we don't want any hangings.*" I said, "*Obie, did you think I was going to hang myself for littering?*" Obie said he was making sure, and friends Obie was, cause he took out the toilet seat so I couldn't hit myself over the head and drown, and he took out the toilet paper so I couldn't bend the bars roll out the - roll the toilet paper out the window, slide down the roll and have an escape. Obie was making sure, and it

and it was about four or five hours later that Alice (remember Alice? It's a song about Alice), Alice came by and with a few nasty words to Obie on the side, bailed us out of jail, and we went back to the church, had a another thanksgiving dinner that couldn't be beat, and didn't get up until the next morning, when we all had to go to court.

We walked in, sat down, Obie came in with the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one, sat down. Man came in said, "*All rise.*" We all stood up, and Obie stood up with the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures, and the judge walked in sat down with a seeing eye dog, and he sat down, we sat down. Obie looked at the seeing eye dog, and then at the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one, and looked at the seeing eye dog. And then at the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one and began to cry, 'cause Obie came to the realization that it was a typical case of American blind justice, and there wasn't nothing he could do about it, and the judge wasn't going to look at the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with the circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one was to be used as evidence against us. And we was fined \$50 and had to pick up the garbage in the snow, but that's not what I came to tell you about. Came to talk about the draft.

They got a building down New York City, it's called Whitehall Street, where you walk in, you get injected, inspected, detected, infected, neglected and selected. I went down to get my physical examination one day, and I walked in, I sat down, got good and drunk the night before, so I looked and felt my best when I went in that morning. 'Cause I wanted to look like the all-American kid from New York City, man I wanted, I wanted to feel like the all-, I wanted to be the all American kid from New York, and I walked in, sat down, I was hung down, brung down, hung up, and all kinds o' mean nasty ugly things. And I walked in and sat down and they gave me a piece of paper, said, "*Kid, see the psychiatrist, room 604.*"

And I went up there, I said, "*Shrink, I want to kill. I mean, I wanna, I wanna kill. Kill. I wanna, I wanna see, I wanna see blood and gore and guts and veins in my teeth.*"

(continued...)



Eat dead burnt bodies. I mean kill, Kill, KILL, KILL." And I started jumpin up and down yelling, "KILL, KILL," and he started jumpin' up and down with me and we was both jumping up and down yelling, "KILL, KILL." And the sergeant came over, pinned a medal on me, sent me down the hall, said, "You're our boy."

Didn't feel too good about it.

Proceeded on down the hall getting' more injections, inspections, detections, neglects and all kinds of stuff that they was doin' to me at the thing there, and I was there for two hours, three hours, four hours, I was there for a long time going through all kinds of mean nasty ugly things and I was just having a tough time there, and they was inspecting, injecting every single part of me, and they was leaving no part untouched. Proceeded through, and when I finally came to the see the last man, I walked in, walked in sat down after a whole big thing there, and I walked up and said, "What do you want?" He said, "Kid, we only got one question. Have you ever been arrested?"

And I proceeded to tell him the story of the Alice's Restaurant Massacre, with full orchestration and five part harmony and stuff like that and all the phenome... - and he stopped me right there and said, "Kid, did you ever go to court?"

And I proceeded to tell him the story of the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with the circles and arrows and the paragraph on the back of each one, and he stopped me right there and said, "Kid, I want you to go and sit down on that bench that says Group W NOW kid!!"

And I, I walked over to the, to the bench there, and there is, Group W's where they put you if you may not be moral enough to join the army after committing your special crime, and there was all kinds of mean nasty ugly looking people on the bench there. Mother rapers. Father stabbers. Father rapers! Father rapers sitting right there on the bench next to me! And they was mean and nasty and ugly and horrible crime-type guys sitting on the bench next to me. And the meanest, ugliest, nastiest one, the meanest father raper of them all, was coming over to me and he was mean 'n' ugly 'n' nasty 'n' horrible and all kind of things and he sat down next to me and said, "Kid, whad'ya get?" I said, "I didn't get nothing, I had to pay \$50 and pick up the garbage." He said, "What were you arrested for, kid?" And I said, "Littering." And they all moved away from me on the bench there, and the hairy eyeball and all kinds of mean nasty things, till I said, "And creating a nuisance." And they all came back, shook my hand, and we had a great time on the

bench, talkin about crime, mother stabbing, father raping, all kinds of groovy things that we was talking about on the bench. And everything was fine, we was smoking cigarettes and all kinds of things, until the Sergeant came over, had some paper in his hand, held it up and said.

"Kids, this-piece-of-paper's-got-47-words-37-sentences-58-words-we-wanna-know-details-of-the-crime-time-of-the-crime-and-any-other-kind-of-thing-you-gotta-say-pertaining-to-and-about-the-crime-I-want-to-know-arresting-officer's-name-and-any-other-kind-of-thing-you-gotta-say", and talked for forty-five minutes and nobody understood a word that he said, but we had fun filling out the forms and playing with the pencils on the bench there, and I filled out the massacre with the four part harmony, and wrote it down there, just like it was, and everything was fine and I put down the pencil, and I turned over the piece of paper, and there, there on the other side, in the middle of the other side, away from everything else on the other side, in parentheses, capital letters, quoted, read the following words:

("KID, HAVE YOU REHABILITATED YOURSELF?")

I went over to the sergeant, said, "Sergeant, you got a lot a damn gall to ask me if I've rehabilitated myself, I mean, I mean, I mean that just, I'm sittin' here on the bench, I mean I'm sittin' here on the Group W bench 'cause you want to know if I'm moral enough join the army, burn women, kids, houses and villages after bein' a litterbug." He looked at me and said, "Kid, we don't like your kind, and we're gonna send you fingerprints off to Washington."

And friends, somewhere in Washington enshrined in some little folder, is a study in black and white of my fingerprints. And the only reason I'm singing you this song now is cause you may know somebody in a similar situation, or you may be in a similar situation, and if your in a situation like that there's only one thing you can do and that's walk into the shrink wherever you are ,just walk in say "Shrink, You can get anything you want, at Alice's restaurant.". And walk out. You know, if one person, just one person does it they may think he's really sick and they won't take him. And if two people, two people do it, in harmony, they may think they're both faggots and they won't take either of them. And three people do it, three, can you imagine, three people walking in singin' a bar of Alice's Restaurant and walking out. They may think it's an organization. And can you, can you imagine fifty people a day, I said fifty people a day walking in singin' a bar of Alice's Restaurant and walking out.

And friends they may thinks it's a movement.

And that's what it is , the Alice's Restaurant Anti-Massacre Movement, and all you got to do to join is sing it the next time it comes around on the guitar.

With feeling. So we'll wait for it to come around on the guitar, here and sing it when it does. Here it comes.

You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant. You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant. Walk right in it's around the back. Just a half a mile from the railroad track/ You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant.

That was horrible. If you want to end war and stuff you got to sing loud. I've been singing this song now for twenty five minutes. I could sing it for another twenty five minutes. I'm not proud... or tired.

So we'll wait till it comes around again, and this time with four part harmony and feeling.

We're just waitin' for it to come around is what we're doing. All right now.

You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant, *Excepting Alice*. You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant. Walk right in it's around the back. Just a half a mile from the railroad track. You can get anything you want, at Alice's Restaurant

Da da da da da da da da
At Alice's Restaurant!

"Alice's Restaurant Massacre" is a musical monologue by singer-songwriter Arlo Guthrie released on his 1967 album *Alice's Restaurant*. The song is one of Guthrie's most prominent works, based on a true incident in his life that began on Thanksgiving Day 1965, and which inspired a 1969 movie of the same name. Apart from the chorus which begins and ends it, the "song" is in fact a spoken monologue, with a repetitive but catchy ragtime guitar backing. In an interview for *All Things Considered*, Guthrie said the song points out that any American citizen who was convicted of a crime, no matter how minor (in his case, it was littering), could avoid being conscripted to fight in the Vietnam War. The song lasts 18 minutes and 34 seconds. It is notable as a satirical, first-person account of 1960s counterculture, in addition to being a hit song in its own right. The final part of the song is an encouragement for the listeners to sing along, to resist the U.S. draft, and to end war.

