

FOR THE MEN, AND THEIR
FAMILIES, OF THE 2ND BATTALION,
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
******newsletter*



November 2011, Issue 34

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See all issues to date at either of these web sites:

<http://firebase319.org/2bat/news.html> or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 173d Photo of the Month ~



Sky Soldiers and Aussie troopers give aid to an Australian soldier during the first major joint-troop operation on 30 Jun 65.



Chaplain's Corner

Sky Soldiers of the Heroic Herd, the 2/503d Bn, Families and Friends:

Thanksgiving Blessings!



The Leapin' Deacon

Psalm 19: 7-10

“The revelation of God is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes. God’s reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate down to the nth degree. God’s Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You’ll like it better than strawberries in the spring, better than red, ripe strawberries.”

We are thankful for the wonder and grace of each new day with its cherished sunrise and sunset; for the illustrative beauty of the evening and night with the countless stars and captivating celestial formations; and, in due time, the needed rainfall to assist our faithful farmers in providing produce to feed our Nation. We come before our kind Heavenly Father in renewed, devout and buoyant spirit of thanksgiving for His loving and mighty good earth, water and air, preparations for our awaiting tables, and our dire need for good nourishment.

Thanksgiving Season is just that – thanks giving and thanks living with a powerful attitude of gratitude for our Lord’s great Grace and Mercy. If we receive anything beyond the “basic load” of food, air, water, clothing and shelter we are blessed in a huge way.

We further thank and praise our Lord for the profound privilege to be creative and enterprising Sky Soldiers and Families in sure mission, meaning and purpose. Our Lord has designed a special ritual of thanksgiving here on earth, and that is to love, serve, and encourage our brothers and sisters in need. This is the language of thanks we are called upon to use as servants of God, Country and our families, let us practice what we Preach and Pray.

We come to our ever-present Lord in thanksgiving with and for our faithful citizens who so gallantly serve our beloved Nation in the Armed Forces – each Sky Soldier and Family Member exceedingly important and valuable.

Lord, continue to watch over, inspire and protect, now and forever, our Troops of all ages and ranks and their families.

I close with a mighty Thanksgiving Prayer by the Most Rev. Robert Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop of Green Bay, Wisconsin:

“COME HOLY SPIRIT COME.

Free us from all reluctance that we may give freely and totally what we have and what we are, You are a spirit of joy. Send your transforming fire into our hearts and our world. Renew the face of the earth.

COME HOLY SPIRIT COME.

Teach us your immeasurable generosity. Empower us to welcome the stranger, to heal the broken-hearted, to calm the distressed. May we love without measure everyone who enters our life.

COME HOLY SPIRIT COME.

Remove all fear from our heart and grace us with trust in love’s enduring power. May we be vital and joyful instruments of your love in a world that knows too much violence and pain.

COME HOLY SPIRIT COME!”

AMEN!

Blessings in abundance,

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



“Three soldiers of the 173d Airborne take a rest from their assault on Hill 875, near Dak To, Central Highlands. The 173d Airborne captured the hill on Thanksgiving Day 1967.”

The National Archives





nationwide because the government has agreed to modify two national policies hostile to religion."

The order also requires the VA to change its national policies regarding volunteer honor guards. These changes will now allow the reading of "Thirteen Fold" Flag Recitations unless the deceased veteran's family requests otherwise, volunteer honor guards to provide their own texts of recitations to the funeral homes for the funeral homes to offer those options to the deceased veteran's survivor(s) for consideration, and the VFW honor guards to work independently with funeral homes to coordinate provision of volunteer services at the committal services scheduled at the cemetery without interference from the government.

"I am glad to see the VA overturn these policies, which will allow us to perform the entire VFW burial ritual," said Inge Conley, Commander of VFW District 4 in Houston and the VFW entity that initiated the lawsuit. *"We should be able to include prayers, mentions of God, and the phrase, 'May God grant you, grace, mercy and peace,' to grieving families laying American soldiers to rest."*

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]

First Amendment Will Prevail at Houston VA National Cemetery

Cemetery will not interfere with prayers, religious expression during burial services.

October 21, 2011

The Veterans of Foreign Wars today declared victory in a Federal Lawsuit (Rainey v VA) filed over allegations of religious hostility and unlawful censorship by the VA and its director of the Houston National Cemetery.

Federal District Judge Lynn N. Hughes signed a consent decree ordering the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to lift the ban on prayer and the word "God" at national cemeteries, to revoke national policies hostile to religion, and to reopen the Chapel which identity was previously changed to "meeting facility" at the Houston National Cemetery.

Texas-based Liberty Institute filed suit on behalf of the VFW over allegations of religious hostility and unlawful censorship by the VA and its director of the Houston National Cemetery. Officials told the VFW they could not have prayer during the burial services of veterans unless the family requested it specifically in writing and submitted the prayer to VA officials for pre-approval.

"The VFW is grateful that the government has restored the basic tenets recognized in the U.S. Constitution – which guarantees fundamental rights of religious expression and freedom of speech – to patriotic Americans who sacrifice everything to defend it. This is indeed a victory." said VFW National Commander Richard DeNoyer.

"We are thankful that after almost five months of litigation, the government is finally doing the right thing by entering into a consent decree and ending religious hostility at the Houston National Cemetery," said Jeff Mateer, general counsel for Liberty Institute. *"The decree not only impacts religious freedoms in Houston, but at all VA cemeteries*

Flag Folding

As an Army and Navy custom, the flag is lowered daily at the last note of retreat. Special care should be taken that no part of the flag touches the ground. The Flag is then carefully folded into the shape of a tri-cornered hat, emblematic of the hats worn by colonial soldiers during the war for Independence. In the folding, the red and white stripes are finally wrapped into the blue, as the light of day vanishes into the darkness of night. This custom of special folding is reserved for the United States Flag alone.



EDITOR'S NOTE

By Lew "Smitty" Smith

Do people ever read editor's notes? In fact, can't recall once reading a single such note by Hugh Hefner, although the articles were very interesting. Editor's notes are probably read only by their children or grandchildren, and then just those trying to work their way thru Journalism 101 at some Jr. College. So, for 33 issues of our newsletter you've only seen two, maybe three such messages at best, and hopefully brief one's at that. They do, however, serve as great ego boosters. Running that risk, here's one which addresses a couple topics.



Photo of Hugh Hefner

Former hooch buddy and current good friend, S-2/ Recon HHC/2/503d RTO Jerry Hassler sent in a note the other day; Jerry said, *"When you die, it all dies."* Not sure what motivated the RTO's message, unless he knows something I don't know, but he was referring of course to the longevity of our newsletter tied to the longevity of yours truly. But I hope that won't be the case anytime soon, and should this old Journalism 101 grad go AWOL one day, we can hope Jerry, or our other hooch buddy Jim Bethea/HHC, or Wambi Cook/Alpha or Larry Paladino/Bravo, who each possess the necessary cutting and pasting skills, will pick-up our 2/503 Newsletter banner and carry on. But that's not what this note is about. This note is about Alice's Restaurant.

There's a fine line and risk one runs between producing a paper which is hoped to be interesting reading to a wide cross-section of readers, particularly when those readers are combat vets of the unit with which you served, and doing nothing to disparage that unit or the men who served in it. A combination of historical, factual reports of shared events while coupled with a measure of tongue-in-cheek humor seems to fit the bill most of the time as complaints have been less than a handful these past few years, and adjustments have been made on occasion to avoid such conflicts of opinion whenever possible. For example, a venture into political discourse was quickly squashed early on, although we continue to report on our Commander in Chief and politicians whenever military matters are the issue.

But, back to Alice; you remember Alice, this is about her restaurant.

There's an unwritten rule which could possibly be written somewhere, stating no good newsletter ends with an uneven-numbered page (I just made that up); and when putting together last's month's issue we were faced with that dilemma...the thing ended at 39 pages. So, this cutter and paster went on a search and find mission to locate stuff to fill just one more page, and *Viola!* the lyrics to the song *Alice's Restaurant* popped up on the screen. But alas, after cutting and pasting, the damn thing resulted in TWO pages, now putting our newsletter at the ungodly uneven number of 41! Having completed the work with the song lyrics something else was found to bring us to a comfortable 42 page issue; and following a battle with the evil email machine our newsletter was dispatched to around 1500 Sky Soldiers and friends of Sky Soldiers throughout the country and the world.

Upon receiving it, one of our buddies took umbrage with the inclusion of the song lyrics, as may have others, and sent in a note saying, *"Got the newsletter OK. Why 'Alice's Restaurant' deserves a place in one the Army's bravest units' Newsletters is beyond belief. It was definitely an anthem of the 'Anti-War movement'".* See, I told you this was about Alice and her restaurant. I tried to explain to our buddy the inclusion of those particular song lyrics was no political statement nor was it intended to demean the valorous service of men from our battalion but, moreover, was simply capturing one sign of the times from our youth, which we regularly do in our paper. He remained unconvinced.

While the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* is chiefly about that, our battalion during the war, it is also about the times book ending that war and all things within those book ends, even Alice and her restaurant. Without contributing perspective to our war, and from all slants, I believe something historical would go missing. Whether we report on the anti war movement, the enemy themselves or the players who set the war in motion and managed it, as well as those of us who carried out their orders, it is all part of our shared history, and therefore, we'll continue to report on all such aspects from that historical period. Should anyone find this unacceptable, they are welcome to take-over the newsletter...*please.*

In the meantime, I'll pay 50 dollars and pick-up the garbage.

All the way!

Smitty Out



Dozens of U.S. paratroopers injured after parachute jump during mock battle goes horrifically wrong

Reports 13 paratroopers suffered head, spine and pelvic injuries during the training exercise

By Allan Hall

Dozens of U.S. Army paratroopers have been hurt during a massive airborne drop in Germany. Sixteen of the 47 injured men are still in hospital, two of them in intensive care after the jump involving 1,000 soldiers went terribly wrong. They suffered head, spine and pelvic injuries.

The exercise pitted soldiers from the Vicenza, Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade in a mock-battle scenario with Slovakian soldiers and American troops from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team over the Hohenfels training area in Bavaria, southern Germany.

Exercise: U.S paratroopers jump out of a military airplane on Wednesday in a massive airborne drop exercise that left dozens injured. The American army said the drop was part of a scheme to switch the military focus back to fighting conventional forces as operations in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down.

More...

It is unclear what precisely happened to cause the numerous injuries. Officers at the clinic where the soldiers were treated said some of the injuries appeared related to parachutes drifting into nearby trees. Most of the injuries occurred during the first wave of the morning drop, which involved about 650 soldiers.

Polish troops also took part in the exercise but none of them were hurt. The victims suffered a variety of broken bones and spinal injuries and every one of them required hospital treatment. They were ferried to a local hospital in a fleet of ambulances.

A German civilian who witnessed the drop told Radio Bavaria: *"I've never seen so many parachutes in the sky. It was incredible sight, but I had no inkling that anything was wrong. I didn't see any chutes tangled or men appearing to drop too fast."*

But the military said that they would not be staging an inquiry into what happened because the injury rate was "acceptable". Civilian spokeswoman for the Joint multinational Training Command, which is under U.S. Army command, Denver Makle, said as the numbers injured 'was within expected margins' an investigation was not necessary.

Speaking to *The Local*, a German website, she added: *"Airborne operations are always dangerous. There is very little margin for error."* She explained an injury rate of up to 3 per cent is normal in this type of exercise. The units involved will continue their training, which is one part of an exercise involving thousands of soldiers from 10 countries.



Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2046471/Dozens-U-S-paratroopers-injured-mock-battle-Slovakians-goes-horrificallywrong.html>

[Sent in by Buzz Cox, C/D/2/503d]



Vietnam War Bonds?

Buy Savings Bonds



This is a picture of some of the members of our Airborne Association doing their job in Viet Nam. They are on their way to attack a VC base camp. It's close — they're not sure how close. They'll know in a few minutes.

They buy Savings Bonds with the money they earn.

Ad Inscription:

“This is a picture of some of the members of our Airborne Association doing their job in Viet Nam. They are on their way to attack a VC base camp. It's close – they're not sure how close. They'll know in a few minutes.

They buy Savings Bonds with the money they earn.

They are also showing the world how much we are willing to pay for our freedom, and the freedom of our friends.

Sometimes the price is very high. More than money can buy.

What price are you willing to pay?

THIS ADVERTISEMENT WAS PREPARED AND PAID FOR BY THE MEMBERS OF THE AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION, FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA” Spring 1967

[Sent in by Peter Klausner, A/4/503d]

Microsoft® EXPANDS VET HIRING INITIATIVE

Microsoft's *Elevate America* program, which trains veterans and spouses for civilian jobs in the technology sector, is expanding with the help of the Labor Department. Microsoft will provide 10,000 technology training and certification packages to veterans over the next two years via the Labor Department's One-Stop Career Centers in offices across the country. The company also has a program called *Military2Microsoft*, with a website veterans can use to translate their military skills to job openings at the company:

www.westillserve.com

Source: *MilitaryTimes EDGE*]

The Real Rambo

Here's the real Rambo. He and I served together in 1967 at the Airborne Department, Ft. Benning, GA, he was a SFC E-7 at that time. His mother and Joe Lewis' mother were close friends; both mothers are buried side by side in Opelika, Alabama -- told to me by Howard's friend, Roy Johnson, CSM 173d. **John "Top" Searcy, HHC/2/503d**



The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the **MEDAL OF HONOR** to **FIRST LIEUTENANT ROBERT L. HOWARD, UNITED STATES ARMY** for service as set forth in the following CITATION:



Col. Howard
7/11/39 – 12/23/09

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. 1st Lt. Howard (then SFC), distinguished himself while serving as platoon sergeant of an American-Vietnamese platoon which was on a mission to rescue a missing American soldier in enemy controlled territory in the Republic of Vietnam. The platoon had left its helicopter landing zone and was moving out on its mission when it was attacked by an estimated 2-company force. During the initial engagement, 1st Lt. Howard was wounded and his weapon destroyed by a grenade explosion. 1st Lt. Howard saw his platoon leader had been wounded seriously and was exposed to fire. Although unable to walk, and weaponless, 1st Lt. Howard unhesitatingly crawled through a hail of fire to retrieve his wounded leader. As 1st Lt. Howard was administering first aid and removing the officer's equipment, an enemy bullet struck one of the ammunition pouches on the Lieutenant's belt, detonating several magazines of ammunition. 1st Lt. Howard momentarily sought cover and then realizing that he must rejoin the platoon, which had been disorganized by the enemy attack, he again began dragging the seriously wounded officer toward the platoon area. Through his outstanding example of indomitable courage and bravery, 1st Lt. Howard was able to rally the platoon into an organized defense force. With complete disregard for his safety, 1st Lt. Howard crawled from position to position, administering first aid to the wounded, giving encouragement to the defenders and directing their fire on the encircling enemy. For 3½ hours 1st Lt. Howard's small force and supporting aircraft successfully repulsed enemy attacks and finally were in sufficient control to permit the landing of rescue helicopters. 1st Lt. Howard personally supervised the loading of his men and did not leave the bullet-swept landing zone until all were aboard safely. 1st Lt. Howard's gallantry in action, his complete devotion to the welfare of his men at the risk of his life were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.



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."

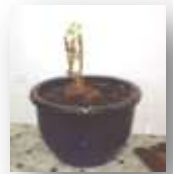
To assist you in remembering the timing of your annual pledge donation, the Foundation will send you electronically or by mail a brief reminder.

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.





Dale Olson



The best of all good men.....and smuggler of rose bushes



A few days ago Mike Guthrie, A/2/503d, called to share the saddest of news, we lost Sky Soldier Dale Olson, A/2/503d, on Saturday, October 22nd, he was just 68 years young. The report was Dale expired while working in the yard at his

home in Sacramento, California. The news shocked us, as Dale and his wife Marci are good friends, and Dale so vibrant. Dale leaves behind his wife, children Tiffany and Scott, an extended family and countless friends.

It is always sad when one of our own passes on, but even more so when that buddy is a close friend, and Dale was just that, a close friend. Even though we lived on opposite sides of the country, Dale and I would talk on the phone occasionally, and regularly trade notes, keeping each other current on what was happening in our lives and that of our families.

Dale was a pious man, he loved his God completely, as he loved his family; and me, well, I'm a non-believer, yet we never once let our opposing beliefs stand in the way of our friendship and care for one another and each other's families; and Dale so dearly loved his Marci and his family, and the world evolved around his grandsons Joshua, Isaac and Evan.

Dale served in Alpha Company with our battalion in '65/'66, earning his Combat Infantryman's Badge as a grunt before being assigned an administrative position with the company. He was so proud to be a Sky Soldier and to have served his country during that war, and especially proud of the men he served with.



2/503 reunion in Cocoa Beach. While not considered a ladies' man, even the pretty girls couldn't resist the charm of this big paratrooper teddy bear.

But in his own, quiet, self-effacing and peace invoking way, he probably never realized how honored those of us who knew him felt, in just knowing him -- I should have told him that -- maybe now he knows.



Dale with "Capt. Quong" at Ho Chi Minh's retreat. As his Lord taught him, *love thy enemy.*

Dale and Marci's life following the war saw more than its share of heartache, having lost their son Ryan at an early age, and Dale's constant fight with diabetes. Dale's remains will be cremated and buried with their son. And the recent recession did them no favors either, rocking their financial world as it did so many others. Yet, in spite of these tests of his character, Dale never flinched, he remained upbeat, resilient, always looking for the positive coming in the morrow, and the goodness he saw in others. Dale was all about goodness, and was so undeserving of such an abbreviated stay in this world. Damn, I'm missing him.

During one of our two 2/503 reunions in Cocoa Beach years ago, we were unable to find a local preacher to lead a sunrise service on the beach. Of course, Dale stepped in and did a wonderful job. 173d surgeon, Col. Tim Cloonan attended that service. In learning of our loss of Dale, Tim said, "*I remember Dale. I only met him that one time, he sure had his head screwed on right. I sure do remember him and the calm he generated in those around him. I can't compare myself to a man like that...you are correct, he 'was the best of all good men.'*" Yes, Doc, that he was.

(continued....)



In '01, Dale, a small group of other Sky Soldiers and I returned to Vietnam to participate in the dedication of a school dormitory for needy kids built by another close friend of his, Mike Thibault, also A/2/503d. None of us will ever forget how concerned Dale was about getting captured by the bad guys as he smuggled into the country his *rose bush of friendship* in honor of a fallen buddy, which he was successful in doing. In line, following Dale's lead, each Sky Soldier poured a glass of water on that gift of peace and remembrance. This physical giant of a man was the most gentle soul I've ever known...just ask anyone who knew Dale, and they'll agree.



In Taipei following their reinvasion of Vietnam in '01. Dale on left with his buddies Jack Ribera, Lew Smith, Mike Thibault and Mike Sturges.



In 2001, Dale is having video fun with local kids in the Mekong Delta near LZ Wine of Operation Marauder in '66. Dale was a smile magnet.

During our reinvasion of Vietnam back then, Dale, Mike and I, along with a guide, humped for hours to find the site of where Alpha Company was ambushed. It was there Dale lost his closest friend in the war, Lamar Frederick. I recall taking Dale's video camera, and without his knowledge filmed him standing next to a tree at that ambush site, talking to and weeping for the longest time over his lost friend.



Dale, standing near tree line where the battle of 26 February 1966 began.

On the exhausting hump back we were forced to cross a rickety foot bridge across a paddy dike, then walk along the dikes towards our pickup location. At one point Dale slipped on the wet surface and fell into the rice paddy water, which we all found amusing. Of course, he jumped right up with a bigass smile on his face.

**17 Sep 2003
Lamar Donald Frederick
Private First Class
A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE
Army of the United States
23 December 1943 - 26 February 1966
Bellevue, OH
Panel 05E Line 080**

Lamar,

It has been 37 years since you left us. Eight of us from 2/503rd, mostly A Company, went back to Vietnam in Feb of 2001. I took a Bare root Rose bush in my suitcase and planted it in your honor. Originally, my plan was to honor you where you fell. However, that was not possible. It now grows outside a High School Dormitory outside Saigon. Many of your old friends contributed to this dormitory.

This Rose is now being cared for by the young high school girls that are living in the Dorm. It is fully grown now and beautiful. To those of us that knew you, this will always be a tribute to you.

On July 10, 2004, your mom, Justine Snowden, is to be honored by the 173d Airborne as a Gold Star Mom.

This has been far too long coming. I look forward to it with great anticipation and eagerness.

We will always remember you.

Always

Dale Olson

And in some faraway land this smuggled rose bush blossomed. And here, in our backyard in Florida, a new rose bush is being planted. We're naming it Dale.



Dale, our thoughts are with you, Marci and your family. Farewell my brother.



Last Chance to Nominate a Buddy for 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 are 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). – See Issue 18, Page 7 -

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!



VA to Help Cover Some Home Loan Fees

Week of October 10, 2011

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will cover extra costs for veterans who struck deals on home loans and faced the possibility of higher fees amid confusion over a federal law change. The problem involves a Sept. 8 notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs loan operations that said certain fees would be lower beginning Saturday. But Congress delayed those lower fee rates from taking effect until November in legislation awaiting President Barack Obama's signature. For more information and updates as they become available, visit the News and Announcements box on VA's Loan Guaranty Home Loan Program website. For more guides on how to get a VA home loan and make the best use of it, visit the [Military.com](#) VA Home Loan Center.

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]



Presented to honoree

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 Lexington, Kentucky the same days as the 173d Association annual reunion next June. So far, about 12 members have indicated they will attend. Watch this space for details to follow.



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See early notice on Pages 11-13.

Contact:

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

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

A Day for Vets

This *Veteran's Day*, we honor those who have so bravely served this country. America is founded on the principle of freedom, justice, and liberty for all. Our nation's soldiers serve every day to protect our country and its ideals. On *Veteran's Day*, take a sacred moment to remember those who sacrifice their lives every moment to achieve peace and democracy.



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"

2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / November 2011 – Issue 34

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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.

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

Steve Aballa, 2/503
 Ron Amyot, 2/503
 John Arnold, 1RAR
 Jim Baskin, 4/503
 Bob Beemer, 2/503
 Jerry Berry, 4/503
 Pat Bowe, 2/503
 Wayne Bowers, 2/503
 Jim Brookmiller, 4/503
 Bob Bruce, 1/503
 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
 Bruce Demboski, C/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
 Joe Franklin, 173d Bde
 A.B. Garcia, 2/503



Tony Geishauser, Cowboys
 Jim Gettel, 2/503
 Johnny Graham, 2/503
 Larry Hampton, 1/503
 Jerry Hassler, 2/503
 Nick Hun, 2/503
 Ken Kaplan, 2/503
 Ed Kearney, 2/503
 Jack Kelley, 2/503
 Bill Knapp, 2/503
 Gary Kozdron, 1/503
 John Kyne, 2/503
 Joe Lamb, 2/503
 Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503
 Joe Logan, 2/503
 Roy Lombardo, 2/503
 Bob Lucas, 2/503
 Richard Martinez, 2/503
 Jim Montague, 2/503
 Butch Nery, 4/503, N75
 Hal Nobles, 3/503
 Bill Ostlund, 173d
 Larry Paladino, 2/503
 Ed Perkins, 2/503
 Lou Pincock, 2/503
 Jack Price, 2/503
 Gary Prisk, 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
 Larry Speed, 1/503
 Jim Stanford, 2/503
 George Stapleton, 3/503
 Mike Sturges, 2/503
 Bob Sweeney, 2/503
 Bill Thomas, 2/503
 Marc Thurston, 2/503
 Alt Turner, 2/503
 Steve Vargo, 2/503
 Jerry Wiles, B/2/503
 Ron Woodley, 2/503
 Bill Wyatt, 2/503

We're raising necessary funds to cover the cost associated with inviting between 3 and 5 503rd troopers and their spouses or a family member. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rto173d@cfl.rr.com for details.



MY LATEST RANT

“The Army which long ignored and even denied that going into combat can produce long-term psychological stress is now providing counseling to try to avert such problems.....”



Doc Scott

That was the opening to a 1990 article in the *New York Times* about our Fort Bragg program to support troops returning from *Operation Just Cause* and the overthrow of dictator Manuel Noriega.

I was amazed that at little old Fortress Bragg, North Carolina, our team could seriously be making history by providing the first acknowledged treatment to preclude the impact of the long-term sequel of exposure to combat trauma.....something other than the proverbial *"Suck it up and Drive On"* mentality so ingrained in military culture.

Well, I'm here to tell you, some 22 years later, the Army has come full circle thanks to the efforts of BG Cornum. BG Cornum is a Board Certified Urologist, who specialized in wound healing metabolism, a career she probably should have not ventured from.

By virtue of the fact that she went down in a helicopter in Iraq and was a POW for several days, she has become an expert in Battle Fatigue and the anointed guru on all things traumatic. She has gone on record stating that Post-traumatic Stress Disorder doesn't exist and subsequently immediately rose to the position of Director of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness in the Army. Not since the DSM II eliminated the category of Battle Stress, has the view been so archaic.

Now MG Cornum has teamed with psychologist Martin Seligman, PhD (Dr. Don't Worry, Be Happy) of the University of Pennsylvania to commit \$117,000,000 of your tax dollars to "blame the victims". The Army's new Battle Mind Training, now evolved at RESILIENCY TRAINING spearheaded by Army Chaplains (Opportunist Professors of Psychology De Luxe) is aimed at educating soldiers through classes on personal, unit, social and spiritual resiliency adapted from a Penn State Resiliency Program with little measurable evidence of success.

Obviously, training to prepare for trauma is of some benefit, but to design a entire program on Resiliency is absurd. MG Cornum does admit that if soldiers just can't get their heads around what happened to them, then

perhaps they need to see someone to help them "REFRAME" their experience.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyNmSE-QyZc>
Read Ed Tick, *Heal the Warrior, Heal the Country*
<http://www.welcomhomesoldier.com/permalink-4291> for a simple explanation of how important it is to recognize the wound.

Even the *American Psychological Association Journal* has been sucked into this debacle dedicating an entire journal to the program. Soldiers are instructed to attend the prescribed Resiliency Training and informed that they now have the necessary tools to transcend the impact of being shot, exploded, maimed, losing a buddy and witnessing atrocities. The Warrior Ethos is now this: The Army has afforded the opportunity for Resiliency Training. If you didn't participate, you are derelict in your duties. If you participated and still have PTSD symptoms following a trauma, you are obviously WEAK. **And do we really have to wonder why the suicide rate for veterans is more than died in combat, 18 a day, and the suicide rate for female soldiers triples when they are in combat. I'm sure these soldiers all failed to 'listen up' during their Prescribed Resiliency training. Thank you General for your contributions. Perhaps it's time for you to return to Urology.**

The Army has taken a QUANTUM LEAP BACKWARD and the American Psychological Association has followed them into the hole. This program clearly contributes to putting soldiers in a position which creates, not ameliorates PTSD and its symptoms. It is clearly a modern day version of BLAME THE VICTIM. Does it have a familiar ring? If you don't have a job, it is not the Bank's fault or Wall Street's fault, it's your own damn fault.

Let's just be honest and call the Army's Resiliency Program what it is....a new name to return us to Suck it up and Drive On!

We could have saved the millions.

Some wounds don't end with the war. The severity and extent to which veterans suffer with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is a direct response to our culture's willingness to Welcome Home and care for its Warriors.

**Scott Fairchild, PsyD
LTC (Ret), 82nd Airborne Div.
Veterans Caring for Veterans
1370 Bedford Drive, Suite 106
Melbourne, FL 32941
Phn: 321 253-8887, Fax: 321 253-8878**



Last Opportunity to Order Your Battalion Coin

I am introducing you to 4 coins I did to honor the service of the combat paratroopers of all 4 Battalions in the Brigade. AVAILABLE NOW.

They are \$10. per coin plus \$2.50 for shipping of one or two coins. Shipping for 3 or more coins is \$4.50.

If interested please pass on to your readership the availability of these coins. I only produced 100 of the 1, 3, 4 Battalion coins, and 200 of the 2nd Batt coins. After they are gone I am done.

After expenses ALL profits are donated to the 173d Memorial and to a local Foodbank. ALL PROFITS are given away.

Please send a note indicating which coin(s) you are ordering and include your check payable to:

Paul R. Fisher, LTC (Ret)
3/503d
81 Oak Lane
Eatontown, NJ 07724

If you have any questions please call me:

Cell (908) 489-0366
Home (732) 542-1598

Coin Design ~ Front:

Battalion Number Banner.

Circle of the countries where the Brigade has fought (3rd and 4th did not go to Iraq or Afghanistan but the Brigade did).

Center is the WWII Eagle patch of the 503rd Airborne Infantry.

Coin Design ~ Back:

Top: Master Jumps wings (for the Brigade not each individual).

Gold Star for 5 combat Jumps (3 in WWII, 1 VN and 1 Iraq)

CIB: 1st and 2nd Battalions three awards for WWII, VN and SW Asia).

3rd and 4th (2 awards of CIB WWII and VN).

Rock designation 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th.

Dual Battalion Crests.

Brigade Patch.

Sky Soldier for the name the Chinese gave the Brigade.

Coin color Dark Purple for the blood combat paratroopers spilled on the battlefield.

1/503d



2/503d



3/503d



4/503d



Airborne.....All The Way!



Retiree COLA Watch

October 7, 2011 • Terry Howell

Our friends at the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) maintain a constant watch on the factors that determine the cost of living adjustment for military retirement pay, VA compensation and pension, and social security benefits.

According to MOAA, the inflation rate rose 0.3% in August. This marks several months of steady inflation increases, which will most likely result in a 2012 COLA rate of 3.7%. This will mark the first COLA increase in two years.

However, there is a proposal to change the basis for COLA to the Chain Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (or C-CPI-U). According to Tom Philpott, adopting the Chain CPI to adjust entitlements has been recommended by every group looking for ways to address the federal debt crisis. The new index could reduce the COLA by .3% with a 2012 COLA rate closer to 3.4%.

Read more:

<http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2011/10/retiree-cola-watch/#ixzz1aTfnv7Dz>

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]

Whodat?

Who recognizes this super, duper 2/503 trooper?



Search and Destroy Mission

0510 Hours

An ocean breeze pushed through the palm trees as the company approached the beach and a fishing village filled with silent people. Hootch by hootch they searched north into a small valley and dug in on a terraced rice paddy encased in spindly grass and vine foliage.

At twilight Hardin was negotiating with Reynolds over a can of pound cake when a bell in the village rang once, and then again. The echoes lingered in the valley.

"Sleigh bells ring, are ya lis'nin'?" Ski's words sounded like they were being forced through a sausage skin.

Music was made smaller by Ski's voice, but he sang anyway. He had started singing after Bucks was killed: Christmas songs and James Brown mostly, and then only snippets. He had a square-wheel sense of rhythm. His voice would boom whenever the square side of the wheel hit the ground. Fish said Sky was a natural entertainer, as if Fish would know.

"Shut up, Ski." The perimeter went silent. The bell rang a third time and a stranger fired an AK in four short bursts, tearing at the tree above Rap's head.

Tennessee keyed the hook, and said, "Just 79's, no sixteens." Five M-79 rounds crashed into the jungle. The stranger was gone.

Ski continued to sing as if there had been no interruption. Fish grabbed his shirt and Ski shut up. Then, as if struck by a thought, he jumped into Hardin's foxhole, nudged his shoulder, and held out his hand.

"Every night, Captain. From here on, with Bucks dead, I gotta hold his dog tag so him and me can talk. We kept each other alive in the mountains. I figure he's still lis'nin'."

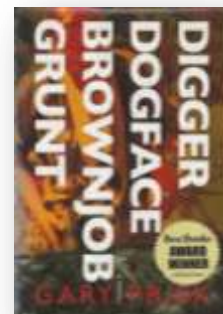
Hardin slipped the chain over his head, handed it to Ski, and said, "The ole tag is my dad's. He landed in Normandy on D-Day."

Ski looked at his captain as if he had met him for the first time, toasted him with Bucks' dog tag, and turned away to read in private. There were several tags: Nuts, Dig-it, Hippie, Bucks, Sam, Hardin, and his father.

Ski gave Bucks' tag a kiss, handed the necklace to Hardin, gave his captain a pat on the back, and sprang from the foxhole. Acting like a revelation had surprised him, as if one of his annoying murmurs had produced an idea, Ski turned and straightened his shirt.

"Big Bucks was a good man, Captain."

[An excerpt from *Digger Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt* by Captain Gary Prisk, CO, C/2/503d, available on Amazon]





~ Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~



Col. George J. Stapleton Commander, 3/503rd

Colonel (Ret) George J. Stapleton served as the 8th Commander of the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) from 29 November 1970 to June 1971, in Vietnam.

His education includes the United States Military Academy, B.S. Engineering, 1956; Auburn University, M.A. Political Science, 1970; the United States Air Force Command and Staff College, 1970; and the United States Army War College, 1974.

George was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1932, the son of Colonel (US Army Ret) and Mrs. George A. Stapleton. After graduation from the University of Detroit High School in 1950, he enlisted in the 425th Infantry Regiment, Michigan National Guard, attaining the rank of Sgt E-5. He was commissioned a 2nd LT of Infantry in 1956 upon his graduation from West Point, after which he served in seven paratrooper assignments in the United States, Germany and Vietnam, where he was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutist Wings, Ranger and Green Beret Tabs and two awards of the Purple Heart.

In Vietnam, he commanded the 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Other key assignments included duty as a Company Tactical Officer at West Point, a Squadron Air Officer Commanding at the USAF Academy, US Army Program Manager for the MILES Laser Training and Simulation System, Chief of Staff, US Army Training Support Center and Deputy Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program.

Retiring from active service in 1984, the Colonel joined Loral Electro Optical Systems, a Defense Aerospace Company, where he served as the International Marketing Manager for Simulation and Training. In 1991, he joined another Defense Aerospace team, Cubic Corp., where he served as Vice President of Cubic Defense Systems and in 1996 as President of Cubic Sales Limited, their Middle Eastern subsidiary. He retired in 2002.

Col. Stapleton and his wife Lynell reside on St. Simons Island, Georgia. They have 7 children, 11 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.



Mason Branstetter (L) presents salute to Col. Stapleton (C) at LZ Uplift during Change of Command ceremonies at Echo Company circa April 1971

Community service includes leadership roles in the St Simon Land Trust, St William Church, Civil War Round Table of Coastal GA, Military Officers Association of America, and Adopt-A Highway Program. Supporting roles include service with the St Simons Library League, Seafarer's Center, Veteran's Chapters (American Legion, Veterans Of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans), GA Historical Society, Light House Museum, US Army Museum, Civil War

Preservation Trust, and Association of the US Army.

Today, the commander is fighting a new enemy, cancer, which is threatening to overrun his position. Here's the Colonel's email for those who wish to send George good wishes gjs1956@comcast.net

All the way, Sir!





Lt. Colonel Postlethwait commanded the 34th Infantry Regiment on Corregidor, and received the DSC for his actions there. Shortly thereafter, he wrote of his experiences.

E. M. Postlethwait, Lt. Col. (US ARMY)

Corregidor Coordination

THE CORREGIDOR OPERATION WAS AN EXAMPLE OF COORDINATION as it ought to be. The fact that every arm or service has as its final mission, either directly or indirectly, the delivery of John Rifleman to the heart of the enemy's ground with his GI boot resting squarely on the chest of the enemy is at last being recognized.



Map 80 – Recapture of Corregidor, 16 - 28 February 1945

With that recognition the development of true coordination between the arms is getting somewhere. It isn't perfect yet, but we're getting there fast. The mechanics of close air support and naval gunfire support were first worked out in theory, then tried and improved; and they are still being improved.

Like most of us, I first learned the mechanics at informal staff schools out of the "books," and in pre-operation planning. It all sounded good and everyone apparently had the right idea, but something always seemed to mar the picture in actual operation. The weather turned out to be bad for the planes, communications went haywire, the Japs kept the Navy busy somewhere else. It was always something - until the Corregidor show. There, we Doughfeet got the kind of support we had heard about and dreamed about, but which we were beginning to doubt existed. Everything clicked, just the way it says in the book, only better.

The pre-invasion bombardment plans were worked out by the higher staffs. We had no voice in the plans, except by accident. I'll say more on that later. Briefly, the Air Forces dropped around two hundred tons of bombs per day for over two weeks before Corregidor D-Day. And the Navy bombarded the island for several days from cruisers and destroyers.

Luckily, Captain "Tommy" Thompson, my naval gunfire liaison officer, was on the ball. The firing ships for the show were anchored near our staging area, and after studying the tactical plan, Thompson went out to talk things over with their officers. On board one of the cruisers, he found Commander H. L. McCoy who had been stationed on Corregidor at the time of its surrender and later escaped. Commander McCoy came ashore with Captain Thompson to our CP on Luzon and answered a thousand and one questions about the island. The talk was worth an extra battalion. Among other things, we worked out one especially important detail. One of the entrances to the large tunnel in Malinta Hill on Corregidor looked right down on the beach where we could land. A gun in that entrance could have spelled murder for anyone on the beach – might even have stopped the whole show. McCoy knew exactly where the entrance was. I asked him if he could close it for us, or at least neutralize it. His answer was "*Hell, yes. I'll go to the fire control tower and lay some eight-inchers right in there myself.*" What more could we want in cooperation on that important point?



Aerial view of infantry landing on The Rock.

(continued...)



In our landing plan, one rifle platoon, equipped for assault-party operations (flame throwers, demolitions, bazookas etc.) was earmarked to hit out fast for that tunnel entrance and finish the job. When that platoon reached the spot on D-Day, there was no job to finish. McCoy and his eight-inchers had completely closed it. Support? And how!



The invasion fleet heads towards Corregidor

Plan for Corregidor

A quick stretch of the terrain and tactical plan before I continue with the close-in air and naval support will clarify the story. Corregidor is a tadpole stretched out from west to east in the entrance of Manila Bay. The head of this polliwog (the west end of the island) is called Topside. It is a 500-foot high plateau that drops into deep ravines and cliffs to the water's edge on all sides, and this part of the island is 2,500 yards in diameter.

The thin waist of the tadpole is called Bottomside. It is about five hundred yards wide and rises about twenty five feet above the water. Overlooking Bottomside and to the east of it is steep, jagged, 400-foot Malinta Hill. This hill is over 800 yards long from north to south and only 300 yards wide. The main corridor of Malinta Tunnel runs through the base of the hill from west to east with a main entrance at each end. North and south wing tunnels join the main tunnel inside and come out at smaller entrances on the north and south sides of the hill. From Malinta Hill to the east, the tail of the tadpole stretches out for 3,000 yards to its tip.

Corregidor's long standing nickname, "the Rock," is a good one for there is only enough soil over the jumble of rock strata to support the life of heavy undergrowth. The tactical plan, which was followed to the letter, called for the 503d Paratroop Regiment to land two battalions on Topside by parachute at 0830. The 3d Battalion, 34th Infantry, was to land near South Dock on the south shore of Bottomside at 1030, secure the Bottomside area and Malinta Hill. From there on, priority one was to open the road from Bottomside to Topside. Priority two, the 503d would clean up Topside including all its ravines

and cliffs while the 34th held tight on Malinta. Priority three, a drive down to the east tip from Malinta Hill. There are a hundred or more stories to tell of how it all worked out, but I shall stick to air and naval gunfire support.

Air Support Operations

The air support set-up was quite orthodox in organization but outstanding in ability. Captain Gire, the air liaison officer, had one lieutenant and four enlisted men. They were equipped with a radio capable of reaching both the air base and the planes in the air. An air strike would begin with a request to the air liaison officer. Sometimes he got his request twelve or more hours in advance, but a fifteen-minute notice didn't faze him in the least. Next, an OP would be established for the strike. At the OP was a ground troop officer thoroughly familiar with the ground, the tactical situation and the target. That was usually the battalion CO or executive officer of the unit being helped by the air strike. The Air Forces lieutenant was there with a telephone line to the liaison officer at the radio. An 81mm mortar observer completed the group.



16 February, 1945. A destroyer comes in close during preparation for the Corregidor landings.

The procedure usually went like this: Captain Gire called the squadron leader, who was circling overhead with his outfit, and designated the target on their corresponding air support photos. He also gave him the position of the nearest friendly troops and a line of air flight along which overs and shorts would be harmless to us. After the squadron leader had identified the target and instructed his pilots, they made a trial run. For the trial run, we marked our lines with colored smoke and the target with a white phosphorus mortar shell. For the bombing run the target was again marked the same way and in they came. The air officer at the OP watched them like a hawk.

(continued...)



Control was so tight that after one pilot had dropped his bomb, the next plane could be given an adjustment for over or short on the first bomb to make his own release accordingly. If necessary, the second plane could be turned off the target. Such an emergency never arose, but that safety measure definitely could have been taken. That is real air support!



17 February, 1945. LCI's beached on Black Beach.

Our planes were usually P-47s loaded with either two five-hundred-pounders, or two belly tanks of incendiary fuel. A two-hundred-gallon tank of that stuff bursting in the undergrowth of a ravine, flushes out the rodents in it most efficiently.

The infantryman often finds men of other branches standing in awe of his stories of personal contact with the enemy. Some of the bold and adventurous will occasionally ask to go on a patrol or visit the troops in contact in order to get a personal taste of it. Our Air Forces forward observer had the time of his life one day. Company L of the 34th Infantry was scheduled for an attack up a large ravine past the north entrance to Malinta Tunnel. In preparation for it we were running an incendiary strike to burn out the heavy undergrowth and silence a Jap 20mm. in the area. The battalion executive officer and the air observer had a beautiful OP in a small trench overlooking the target area. When the planes passed over on the trial run, a six-foot Jap jumped out of the bushes, ran like mad up the narrow road about fifty yards and popped back into the bushes. The Air

Forces lieutenant's eyes bulged. "Hey, I could have got that bastard if I'd had an M1!"

The executive officer smiled, got an M1 from the nearby platoon sergeant and laid it over the parapet. "OK, there you are. Now, when the first bomb drops, keep your eyes open. He'll probably flush again."

The bomb dropped near the road. Out came the big Jap like a bat out of you know where. The lieutenant dropped him neatly. The other riflemen, having given the Air Forces officer a visitor's courtesy, made sure that the Jap stayed down. The next plane was coming in, the phone rang madly. The excited lieutenant unconsciously answered it. The voice in his ear was angry. "What the hell are you doing up there? I've been ringing my head off! The pilots want to know if the bombs are going in OK!"

"Bombs? Oh, bombs! Yeah, they're all right. Say, I just shot a Jap!"

Frequently and fortunately there were more planes available than we could use on close support targets. Normally, there were requests for about two strikes a day. The air base often sent enough planes for four or five strikes if we happened to need them. The liaison officer would say, "I've got fifteen planes overhead.

"Any targets?"

"Nothing right now."

"OK, they've got about two hours of gas. I'll keep them standing by and check again when they have about fifteen minutes left."



The traffic wasn't always one way

If at the end of the two-hour period, no close-in targets moved up, the bombs were used "strategically" on the east end of the island, on likely storage areas and hideouts in ravines where naval gunfire couldn't reach.

(continued....)



After the bombs were dropped, the planes would rat race around and strafe for any Japs flushed by the bombing. One day, the liaison officer was sending a squadron on a “strategic” mission. The squadron commander asked, “Is it OK to strafe in there?”
 “OK to strafe. Go ahead.”
 “Roger.”

Then a strange voice came in. “This is so-and-so right over you. I’m coming home from reconnaissance. I haven’t any bombs, but may I join in the strafing?”
 “Sure, come along?”
 “Roger, Wilco, and thank you.”

Cooperation and coordination are wonderful things once everybody gets the idea.



The 317th Troop Carrier Group “Jungle Skippers” deliver their cargo to the landing zones of Topside. The unit comprised the 39th, 40th, 41st and 46th Troop Carrier Squadrons.

Reasons for Air’s Successes

Our air support worked exceptionally well because: The Air Forces had the planes and wanted to use them. Every effort was made to fill all requests. The air liaison officer and his party knew their business and had a desire to produce. No unreasonable or wasteful requests were made by us.

While I’m on the subject, I believe a few general suggestions for better air support are in order: Make five bombers available for close tactical support whenever possible. The average close-support target is either a spot target or a small area target requiring great accuracy to get satisfactory results. Accuracy is important for troop safety on close targets. (The closer we Doughboys can get for a quick follow-in, the better we like it). It’s a tough job for a glide-bombing fighter pilot to be this accurate. We’d like more rockets.

Nothing like a sizzling howling rocket for spot accuracy and for making Christians out of Shintos.

When there are plenty of pilots and planes available, why not designate some outfits as ground-cooperation

squadrons? Give pilots special training on it. Teach them some ground tactics and show them how they fit into the picture. Have a few field exercises with Infantry battalion staffs, air liaison parties and the planes flying dummy missions with flour sacks.

We can tighten teamwork by basing the supporting squadrons close to the ground operational area and bringing the pilots to the area after a mission to see the destruction and the dead Japs they have produced. Nothing fosters pride in a job like seeing the results. “I just shot a Jap!” Hell, how about “I got fifty-two on that mission this morning”?

With the decrease of Jap air power and the increase of bitter ground fighting (witness Okinawa), close tactical air support becomes more possible from the Air Forces view and more important and necessary from the Ground Forces view.

The Malinta OP

Before mentioning our naval gunfire support, I’ll tell you about the Malinta Hill OP. Before the war, a concrete OP on the top of Malinta Hill, known as base end station B-23 was used for artillery direction. It is dug into the rock, has overhead cover, and affords a grand view of the entire island. Every officer ever stationed on Corregidor knows the spot. I met Major Jules Yates after his liberation from Cabanatuan, and found that he had used this OP to defend Corregidor from Japs. He was happy to know that the same OP had been used to drive them off.



Black Beach, looking towards Caballo Is., occupied the former area of Barrio San Juan. The barrio had been evacuated and leveled pre-war to provide clear lines of fire across the south channel.

Our Company L had an officer on duty there around the clock. After a day or two, they had learned all the most likely places to nail a few Japs. Machine guns were adjusted on road junctions, cave entrances, paths, etc. The 81mm mortar observers did likewise with their guns.

(continued...)



From there on, it was a game, mostly at night, observing fire by the light of the moon and Navy star shells. One or two Japs moving down a road was a challenge to the mortar observer to fire his gun at the precise instant which would bring Jap and the shell together. A miss of five yards, even though it got the Jap, brought derisive remarks. When a Jap column appeared, school was out and a field day in order. The best Malinta Hill OP field story comes later in speaking of naval gunfire.



This view was taken from high on the northern slopes of Malinta Hill across the North Dock area towards Topside. The three docks are the Lorcha Dock, North Dock, and Engineer's Dock.

Our pre-landing bombardment was copious, well placed and was furnished by cruisers, destroyers, gunboats, rocket firing LCI's and PT boats. On D-Day the fire never ceased from the opening of the heavy guns at daylight until our first wave touched shore amid the dust of the final volleys of five-inch shells.

My best story of naval support concerns our floating artillery. The destroyers which stood offshore day after day giving close support with gnat's-eye accuracy were a main factor in the retaking of Corregidor. The set-up was similar to that of field artillery and air support, a liaison party and a forward observer party. These parties come from the Joint Assault Signal Companies made up of individuals from both the Army and Navy. JASCO is a good outfit and deserves a lot of credit. Their men on Corregidor showed plenty guts and skill.

We had two destroyers available at all times, day and night. During the day, one destroyer sat dead in the water off the south shore firing on any likely looking target east of Malinta Hill, while the other worked around the west end, firing mission for the paratroopers in their clean-up of the rugged ravines and cliffsides in that area. At night, one destroyer lay out west of the island firing star-shell illumination until the moon rose, while the other patrolled outside the bay entrances though still available to fire on call.

Targets on Call

Scheduled fires were requested daily through the liaison officer. Concentration lasting from ten minutes to an hour were fired in preparation for attacks on the day's objectives. At night illumination schedule usually called

for one or two star shells every few minutes until moonrise.

Targets of opportunity were worked all days. If we picked them up, we asked for the fire and got it. Often the ship picked them up. It was quite common to hear from the radio, "*We see what appears to be a gun position at so-and-so. May we fire?*" The Navy's "may-we-fire" attitude was worth a million to us.

A good example of coordination on a target of opportunity happened one night. The normal night schedule was in progress, one ship firing star shells, the other on patrol. From the light of a star shell, the Malinta OP observer picked up a long column of heavily laden Japs coming out of the east entrance to Malinta Tunnel and moving down toward the eastern tip of the island. The telephone switchboard began to snap with business, SCR-300 radios began to talk and SCR-284 generators began to whirl.

In the first three minutes, four machine guns were set to cover the column from head to tail, four 81mm mortars were likewise shifted, star-shell illumination was increased to continuous lighting. All machine guns and mortars opened fire together. The initial bursts caused heavy casualties and pinned the Japs down. Seven minutes later, the destroyer on patrol had reached its firing position and had fired the initial round for adjustment. For the next thirty minutes, five-gun broadsides raked those monkeys from tip to tail. If any of the 150-odd Japs in that party lived through it, I don't know how. Smooth teamwork that night saved the lives of quite a few Doughboys who would have to dig those Japs out of a hole the hard way later on. The Navy got a "well done" from us for that one and we weren't just being polite.



Engineer's Ravine is swathed in smoke as men of the 3d Bn., 34th Inf. Rgt. crouch down low and observe for any potential movement across the North Dock area. They are positioned on the slopes of Malinta Hill, near Malinta Point.

(continued...)





Too many of us left Corregidor behind by means of Hope.

In addition to scheduled fire and targets of opportunity, we had several special targets. The east entrance to the main tunnel was a tricky one. While the 503d was working on their Topside job, my 34th Infantry force held Malinta Hill. But there just weren't enough troops to maintain control of the east tunnel entrance at night. At the same time, both Colonel George Jones, commanding officer of the 503d "Rock Force," and I wanted to stop this nightly business of Japs bringing supplies out of the tunnel down to the east end of the island. We knew exactly where the entrance was, but we were leery about firing on it. It was right below our own men on the hill, but it couldn't be seen from there for adjustment. Firing from our verbal descriptions wouldn't do because it was hidden under heavy bushes and hard to locate. Our patrols visited the area almost daily, so we had several officers who had seen it. But there was no place on the island from which they could adjust fire on the tunnel entrance. The Navy gave us a simple solution by invitation. "Come out to the ship and show us," they said, so we did.

Colonel Jones, Lieutenant John Bierne, who had patrolled the area, and I went out one afternoon. Bierne laid the fire control cross-hairs right on the entrance. The fire of one gun was adjusted and then the ship poured in a hundred more rounds of APC. Our patrol the next morning reported the entrance closed. Our visit

to the destroyer not only accomplished an important mission, but fostered mutual esteem and friendship which made for even better teamwork in the future, if that were possible.

The coordination between the higher planning staffs of the Army and Navy is excellent and produced first-rate results. I'd like to see more opportunity for the men *doing* the job to get together and work out details. Skippers of destroyers and gunboats should have at least one conference with the staff of a landing team before the show, and several more during the show if possible.

I have probably made the Corregidor operation sound like a picnic. It wasn't. The troopers took their share of casualties in sweating out the extermination of six thousand Japs and there are hundreds of stories to be told about it. It would, however, have cost many times the price in blood if Air, Navy, and Ground Forces coordination had not worked so magnificently. Anything we can do to foster and improve our teamwork will always be of prime value in finishing this war as cheaply as possible.

E. M. Postlethwait

[Source: 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site]



~ Corregidor History ~

I have passed the following along in your direction so as to obtain your views. It was published in a blog by Steve Kwiecinski, who lives on Corregidor as a "guest ranger". Regards,

Paul Whitman

503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site

THE ORIGINAL 16 FEBRUARY 1945 FLAG POLE



OLD GLORY FLIES OVER CORREGIDOR AGAIN -
The American flag flies over Corregidor for the first time in 2 1/2 years as it is attached to the tallest remaining pole on the Rock by Pfc. Clyde I. Bates of Evansville, Mis. and T/5 Frank Guy Arrigo of East Chicago, Ill.

(503rd PRCT photo archives)

We wish to bring your attention to an artifact which is slowly disintegrating here on Corregidor, and want to know your opinions on whether or not anything can and/or should be done about it.

On February 16, 1945, the Americans landed on Corregidor to recapture the island from the Japanese. Members of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team first landed at Topside. The first American flag raised that day was not at the historic Spanish Flagpole, the site of the ceremonial flag raising upon MacArthur's return on March 2nd, which stands at the southeast corner of the Topside Parade Ground. It occurred on a telephone pole that stood near the Post Improvement

Building, down the hill and across the trolley line which ran west of the Parade Grounds. Arrigo and Bates climbed the pole, and the flag that they affixed stayed there during all the fighting.

Several of our explorer/history-nut friends are certain that they have located that pole -- or at least what little remains of it. As you can see from the picture below, it now consists of several pieces of wood in the concrete-lined 14-inch hole which formed the flagpole base. Our friend Karl is standing next to it. It appears to have been burned down to around two-feet high. Should something be done to preserve what is left of the pole?

One suggestion would be to remove the few pieces of wood that are left and exhibit them, maybe in the museum or near the Spanish Flagpole. We also wonder if folks with ties to the 503rd PRCT might wish to sponsor a permanent marker to be placed in or beside the actual flagpole base.

Steve Kwiecinski



Little remains of the original pole from the first raising of the American flag on Corregidor. Karl Welteke, is one team member of the Corregidor Historic Society which researched and relocated its remains in 2010.

Note: Persons interested in such a project can reach Steve by contacting Paul Whitman at exo@503prct.org





INCOMING!!



Robert Stack

In 1967 Robert Stack visited C/2/503 in Dak To. We had just returned from a 30 or 45 day hump. He visited us at our base camp. He was very nice to everyone and very respectful.

Needless to say, even our base camp was not 'safe' from mortar/rocket fire and he was risking his life visiting us. This was not a 'photo-op' and I don't remember any press people at all.



I always admired him for that visit which really meant a lot to us, given all the hate spewing shit toward us going on back in the world. I followed his career after that.

He served in the US Navy in WWII as a gunner instructor. He played Eliot Ness in the hit TV series, *The Untouchables* ('59-'63). He later was in the movie *Airplane* and hosted the popular TV series, *Unsolved Mysteries*.

He died of a heart attack on 5-14-2003 at the age of 84.

Instead of sitting on a NVA (photo-op) tank; kissing ass to the commies, like Jane Fonda, Robert Stack visited C/2/503 in Dak To in the Central Highlands in the Summer of 1967, despite heavy units of NVA known to be in the area.

Steve "Sgt. Rock" Vargo
C/2/503d

Newsletter Cover, October 2011

The front cover picture, of Hill 875, the soldier off to the right by himself, looks like my husband, Raymond Lockman. Do you have any names of those men?

Vicki Lockman

(please contact Editor rto173d@cfl.rr.com)



Red Flags

I did receive the most welcomed Newsletter and, WOW, did it bring back red flags. See I joined A Co. 2/503 on the 18th of May 1965, shortly after the Battalion was moved from the Rubber Tree Plantation. Very much mud, from day to day and formation to formation, until we got all the PSP to arrange our company street.

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



Jim waiting his turn for bomb casing shower circa '65/'66
[Hope you're feeling better following surgery, Top!]

DC vs. Iraq

An interesting letter in the *Australian Shooter Magazine*, which I quote:

"If you consider that there has been an average of 160,000 troops in the Iraq Theater of operations during the past 22 months, and a total of 2112 deaths, that gives a firearm death rate of 60 per 100,000 soldiers.

The firearm death rate in Washington, DC is 806 per 100,000 for the same period.

That means you are about 25 per cent more likely to be shot and killed in the US capital, which has some of the strictest gun control laws in the US, than you are in Iraq."

Conclusion:

"The US should pull out of Washington."

[Sent in by a Digger]

H Vietnam in HD
Premiers Tuesday, November 8th at 9/8c
on History Channel



Interesting Veterans Statistics of the Vietnam Memorial Wall

"Carved on these walls is the story of America, of a continuing quest to preserve both Democracy and decency, and to protect a national treasure that we call the American dream." ~ President George Bush

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010. The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 36 years since the last casualties.

Beginning at the apex on panel 1E and going out to the end of the East wall, appearing to recede into the earth (numbered 70E - May 25, 1968), then resuming at the end of the West wall, as the wall emerges from the earth (numbered 70W - continuing May 25, 1968) and ending with a date in 1975. Thus the war's beginning and end meet. The war is complete, coming full circle, yet broken by the earth that bounds the angle's open side and contained within the earth itself.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass., listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

- There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.
- 39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.
- 8,283 were just 19 years old. The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old.
- 12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.
- 5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.
- One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.
- 997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam.
- 1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam.
- 31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.
- Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.
- 54 soldiers on attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school.
- 8 Women are on the Wall. Nursing the wounded.
- 244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.
- Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

- West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.
- The Marines of Morenci -- They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.
- The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and



lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart, and they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed.

- The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968, 245 deaths.
- The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.



For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.

[Sent in by Lonnie Mitchell, B/2/503d]



LISTEN TO THE NCOs

While at West Point in June of 1965, we put on a show of firepower for the Plebes. My role was to fire a rifle grenade which was mounted (if my memory serves me correctly) on an M-14 rifle. Of course, the NCOIC told me to put the rifle butt on the ground because it'll kick back pretty damn hard. Well, at 18 years of age, I thought to myself, *how bad could it possibly kick back at me? It was after all, just a rifle with just a grenade attached to it.* I decided then to fire the weapon like a man, a U.S. Paratrooper. *Airborne!*

When I got the signal, I fired that damned rifle grenade, and it literally kicked the shit out of me. And of course, knowing I was told how to fire the weapon correctly, I was too embarrassed to say anything about my injury. However, after many years living silently with shoulder pain, I decided it was time to correct the damage I had rendered on to myself on that fateful summer night back in 1965. I submitted to shoulder surgery in October of 2004. The verbiage from an old song comes to mind, *"You will come to know when the bullet hits the bone."* Damn, that hurt!

Gerry "Doc" Stesiak, Medic
A/4/503d

[I don't feel so bad now about breaking my ankle while attempting a *standing-landing* with the 509th in Germany in '68. That sucker never healed right either. *Young, dumb, etc.* Ed]

It's Not The Medals...It's The Man

(From a letter by Gerry "Doc" Stesiak to the family of SGM Robert Cruz, Doc's first SGM, after his death in January 2008):

I served in the same unit as SGM Cruz and I've never forgotten how he positively affected me. Let me explain:

During a parade at Fort Campbell, we all had our Class 'A' Dress uniforms on. When I saw the number of rows of ribbons SGM Cruz had on his uniform I was stunned. So, I asked him why he never told us how many citations and ribbons he was awarded. To this day I remember his remarks in response to my query:

"Son, it is not that important to show what you earn as a result of soldiering. Rather, it is far more important to be a soldier first and let your actions dictate who you are, not the awards you may receive.

Years later I became a Detroit Fire Chief. Like the old Sarge, I too had earned many citations for bravery and what have you. But, because of SGM Cruz' statement to me, I took it a step further. I never wore the ribbons on my uniform. He made that much of an impression on me.

The M14 Rifle



Development of the M14 Rifle began in 1944 when Army Ground Forces identified the need for a weapon of the M1 Garand's size and weight that was capable of both automatic and semi-automatic fire. After years of research and testing by the Springfield Armory, the resulting rifle fired the NATO 7.62mm cartridge and was fed by a 20-round magazine, which was a considerable improvement on the 8-round clip of the 0.30 caliber M1. It was also equipped with a chrome-lined barrel and chamber to resist corrosion, a prong type flash suppressor, and could accommodate the M6 bayonet. Adopted by the U.S. military in 1957, the M14 replaced not only the M1 Garand, but also the M2 Carbine and M3A1 submachine gun, simplifying both training and logistical procedures.

Though generally regarded as reliable and accurate, the M14 did suffer from excessive recoil when fired in automatic mode. Consequently, the majority of rifles were issued with a selector shaft lock that ensured that only semi-automatic fire could be employed.

The M14 was the primary U.S. infantry weapon in Vietnam until it was replaced by the shorter and lighter M16 rifle. However, the M14 was still being used by some Army and Marine Corps units as late as 1968.

General Data, M-14

Weight (with 20 round magazine):	10.1 lbs.
Length:	44.3 inches
Barrel:	22 inches
Rifling:	1 turn in 12"
Ammunition caliber:	7.62mm
Muzzle velocity:	2,800 fps
Cyclic rate of fire:	700/750 rpm
Maximum effective range:	460 meters



Mike Ludas, A Bravo Bull

Michael "Mike" B. Ludas, 64, passed away, Saturday, October 1, 2011, surrounded by his loving family and friends.



Mike was born September 14, 1947, in Waukegan, IL and graduated from Waukegan Twsp. High School in 1965. He enlisted into the U.S Army in 1966 and chose to become a paratrooper and served with the 82nd Airborne. He was assigned to Bravo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 173d Airborne Brigade (SEP). His bravery during the Vietnam War earned him three Purple Hearts, two Army Commendation Medals with "V", a Vietnam Service Medal w/Bronze Service Star, Unit Citations, a Parachutist Badge with Gold Battle Jump Star, and a Combat Infantryman's Badge. During the battle on Hill 875, while wounded and waiting for evacuation, Mike survived a bomb that landed next to him which tragically killed Fr. Watters who was administering last rights to many of his comrades who also died. Mike always questioned why he was a chosen to survive.

Mike proposed to his high school sweetheart, Geraldine "Gerrie" Smith in 1966, and was to be married in 1967 while in Hawaii on R&R from Vietnam, but because he had been wounded they had to wait until returning home. Mike and Gerrie married January 29, 1968, and he finished his tour of duty in Fort Carson, Colorado as a SP4.

Mike retired as a route delivery and sales driver. He was a devoted Green Bay Packers fan. Hobbies he enjoyed were bowling, fishing, deer hunting, cribbage, golf, cards, computers and most of all spending time with family and friends around the pool.

Mike was a Life Member in the Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade (SEP), Sky Soldiers, and many other military organizations.

Mike is survived by his beloved wife "Gerrie" of 43 years; daughters Lynn (Mark) Eberle of Salem, WI, and Lori Ludas (Dr. Melissa LoPinto) of New Hartford, NY. He was also "Grandpa" to Ryann and Jason Eberle and "Papa" to Charlotte and Dylan LoPinto-Ludas, and left an extended family.



Mike was loyal to his family and friends and will be remembered for his sharp wit, humor and his life's interesting views. He will be missed more than he could have imagined.



Memorial services with Military honors were held at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Union Grove, WI. Please sign the online guest book for Mike at www.strangfh.com

Norman Dwain Samples

Norman "Tex" Samples, 60, of Monahans, Vietnam combat veteran of Charlie Company 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade '69-'70, passed away at Medical Center Hospital in Odessa, Texas on Sunday, October 2, 2011. He worked in the oil field industry in transport. Services were held at Acres West Funeral Chapel.



Norman married Carolyn Wood in Monahans on April 30, 1998. Those left to cherish his memory are his wife: Carolyn Samples of Monahans; three sons, Michael Samples of Monahans and Robby Samples and Jeremiah Samples, both of Wink; two daughters, Megan Samples and Kiesha Tucker, both of Monahans; one brother, Stacey Thate of Palmer, TX; four sisters, Lucy Adams of Tuscola, Diane Myers and Cathy Lynn, both of Abilene, and Glenda Crocker of Richmond, TX; and six grandchildren.

Graveside services with military honors were held October 5, at Monahans Memorial Cemetery, officiated by Rev. Gordon Cox.

[Send in by Wayne C/2/503d & Iva Tuttle,]

Rest easy Chargin' Charlie



Martha Raye Visiting One of Our Own



2/503d trooper Pat Bowe visited by Martha Raye

Because you asked about the photo: We were on patrol in Tuy Hoa during an operation in October of '67 when we were ambushed. As with most ambushes all hell broke loose and I was "gut-shot" and in pretty bad shape. The round hit me in the stomach, but also took out a chunk of my large intestine, collapsed a lung, and blew out a rib in my back. Having lost a considerable amount of blood I was very lucky to have survived. I was finally medivac'd to a field hospital in Tuy Hoa and spent about a month there before I could be transported back to the States. I was then flown to Madigan Hospital in Ft. Lewis, Washington and spent the next 8 months recovering.

An Army nurse took the picture of Martha Raye and I when she was visiting the troops. As I recall Martha was a honorary Captain in Special Forces at the time. She was a really special person and deserves a lot of credit for the work she performed. She may have not done as much as a Bob Hope, but nevertheless she gave much of her time visiting the wounded and being an inspiration to them. God Bless her.

Pat Bowe
HHC/Recon, 2/503d '66-'67



Downtown Tuy Hoa, RVN

Excerpt from Remarks by Secretary Eric K. Shinseki at Vietnam Veterans of American National Convention in Reno, NV

Sergeant Kapaczewski is a member of the "9/11 Generation." More than five million Americans have served in the military during the past decade. Three million of them joined after 9/11, knowing full well that they would be deploying to combat. Their accomplishments are extraordinary – unseating the Taliban, pushing al Qaeda from its sanctuaries, capturing Saddam Hussein, delivering justice to Osama bin Laden, and training Iraqi and Afghan forces to defend their own countries.



The 9/11 Generation includes more than a million spouses and two million children of service members, many of whom have lived their entire lives in a nation at war. More military women have served in combat than ever before. Hundreds of thousands of troops have deployed multiple times. They have all borne a heavy burden on behalf of the nation, but despite the enormous strains of 10 years of continuous operations, our military remains as strong as it has ever been.

Sergeant Joe Kapaczewski's 9/11 Generation is defined, just as Rocky Versace's Vietnam generation, and every previous generation of America's Veterans has been defined, by the virtues of selfless service, sacrifice, and devotion to duty. These men and women who serve and have served are the flesh and blood of American exceptionalism -- the living, breathing embodiment of our national values and our special place in the world. God bless our men and women in uniform; God bless our Veterans -- welcome home, VVA; and may God continue to bless our great Nation of ours. Thank you.

Eric Shinseki

“When all else fails, lower your standards.”

Mike Sturges, A/2/503d





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.



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:

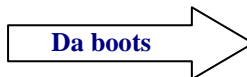
<http://www.goldencorral.com/military/default.asp>

~ Correction ~

This photo was sent in by Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d and appeared in last month's issue. We were under the impression Bob thought the guy's face was worthy of recognition but, in actuality, Bob wanted us to see the man's *BOOTS!* Ya still gotta love that face. Ed

"You should have shown the boots on that photo I sent of that guy with the wrinkled up face. Perfectly clean, brown, possibly old brown army jump boots. Plus the guy had them bloused in his trousers, and correctly."

Bob Fleming
A/D/2/503d



lski, <http://www.digital-photo.com>

"Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys. Look on them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death."

- Sun Tzu, the *Art of War*



'SGT. BROWN IS DEAD, SIR'

**A MAN HAD BEEN SHOT AND WAS MISSING,
BUT- - -**

By Tom Tiede
Newspaper Enterprise Association

COURTENAY, Vietnam, Jan. 14, 1966, Bravo Company had to fall back.

They had stumbled into an ambushing roost of Viet Cong who were fortified inside camouflaged rows of freshly dug trenches. Over the ditches, suicide snipers had been lashed to observation trees to direct knee-high fire on the approaching Yanks.

The boys from B made several crawling assaults, under iron sleet, toward an enemy they could not see and positions they could not locate.

Grenades popped like thunder. Automatic weapons fouled the air.

BROWN IS MISSING

But it was no use. Wet with rain and sweat, dirty with mud and blood, Bravo Company broke contact, regrouped and took combat census.

"Anybody missing?" a lieutenant whispered.

"Sgt. Brown," somebody answered.

"Where is he?"

"Sgt. Brown is dead, sir."

The group fell silent,. Jim brown...dead. Some shook their heads in anger. Others crossed themselves and swallowed.

Then, as the rain began to fall faster, the aching troops scooped away wet leaves and sat on damp ground. Ammunition was counted. C-ration tins sprang open...medics with ashen faces wandered from man to man.

TOUGH FIGHT

It had been a dirty go. They had battled blind, outnumbered and unprotected. Every officer in the unit had been wounded and scores of their men with them. Only one failed to escape, however. The sergeant...Jim Brown of Fayetteville, N.C., a 30-year-old husband.

"Dammit!" a man muttered.

"He musta been hit more than once," somebody guessed.

"I saw grenades falling all around him."

"He took a lot of shrapnel."

"Who saw him last?"

"I seen him go back because he couldn't find a buddy."

BROWN REELING

"Dammit!"

The sergeant had, indeed, gone back for a friend, but not before being thrice torn open by the enemy arsenal.

His squad had crawled within 50 yards of the unseen trenches before an anti-tank shell blasted the first rip in his body.

It was a hollow thump of an explosion that left Brown reeling with vertigo.

He kept moving, however, and 25 yards later he took a second set of fragments, this time from a grenade.

Again he shook it off and moved closer. Again he was opened up by the shattering of a hand thrown bomb.

Finally, he was ordered back. But then a man in his squad couldn't be found. Sergeant Jim Brown crawled into hell once more.

The rain had continued throughout the night and those of Bravo Company who slept at all, slept wet period. And nervous. Artillery zeroed in on the VC trenches after dark and shelled them through the night. At dawn, Air Force jets flew in to drop their bombs.

IN TARGET AREA

Sergeant Brown was in the target area, of course. The men wondered if they would ever find his body.

By mid-morning all combat had ceased and the jungle was quiet. The sun rose and the thicket steamed. Silently, the boys from B collected their gear for an air evacuation.

Suddenly, one of them heard a noise. He turned his head and blinked his eyes. A few yards away a man approached awkwardly, his eyes red, his face white, his clothes caked with stains of blood. *"Hey, guys,"* the man cried. Dazed, frightened, sick with confusion, he was near collapse. But Sergeant Jim Brown was by no mean dead.

SSG James Brown served in B/2/503d in '65/'66.



Bean Mess for the Brain

By Tom Conley
HHC/C/2/503d, '65/'66

This cyber space cook book is Dedicated to Big & Rich and Kris Kristofferson for unlocking my closet and letting "the sun shine in". "Open up your hearts" as you read "Bean Mess for the Brain".

'Forty Years On The Rock'

**For these woods are filled with the lives of young men
and deep in the dark they call cadence again.**

**The rhythmic step the pounding of feet the ungodly
march song that won't let me sleep.**

**I have no fear of those evil the wicked in life I fear
being condemned to march late in the night.**

**Welcome them home. Don't leave them behind. We
that survived have them alive in our mind.**



**RTO Tom Conley learning about bean mess
at Camp Zinn in Vietnam, circa 1965/66**

Do you only sing the song of the "great generation"? Was theirs "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight"? The great generation with great relief drew lines in the sand. Their kids who weren't too self centered to serve

nor selfish to contribute, "Asked not" and stood the line. Some did it in vista, in the foreign service; some the peace corps, some the Green Berets. Some took their draft notice, some volunteered; they all stood the line.

Then and now generations of us have stood the line drawn by the "Great Generation". We stood it in Germany. We stood and still stand in Korea. We sail the seas and once more the "shores of Tripoli". Those that burnt our fathers flag; can they feel the love of their borrowed lives? Do the words "does that star spangled banner yet wave" bring tears to their eyes? Never! Should they ever take for granted that someone else's children should stand the line for them.

This is how to make "BEAN MESS FOR THE BRAIN," a recipe for my children.

This isn't your chicken soup. I'm getting short. Before I see the "green green grass of home". Let's talk about Zen and the art of making bean mess. It's your world now. I can't tell you how to "roller skate in a buffalo herd". I can tell you how to make bean mess.

I was raised by three "generations of the daughters of eve". They didn't make bean mess. They made polenta, fajitas, fried eggs in real butter. They sipped whiskey on soft July nights and watched the lightning bugs. They taught me "joie de vivre". Put that in your bean mess as the first and primary ingredient. It's called love.

That kind of love hollers down the generations, it crosses national boundaries, it's multilingual, its nourished with this old dads bean mess.

I'd like to invite the world to share some bean mess and some store-bought desert (one attempt at oatmeal cookies was enough). We had bean mess and oatmeal mess on the table at the same time and I learned a valuable lesson from your bright shining eyes. I had the love but I had limitations on how I could send it down the line.

After you stir in the love, don't attempt more right away and don't expect it to come back right away. But, don't ever stop using love as the primary ingredient!

Love of yourself, love of life, the world, and all the creatures in it. We are all mysteriously stuck together like bean mess.

It wasn't a dust mote I remember, it was cold sheets and a lonesome whistle. It was a three story cold water flat, bathroom out the door. An icebox, you know block ice.

(continued....)



A steam train rumbling down the tracks and that lonesome whistle. The great grandmother watches me. She came to Ellis Isle, her and me are here to stay. We are cans. I didn't know we were on the wrong side of the tracks. I didn't know this train got to disappear from railroad news. *Good morning America...* Not, *good morning Vietnam*, "welcome to my world won't you come on in". That's when I knew me and the lady that booked in as "domestic help" were cans.

Cold sheets, the plaintive cry of a steam whistle, *Doom! Doom! Doom!* 51 caliber chicom. Let me wake up in them cold sheets. It's about trains and trucks and mom; it's about cans, welcome to my world won't you come on in.

It's about cans. Africans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Native Americans, and White trashcans. *We built this City out of rock and roll*. We traded them bagpipes for fiddles, the song of the streets. Sunday morning coming down. We took out the trash "yakkity-yak don't talk back", fought their wars, paid their taxes, and now this trains' got to disappear from railroad news.

"And sons of porters ride their fathers magic carpet and didn't get the news. Good morning America, how are ya? Don't you know me? I'm your native son."

"Welcome to my world won't you come on in?" That was the lead to a radio program aired on Armed Forces Radio. A working class Jew from North Philly saved my life not private Ryan's. Did I live a good life? Da da da-nant combat, the cans, doctored the language and our sagging spirits. The U.S. was *the world*, the Reeowl world. "We were hungry we were barely alive. Bang! Bang! they shot us down. Bang! Bang! we hit the ground."

Trains, troopships, leaving on a midnight train to a better place and time. I'm off that lonesome highway. I am getting short in the world. What to leave in and what to leave out?

The military was the first truly integrated equal opportunity employer; a meritocracy. That is what the world really is, "a meritocracy". Can you dig it?

Short was the word for approaching D.E.R.O.S (day to return stateside). The shorter you got the more you worried about the humbug, a short round, a scorpion bigger than a crawdad, a hundred-pacer snake, going home in a body bag. Four of us in Charlie Company found a unique way to avoid the short timers' blues -- we extended our tours....

That's what I'm trying to do now, I'm short in life. What a long strange trip it's been. I know this train's got to disappear from railroad news. I want to extend

my tour long enough to leave this lonesome whistle in your ears.

The four who extended were a Native American, two White trashcans, and an African American. This little short story is about the African American. He volunteered to walk point, he extended and volunteered to continue to walk point. One time Shelton was walking point in War Zone "D" and saw a trip wire. He was in motion when he saw the wire. He jumped and hollered a warning so the rest of us would stay back. When Shelton's feet hit, the ground gave way. He was falling headlong into a punji pit. This booby trap was meant to snare him, he was supposed to trip it; activating a delayed fuse then fall into the staked pit and be impaled on shit-smearred stakes. When help came to him that is when the delayed fuse booby trap was to explode (maximizing casualties). Well, he didn't trip it and he shouted a warning. Later, I asked Shelton, "how did he avoid being impaled by the punji stakes?" Shelton replied that when he broke through and knew he was going into a punji pit, he figured the ground holding the stakes was soft and that if he wind-milled his arms and legs he could avoid a direct impalement. He did. Later he and every squad leader in his platoon were KIA'd due to a tactical error by their lieutenant. The world lost a beautiful human. What's left? 8E40, a line on the black scar in this nations heart .

Shelton volunteered to walk point. With every step he risked his life for people like me who weren't as good at walking point. He had something to contribute, something he did well, something of Merit. I extended. I was good at what I did. I humped a radio. I humped it till my enlistment was up -- I wasn't a hero, I was a target. I learned from Shelton that we are put on this earth with something to contribute. ...Your life's not your own, neither are your successes. Your mistakes are truly your own.



Tom outside HHC commo hooch. He would serve as RTO for Bn CO LTC George Dexter during Op Marauder Jan. '66 before transferring to Charlie Company.

That brings us to the second ingredient in bean mess. You have to contribute to bean mess and to life.

(continued...)





Tom Conley on 2 Jan 66 at LZ Wine in the Mekong Delta with LTC George Dexter during Operation Marauder

Stand and Deliver

Rogers Rangers, the unit was a rapidly deployable light infantry force tasked with reconnaissance and conducting special operations against distant targets.

Two-hundred-and-two years later troops of the airborne 503rd infantry battalions were given 'Rogers Rangers cards' as a training aid. The cards had solid hard-won commandments; like *keep your powder dry and your tomahawk sharp*. The commandment this story is about is *"don't return to camp the same way you went out"*.

Our base camp's mission was to protect Bien Hoa airbase. The herd circled the wagons. 'C' Company's perimeter faced an open area, a field of fire, a killing field. One tactic employed to protect the perimeter was three-man ambush patrols. A good meal at the mess tent, arm up, out the gate before dark. Leave by the 50 cal. machine gun. Set up on a trail, hopefully ambush the ambushers. Pull out at first light, take the long way back and probably miss breakfast at the mess tent.

The average age of the grunt was 19. A three-man patrol could have two teenagers and a twenty year old. They might could smell bacon cooking as the sun came up. Have you ever tried to feed teenage boys? Even bean mess, they will eat it, maybe put hot sauce on it. The smell of bacon, a kids appetite, three young men on the way to breakfast didn't know what Major Rogers knew. They came back through the killing fields. Us back in camp got to hear and see the killing. Standing there with tin coffee cups in our hands. No time to mourn, time to respond to the enemy, more will die in the killing fields this morning .

The enemy knew we would come for our wounded. To the enemy they were bait. To us they were our brothers.

After another D-Day (assaulting hostile guns) and an Armageddon for some, the Company commander got us all together on the 'psb' street and reminded us of our tactics. That captain was the real deal, a combat leader

who felt the death of every man in his command; no time to mourn, time to teach.

He taught us teenagers. He told us again *"not to come back to camp the way we left"*. During his impassioned plea, I overheard one grunt tell Sgt. Corbin, *"Hey you were scared out there today"*. Sgt. Corbin looked at him and said, *"I've known fear!"*

This little story ain't about no "ra ra" facing your fears. This is about how to make bean mess. How to make the bread of life, a sustaining meal. This ain't no chicken soup. This is thick and spicy and it will carry you through a hard day. It ain't no quiche . This meal is for your backbone. It ain't popular. It ain't convenient. It's for *"your heart and nerve and sinew so that they may serve you long after their turn is done"*.

I've known fear that made me want to crawl into my mind and wake up in my own cold sheets. I've known rage that could unleash the furies of hell on an enemy "just to watch 'em die".

"And I came away with a different point of view".

The rest of our country missed out on a big thing about that ""crazy Asian war". They missed out on a generation of their " best and brightest".



Tom with his daughter Theresa post Vietnam. Her dad would years later tell her of bean mess.

They missed out on heroes, like Private Olive; say it Kris Kristofferson, about the love of a man who gave his life for his fellow man. *"So in dying Private Milton Olive taught those of us who remain how we ought to live"*. You can chant peace and love and drop your coins at the 7/11. Love ain't a party. Love came home to this country with a flag draped over it. A love like the colors of that flag. A love that don't run.

That love of life; of doing something with your borrowed life. That love is the first ingredient in bean mess. Like bean mess, love needs to be shared. You may not like the bean mess. You got to respect the love.

(continued...)



Respecting yourself, loving yourself, your borrowed life, you can't help but to respect all life.

Now "feel the love" and stir it into the bean mess of life...

"For these woods are filled with the lives of young men and deep in the dark they call cadence again".

I caught a ride to school most days with a neighbor. It was hard for him to get around. He lost a leg hitting the beach on D-Day. I didn't feel sorry for him -- he was Pvt. Ryan visiting the graves in his mind telling them he was living a good life. I had another neighbor who walked real stiff; he fought the whole war with a bad back from a glider crash coming in with the 82nd behind the beaches on D-Day. I didn't feel sorry for him -- he was Pvt. Ryan visiting the graves in his mind telling them he was living a good life.

Who I feel sorry for is a generation of U.S. citizens that grew up without heroes. They should know about a pilot named Alvarez. They should know about Roy Benavides. Maybe they would come away "with a different point of view about Mexican Americans. More U.S. airmen were killed in the skies of Vietnam than British airmen in the Battle of Britain. I feel sorry for a generation that lost that many of their best and brightest.

I feel sorry for a generation that grew up not knowing their flag would only have two colors on it. If it wasn't for the United States Marine Corps -- that is right, only two colors, white and blue. Them red stripes are from the blood of The United States Marine Corps. From the Halls of Montezuma to Hue. Hurrah for the RED, the white and the blue. I feel sorry for a generation that never learned to sing cadence. Us that bloused our boots and hit silk, we sang cadence:

***"Stand up, Hook up, shuffle to the door,
jump right out and count to four.
Dress it right and cover down, 40 inches all around.
That's the airborne boogie, what a crazy sound.
Standing tall and looking good,
you ought to be in Hollywood."***

I was singing cadence. I didn't need a PhD in history. I didn't need a dissertation on morality to know how to sing and stand tall. Don't you know me I'm your native son? My roots came here as indentured servants, as farm labor, as house cleaners. They came here for a reason. This is a meritocracy. African slaves may have got shipped here but their offspring were singing cadence and standing tall right next to me and the other cans for the same reason. This is a great Country, an experiment in merit. We didn't need a draft councilor to stand tall.

This is a meritocracy and it was our turn to 'stand the line in the sand' to stand tall, to sing cadence and to toe

that line our fathers drew. I feel sorry for those parents that thought they were special and owed their country no form of service; their children grew up without a clue. That their parents, who relied on elitist status and amoral self-serving rhetoric only furthered the cause of an amoral and elitist government. Why oh why didn't they volunteer in droves as CO's and serve as medics and engineers?? They couldn't answer Kennedy's clarion call. What would happen if they had a war and everyone volunteered as Conscientious Objectors? Kris Kristofferson talks about a medic named Joel. Here's another Pvt. Olive. Really, what those parents said was I'm too elite and important to stand the line and risk what those medics did.

1812 President Madison requested a declaration of war against Britain. 1846 President Polk requests a declaration of war against Mexico. April 25th, 1898 the U.S. declares war against Spain. 1917 America declares war on Germany.

1941 U.S. declares war on axis powers. February 11th, 1945 FDR sits down in Yalta with Stalin and Churchill and drew lines in the sand

usurping the power of the Senate. Committing

usurping the power of Congress. THE LINES WERE HARD WON BY MERIT. The usurping of power was elitist not meritorious.

Within 5 years of this new elitist aristocracy, U.S. citizens were fighting and dying in Korea.

You got the love, stir it in, you got something to contribute give it. Its' time for another ingredient.

The want to, the want to contribute, the want to stand tall and sing as you give... You have to be like Shelton, you have to want it. Do you believe in merit and a government of due process?

Stand tall and deliver!

You got to know how to cook for hard times. It isn't complicated. This meritocracy is a single melting pot. It's time to say what is right and do what is right; not what is only in your special interest. We are a country for the people and by the people. Is it of the people? The recipe for bean mess for the brain is simple. Do the right thing more right things happen.

Your all my kids, I'm your son. Here's my nightmare.



The old RTO sharing stories of yore with a third generation



I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW: *LEGS IN THE HERD*

RARE EARTH FROM HILLS 875 & 882

This is not a misprint. This month marks the 44th anniversary of the Battle of Hill 875. Military statistics record the 173d Airborne Brigade sustained over 225 KIAs, and another 250+ WIAs beginning in early November up through the taking of Hill 875 on November 23, 1967. In particular, the majority of these casualties were from the 2nd Battalion. However, what is rarely talked about or even known to many is who made up their replacements?

At the San Antonio reunion I queried several 2nd and 4th battalion rank and file members as to how their specific units were replenished after November's decimation. Most remembered their replacements arrived via intra-battalion transfers or fresh stateside FNGs. The same can't be said of Alpha 2/503d's replacements. I remember vividly that just days after the *Hill*, Alpha welcomed a dozen or more **non-airborne** replacements. They didn't attempt to conceal their "Leg" status. On the contrary, they expressed their honor in joining such an illustrious unit. They understood that they were authorized to wear the "patch" sans the airborne designation over it, and that in itself was sufficient recognition...they were, forever how briefly, Herd Bros.

To the best of my recollection, these *Airborne Legs* remained with Alpha at least until I DEROS'd the second week of February 1968. I'm also pleased to report that wings or no wings, these men acquitted themselves admirably and with distinction while members of Alpha.

Who was responsible for their assignment to the Herd? Was this the first/only occurrence of *Legs* in an airborne unit? When did they leave the Herd? What became of them? This inquiring mind wants to know.

Wambi Cook
A/2/503d

Note: You can view Hill 875 as it looks today on YouTube either through Megawambi or Dak To Hill 875.



Wambi, displaying hallowed soil.

For those faithful 2nd Batt newsletter followers and other interested parties, I extend an offer I made earlier this year; myself and two comrades returned to Viet Nam this past February, and through varied maneuverings and a bit of luck, we ascended the infamous Hills 875 and 882. Before leaving the Hills on 2/22/11, we each secured a baggie of *sacred soil* that we hoped to share primarily with those 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalion Bros. who survived these battles. A few survivors took advantage of this offer. Well, we have residual earth that is still available, but on a first request basis. All that is required is to send to my home address a self-addressed prepaid envelope. The amount of soil is approximately seven (7) grams. Check with your local USPS as to the necessary postage cost. Actual battle participants will have priority.

Contact:

Wambi Cook
18458 East Orkney Street, Azusa, CA 91702
or Wambicook@aol.com

Lest we forget



173d Chapter News



CHAPTER 9

This email abstract is from the National Secretary. Chapter 9 will be prepared to discuss this important issue; however it does reinforce the issue of getting the *Sky Soldier* magazine VIA email. We in Chapter 9 support “electronic magazines” and recommend as many as possible opt for this. You can make this change by logging onto National’s website and selecting “magazine status” problems or contact either Dennis or me. Let us know your feelings on this proposed change.

Dennis Hill

dhill173@verizon.net (781-769-6062)

Peter Klausner

logpc@comcast.net (508-238-0219)

Sirs and Ladies:

We have another issue we need to discuss at the Mid-Winter. Please read, discuss with your Chapters and be prepared at the Mid-Winter to discuss this important issue.

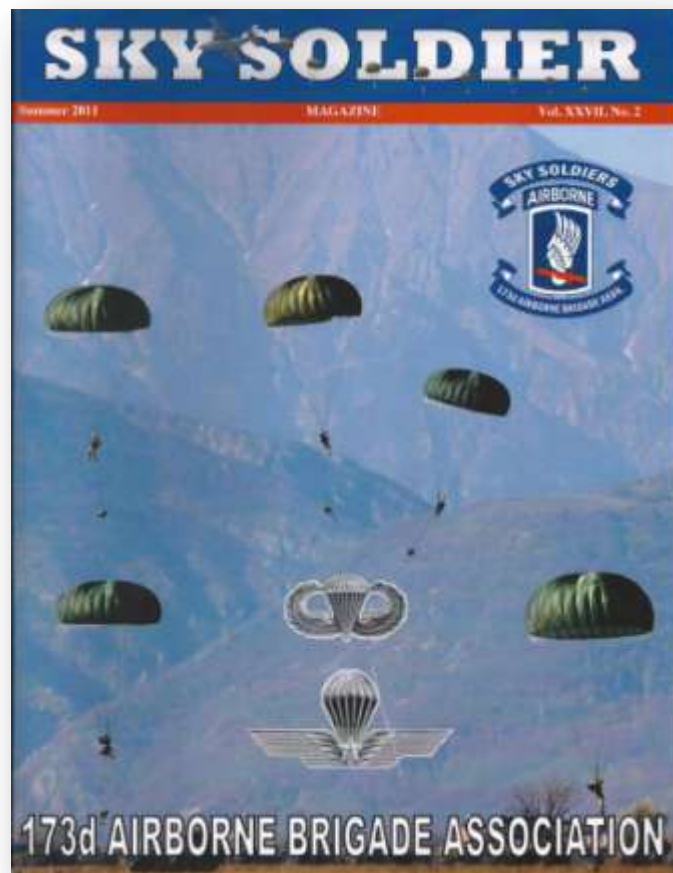
PROBLEM: The rising cost of the *Sky Soldier Magazine* and decreasing revenue (long term) due to increasing Life memberships, will lead this Association to a great financial distress in the future. Many other veterans’ Associations have ended Life memberships and or have made serious adjustments in cost of joining as life members.

Possible Solutions:

1. End life memberships
2. Adjust cost of life memberships
3. Replace *Sky Soldier Magazine*

Pros and Cons of each solution:

1. End life memberships: this will stop the financial collapse in the future but will lose us life time Members -- especially our younger Sky Soldiers whom we need for our future.
2. Adjust cost of life memberships: Like the 101st, Special forces, etc., set all NEW Life membership cost by age groups up to 4 times the current life membership fee. It will decrease the financial problem in the future and cost us less loss of memberships but will still affect membership.
3. Replace how we provide the *Sky Soldier Magazine*. This could be done at any time in the future after much discussion and notice – say in 3-5 years.



Magazine replacement:

1. Quarterly Electronic magazine could start next year (available now).
2. Produce a “Year Book” each year and mail it to all current members. (Major events, Officers, Reunion Photos, Chapter Reports, new KIA, new Decreased and current Members list).
3. In reality members would not be afforded less from the Association but more.
4. It would save financially -- one mailing versus four.
5. We can look at other printing options to reduce cost!
6. Obviously some members will be upset over any change but much like or current Social Security system we need to Fix It and not just push it off until we go bankrupt.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL SKY SOLDIER YEAR BOOK – APPROX 48 Pages Max - \$ 7,000

Next General Membership Meeting

Chapter 9 ~ General Membership Meeting
5 November 2011
12:00 - 14:00 Hrs
22 Hathorn Road, Jaffrey, NH
Tim Austin

www.newenglandskysoldier.com

(continued....)



Midwest Chapter 17 Midwest Christmas Party Franklin, OH

Members of Chapter 17, your fearless leaders are making early preparations for our annual Christmas Party. We intend to hold it once again at the VFW7596 Post in Franklin, Ohio.

We will be located southwest of Dayton. The Holiday Inn is available for rooms. John Kyne and his wife have the ball rolling for us. We are hoping to hear your response. Let us know so we can plan for the numbers.

We had a great little time last year at that location so it should be familiar to you. However, we need the bodies to make it worthwhile so please give a call to let us know if you intend to come out.

We will have the food and drinks waiting and hopefully, a live band. The date is set:

Who: Midwest Chapter 17

What: Annual Christmas Dinner

When: December 3rd, dinner between and 7 or 8 P.M.

Where:

VFW POST 7596
422 South Main Street
Franklin, OH
937-746-7286

Hotel Info:

HOLIDAY INN
851 Commerce Center Drive
Franklin, OH
937-746-1094

\$69. Per night + tax

Contact

John Kyne, [937-862-4487](tel:937-862-4487)

Bill Terry, [614-476-3060](tel:614-476-3060)

You know the Chapter, you know its members so let's come out and have a wacky time.

Also, to our members in Kentucky and Indiana, Dayton is not that far away. Come on out and join in. Last year we had a group from Pennsylvania and we hope to see them again.

Our Medics

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



Last Month's WHODAT?



Photo taken by (then) LTC George Dexter (Col. Ret.), battalion CO 2/503d during *Operation New Hope* in 1965. We believe it is Sgt. Parker providing medical care to villagers.

Military.com
BENEFITS

VA to Help Cover Some Home Loan Fees

Week of October 10, 2011

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will cover extra costs for veterans who struck deals on home loans and faced the possibility of higher fees amid confusion over a federal law change. The problem involves a Sept. 8 notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs loan operations that said certain fees would be lower beginning Saturday. But Congress delayed those lower fee rates from taking effect until November in legislation awaiting President Barack Obama's signature. For more information and updates as they become available, visit the News and Announcements box on VA's Loan Guaranty Home Loan Program website. For more guides on how to get a VA home loan and make the best use of it, visit the Military.com VA Home Loan Center.

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / November 2011 – Issue 34

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Survivor Benefits for Spouses of Disabled Veterans

Sadly, more and more of us are taking that final jump. The following was taken from the Veterans Administration web site at va.org. It appears there are two basic forms of benefits for surviving spouses. DIC, Dependency and Indemnity Compensations, and DEC, Survivors & Dependents Assistance.



Department of Veterans Affairs

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

What Is DIC?

DIC is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of a military service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease, OR veteran whose death resulted from a non service-related injury or disease, and who was receiving, or was entitled to receive, VA Compensation for service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death, OR since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR for at least one year before death if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999.

Who Is Eligible?

The surviving spouse if he or she: validly married the veteran before January 1, 1957, OR was married to a service member who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR married the veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated, OR was married to the veteran for at least one year, OR had a child with the veteran, AND cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND is not currently remarried.*

Note: A surviving spouse who remarries on or after December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.

The surviving child(ren), if he/she is: not included on the surviving spouse's DIC unmarried AND under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school.

Note: Certain helpless adult children are entitled to DIC. Call the toll-free number below for the eligibility requirements.

The surviving parent(s) may be eligible for an income-based benefit. See our fact sheet, Parents' DIC.

How Much Does VA Pay?

The basic monthly rate of DIC is \$1,154 for an eligible surviving spouse. The rate is increased for each dependent child, and also if the surviving spouse is housebound or in need of aid and attendance. VA also adds a transitional benefit of \$286 to the surviving spouse's monthly DIC if there are children under age 18. The amount is based on a family unit, not individual children. Benefit rate tables, including those for children alone and parents, can be found on the Internet at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates> or call the toll-free number below.

How Should a Claimant Apply?

Claimants should complete VA Form 21-534 Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child.

What Are Some Related Benefits?

Health Care (CHAMPVA)
Federal Employment Preference
Home Loan Guaranty
Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance
For More Information, Call Toll-Free **1-800-827-1000** or Visit VA's Web Site at www.va.gov.
Compensation and Pension Service – December 2008

Survivors & Dependents Assistance (DEA)

Summary of Benefits

Beginning August 1, 2011, break (or interval pay) will no longer be payable under DEA except during periods your school is closed as a result of an Executive Order of the President or an emergency (such as a natural disaster or strike). For example, if your Fall term ends on December 15th and your Spring term begins January 10th, your January housing allowance will cover 15 days in December and your February housing allowance will cover 21 days in January.

Dependents' Educational Assistance provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits.

(continued....)



Survivor Benefits continued....

These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

For more information see the Survivors & Dependents Assistance Pamphlet Current payment rates.

Eligibility

You must be the son, daughter, or spouse of: A veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces.

A veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.

A servicemember missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.

A servicemember forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

A servicemember who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective December 23, 2006.

Period of Eligibility

If you are a son or daughter and wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training, you must be between the ages of 18 and 26. In certain instances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26. Marriage is not a bar to this benefit. If you are in the Armed Forces, you may not receive this benefit while on active duty. To pursue training after military service, your discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions. VA can extend your period of eligibility by the number of months and days equal to the time spent on active duty. This extension cannot generally go beyond your 31st birthday, there are some exceptions.

If you are a spouse, benefits end 10 years from the date VA finds you eligible or from the date of death of the veteran. If the VA rated the veteran permanently and totally disabled with an effective date of 3 years from discharge a spouse will remain eligible for 20 years from the effective date of the rating. This change is effective October 10, 2008 and no benefits may be paid for any training taken prior to that date.

For surviving spouses (spouses of service members who died on active duty) benefits end 20 years from the date of death.

How to Apply

You should make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. If you are not clear on this point, VA will inform you and the school or company about the requirements.

Obtain and complete VA Form 22-5490, Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance. Send it to the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the State where you will train. If you are a son or daughter, under legal age, a parent or guardian must sign the application.

If you have started training, take your application to your school or employer. Ask them to complete VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, and send both forms to VA.

Section 301 of Public Law 109-461 adds a new category to the definition of "eligible person" for DEA benefits.

The new category includes the spouse or child of a person who: VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability; and at the time of VA's determination is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment; and is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability.

Persons eligible under this new provision may be eligible for DEA benefits effective December 23, 2006, the effective date of the law.



DEA provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

(continued....)



Special Restorative Training is available to persons eligible for DEA benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs may prescribe special restorative training where needed to overcome or lessen the effects of a physical or mental disability for the purpose of enabling an eligible person to pursue a program of education, special vocational program or other appropriate goal. Medical care and treatment or psychiatric treatments are not included.

Special Vocational Training is also available to persons eligible for DEA benefits. This type of program may be approved for an eligible person who is not in need of Special Restorative Training, but who requires such a program because of a mental or physical handicap.

It's recommended surviving spouses of deceased disabled veterans request any needed assistance from the DAV, Disable American Veterans, to best understand and apply for benefits. Ed



Department of Veterans Affairs

Death Pension Benefits

What Is Death Pension?

Death pension is a benefit paid to eligible dependents of deceased wartime veterans.

Who Is Eligible?

You may be eligible if:

- the deceased veteran was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, *AND*
- he or she served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war*, *AND*
- you are the surviving spouse or unmarried child of the deceased veteran, *AND*
- your countable income is below a yearly income limit set by law.

**Note:* Anyone who enlists after September 7, 1980, generally must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty. Service from August 2, 1990 to present is considered to be a period of war (Gulf War) in addition to other periods of war such as World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Income Limits (Effective December 1, 2008)

If you are a... Your yearly income must be less than...

Surviving spouse with no dependent children \$7,933
Surviving spouse with one dependent child \$10,385
(Add \$2,020 to the limit for EACH additional child)
Housebound surviving spouse with no dependents \$9,696
Housebound surviving spouse with one dependent \$12,144

Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with no dependents \$12,681
Surviving spouse who needs aid and attendance with one dependent \$15,128
Surviving child (no eligible parent) \$ 2,020

Note: *Some income is not counted toward the yearly limit (for example, welfare benefits, some wages earned by dependent children, and Supplemental Security Income).*

How Much Does VA Pay?

VA pays you the difference between your countable income and the yearly income limit which describes your situation (see chart above). This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar. Call the toll-free number below for details.

Note: *Certain expenses (i.e., medical expenses, education expenses, or expenses related to the last illness or burial of the veteran or a dependent) paid by you are taken into consideration when arriving at your countable income.*

How Can You Apply?

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-534, *Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by Surviving Spouse or Child*. If available, attach copies of dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates).

For More Information, Call Toll-Free **1-800-827-1000** or Visit Our Web Site at <http://www.va.gov>. Compensation and Pension Service, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Express Mail to Slow Down

Week of October 10, 2011

Effective Oct. 3, 2011, the United States Postal Service has revised mailing standards for Express Mail Military Service items mailed from the United States to APO/ FPO and DPO destinations for delivery. USPS, in conjunction with the Military Postal Service Agency, is revising the service commitment from a universal two to three day standard to a three to five business day standard depending on the origin and destination. For more information, email the Military Postal Service at: MPSA-TR@conus.army.mil or visit the Military Postal Service Agency website.

For more military-related news, visit the Military.com **News Center**.



Mortality Rates Of Vietnam Veterans

by Michael Patrick Brewer on Apr. 08, 2011, under Veterans Benefits

Thank you Patrick Brady for shedding some truth to the rapidly circulating rumors that we are passing on to glory at an accelerated rate. Some good news for Vietnam Veterans is always welcomed. I for one intend to be staring into the camera on the History Channel one day when they introduce me as the, "oldest living Vietnam Veteran!" I am a Life Member of VVA and a past president. I have nothing but the utmost respect for this fraternal organization and the purity of their advocacy. The VVA motto of never leaving another veteran behind is taken seriously.

Go to VVA.org to see their award winning publication,

"The Veteran" Not Dead Yet

Patrick S. Brady

Mortality Rates Among Vietnam Veterans

Recently, the Internet has been awash with dire predictions of the imminent demise of all Vietnam veterans. Both alarmed and suspicious, Vietnam veteran Pat Brady did some investigating. Here's what he found.

"If you're alive and reading this, how does it feel to be among the last one-third of all the U. S. Vets who served in Vietnam?" Like a ritual salute, this question has passed from one veteran website to another in the past 18 months, accompanied by a drumbeat of numbers: 711,000 Vietnam veterans died between 1995 and 2000, or 142,000 deaths every year, 390 every day; no more than 850,000 Vietnam veterans remain out of 2.7 million, meaning at least 1.8 million have fallen to the swift scythe of the Grim Reaper; and "only the few" will still be around by 2015. *"We died in 'Nam,"* reckoned one veteran, *"just haven't fallen over yet."*

This actuarial cadence-count went viral on "Before They Go," a nine-minute video posted on YouTube by Veterans Appreciation Alliance, a group seeking sponsors and contributions for its Grateful Red, White & Blue Appreciation Tour. One website hailed the video as a *"warning that our Vietnam vets are dying off rapidly, and we need to give them a proper 'Welcome Home' before they are gone."* Many veterans proved quite ready to believe that their comrades were falling fast to Agent Orange, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide.

But others were skeptical. Passing through the blogosphere, the supposed daily death toll of 390 Vietnam veterans sprouted a spurious pedigree, with several websites attributing it to the Naval Health Research Center. This was news to the Center, whose Public Affairs Office called on the makers of "Before They Go" to remove the bogus attribution. The nine minute video disappeared from YouTube by mid-April 2010, replaced by a four-minute version cleansed of the offending mortality figures.

Yet the mournful numbers still pop up all over the Internet. Are they true? Where did they come from? First, we must face the limits of our knowledge: No one knows for sure how many in-country Vietnam veterans are alive. So anyone who tells you he is sure is making it up.

The number living must be measured against a baseline of those who were there in the first place. But no one is sure of that number either, despite a surfeit of surveys and estimates. The Department of Defense kept a consolidated file of those who died in the Vietnam War but not of those who fought it. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, and almanacs of the war are conspicuously silent about how many actually saw duty in Vietnam. To make up for the lack of an in-country master list, estimates and surveys have started with figures for those who served worldwide during the Vietnam era, and for those who served in the Vietnam theater, a term that includes Vietnam, its coastal waters, Laos, Cambodia, and sometimes Thailand.

Defining the era presents problems of its own, with Section 101(29) of the U.S. Code for Veterans offering two definitions of the Vietnam era: 1) February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975, for veterans who served in Vietnam; and 2) August 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975, for those who served elsewhere. These are the same parameters used to determine eligibility for membership in VVA. Adding to the confusion, some estimates treat the Vietnam era as ending not in 1975, but in 1973, the year of the Paris Peace Accords. So different estimates of those who served and those who survive produce different results, varying according to the location of service (Vietnam itself or the Vietnam theater) and time covered (usually starting in 1961, 1964, or even 1965, and ending in 1973 or 1975).

A survey of surveys appeared in the first volume (1994) of the Institute of Medicine's semiannual studies, *Veterans and Agent Orange*. Estimates of in-country Vietnam service, the Institute found, ranged from 2.6 to 3.8 million, with most falling between 2.6 and 2.9.

(continued....)



Estimates for the Vietnam theater ranged from 2.7 to 4.3 million, with 3.4 million the most widely cited figure. These numbers must be seen against the larger total of those who served worldwide during the Vietnam era, 8.75 million from 1964-73, and 9.2 million from 1964-75. Depending on the estimate, one out of three Vietnam-era veterans served in the Vietnam theater, and four out of five Vietnam theater veterans served in Vietnam itself.

With these estimates in mind, we can start closing in on what can be said about the number of living in country Vietnam veterans. Better figures are available for era veterans than for in-country veterans. The 2000 Census long form, for example, asked about period of service but not place. Estimates for living in-country veterans can be extrapolated from figures for living era veterans. Setting a benchmark for the year 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 8,380,356 living Vietnam-era (here defined as 1964-75) veterans, about 90 percent of the original 9.2 million, with the death toll near 800,000. The Centers for Disease Control reached a like finding in a Post-Service Mortality Study of 18,313 Vietnam-era veterans, half of whom served in country. By the end of 2000, the CDC found, about 91 percent of era veterans were living, aged 46 to 67 in the sample, with a mean of 53; death rates for veterans were lower than for all men in the U.S. through 1998; and in-country veterans suffered 7 percent higher mortality than other veterans. That difference, the CDC said, was “*not statistically significant*,” was confined to the first five years after discharge from active duty, and was limited to “external causes”—mostly traffic accidents, suicides, homicides, and unintentional poisonings, many of them drug-related.

If in-country Vietnam veterans accounted for about a third of all Vietnam-era veterans, and if they were dying only slightly faster than the others, then the 800,000 era veterans who died from the 1960s through 2000 should have included fewer than 300,000 in-country veterans. That fact rules out the supposed passing of 711,000 of them between 1995 and 2000 alone, a figure that forms one verse of the Internet litany.

Reaching a comparable estimate for the Vietnam theater, the VA Office of Environmental Epidemiology keeps an incomplete list of 3,056,000 Vietnam theater veterans, and counts 349,000 theater veteran deaths through 2001, a count the Office considers 95 percent complete. If four out of five theater veterans served in country and if they were dying only slightly faster than other veterans, then the 349,000 theater deaths should have included 280,000 to 300,000 in country veteran deaths through 2001, an estimate in line with the CDC and Census figures through 2000.

The VA’s *Veteran Population Model for 2007* estimates that 8,448,000 Vietnam-era (1964-75) veterans were living in 2000, and 7,526,000 living on September 30, 2010. While 47,000 leaving the military joined the ranks of Vietnam-era veterans during the decade, 969,000 deaths thinned those ranks. Again, if a third of era veterans were in-country veterans who were dying only slightly faster than other veterans through 2000, they should account for 325,000 to 350,000 of the 969,000 Vietnam-era deaths from 2000 to 2010, unless their mortality rate skyrocketed far above the rate for other veterans after 2000. There is no evidence that it did, and some that it did not.

A *Current Population Survey* by the Census Bureau for August 2009 estimated 7,183,000 living Vietnam-era veterans, including 3,566,000 living Vietnam theater veterans. Compared to other estimates, the era figure seems low, while the theater figure seems high, but the high number may cover a longer period—1961 to 1975—and may reflect inflated self-reporting of Vietnam service. But even allowing for such complications, the survey weighs against any soaring death rate for in-country Vietnam veterans. If three million or more theater veterans are alive, and four out of five of them are in-country veterans, then 2.4 million or more in-country Vietnam veterans should still live, triple the 800,000 rumored on the Internet.

Origins Of A Myth

So, thank God, most in-country veterans are not dead yet. But who started the story that they were?

Doomsday dirges do not need footnotes, but mortality statistics do, and the sources cited for these Internet numbers are few and mystifying. One of them, “the Public Information Office,” likely leads to the American War Library. As one blogger warned: “*The false number of 850,000 originates from the phony website of the American War Museum, which disseminates much false information for reasons only its manager (it is a one-man operation) might know.*”

The blogger misidentified the site. Otis Willie and Roger Simpson of the Public Information Office of the American War Library (not Museum) disseminated the number in a June 7, 2009, posting on [alt.genealogy](#): “*The official estimate of Vietnam War ‘survivors’ as of 25 May 2009 is 831,000. The number of Americans who served in Vietnam between 1945 and 1975 is 3.2 mil. to 2.7 mil. Is the number counted by DoD in 1984 when producing ‘The Vietnam War Service Index.’*”

(continued...)



COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

While most cyberspace chats have rounded off the number of living Vietnam veterans to 800,000 or 850,000, the American War Library's more precise number is echoed in a posting by "Stillhere" on Veterans Benefits Network that regrets "there are only 831,000 of our brothers/ sisters still alive." Calling itself "The World's Largest On-Line Military, Veteran and Military Family Registry," the American War Library asks: "If you are a Vietnam vet, have you verified that your name is listed in the Department of Defense's Official Vietnam Veteran War Service Index?" This "official" index, the same one cited in the Library's posting about 831,000 survivors, is often cited on the Internet as "officially provided by the War Library." As far as I can tell, this Index is nowhere to be found.

The American War Library seems to be a home business run by Phillip R. Coleman in Gardena, California. Various web postings have warned that "Roger Simpson" and "Otis Willie" are two of dozens of names used by Coleman; that the Library solicits personal information from veterans but does not provide free information about veterans; and that the Library and its many related websites post myriad military stories to attract attention and gain legitimacy. For examples of the warnings, Google "American War Library-exposed" or "American War Library scam," or [see www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?t=96622](http://www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?t=96622)

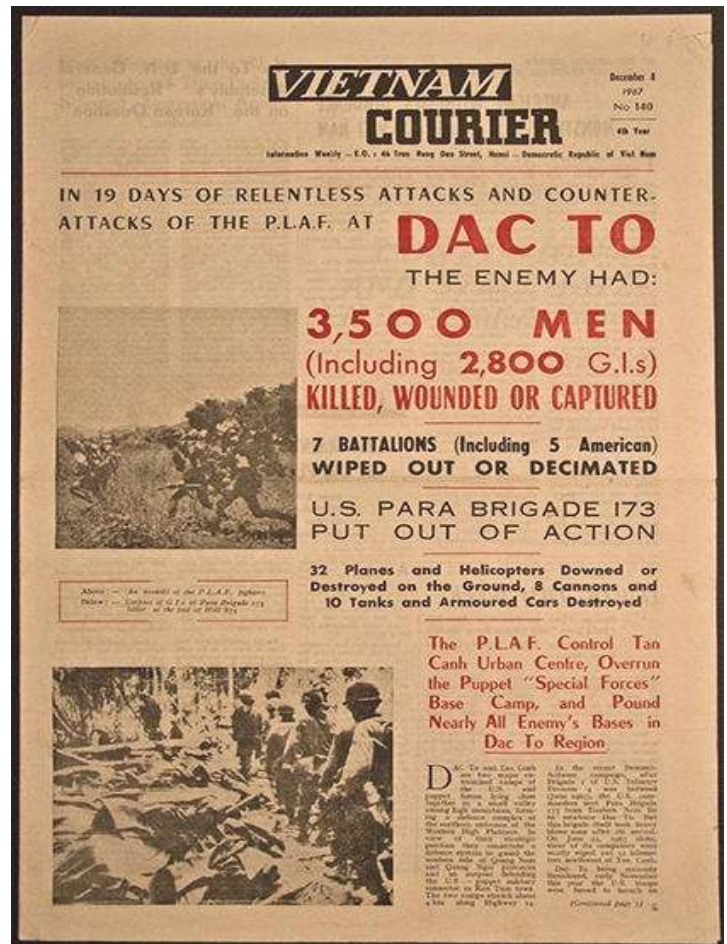
Statistics are hard enough without phony numbers thrown in. But in the available statistics, we find no evidence that the number of living in-country Vietnam veterans is only 800,000, and strong evidence that it is much higher. Again, by my own amateur extrapolations, fewer than 300,000 in-country veterans likely died before 2000, and a slightly larger number since, adding up to 600,000 or more dead, leaving two million or more alive. So if you're a Vietnam veteran reading this, how does it feel to stand with the three out of four who are still here and mean to stay for a while?

For information used in this article, I thank Mike Wells of the VA Office of Policy and Planning, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, and James Messinger, the treasurer of the National Vietnam War Museum.

Source: This article appeared on TusconCitizen.com

"If you go parachuting, and your parachute doesn't open, and your friends are all watching you fall, I think a funny gag would be to pretend you were swimming."

~ Jack Handy



[Sent in by Peter Klausner, A/4/503d]

Note: On my first (civilian) return trip to Vietnam I had the occasion to interview a former NVA soldier and learned the Communist government released similar reports about Operation Silver City (March '66), claiming 5 helicopters had been shot down at LZ Zulu Zulu and 'hundreds' of American G.I.'s had been KIA. In reality, we had one Huey shot down, perhaps 11 were hit, and less than 20 Sky Soldiers KIA....no mention of the hundreds of VC and NVA killed was reported. Ed

Those Jumping Fools And the Foolish Things They Do

Gerry's story about the M-14 and his injured shoulder (see Page 27), and my having broken my ankle performing a not-so-perfect standing landing, are just two examples of some of the things young paratroopers do which no one in their right mind would attempt. Send in your *foolish things paratroopers do* story to share with your buddies. Gerry and I hate being the only ones with our silk hanging in the wind. Chairborne! Ed



Armistice Day (also known as **Remembrance Day**) is on 11 November and commemorates the armistice signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany at Compiègne, France, for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front, which took effect at eleven o'clock in the morning—the "*eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month*" of 1918. While this official date to mark the end of the war reflects the cease fire on the Western Front, hostilities continued in other regions, especially across the former Russian Empire and in parts of the old Ottoman Empire.

The date was declared a national holiday in many allied nations, to commemorate those members of the armed forces who were killed during war. An exception is Italy, where the end of the war is commemorated on 4 November, the day of the Armistice of Villa Giusti.

After World War II, the name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day in the United States and to Remembrance Day in countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Armistice Day remains an official holiday in France and Belgium, known also as the Day of Peace in the Flanders Fields.

In many parts of the world, people take a two-minute moment of silence at 11:00 a.m. local time as a sign of respect for the roughly 60 million people who died in the war. This gesture of respect was suggested by Edward George Honey in a letter to a British newspaper, although Wellesley Tudor Pole had established two ceremonial periods of remembrance based on events in 1917.

