

2/503d

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



We try
harder.

VIETNAM

newsletter

April 2012, Issue 39

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

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



One month at war. Bravo Bulls chowing down on 10 Jun '65 in the rubber trees on perimeter of Bien Hoa AFB. *TDY my ass!*
(Photo by SP5 Jose C. Rivera, USA Sp Photo Det, Pacific. Sent in by Jerry Taylor, C/2/503d)



Chaplain's Corner

Cherished Sky Soldiers,
Families and Friends:



Grace and Peace!

The Leapin' Deacon

It has been a blessing to visit with you in the "Chaplain's Corner" this past year. I say farewell to you with our treasured Jump Commands. A good part of my 30 plus years on Active Duty was spent in the Airborne Community. It was an absolute delight and honor to serve as Chaplain and Pastor with these highly motivated special kind of Warriors of our loved Country. Life was packed with extremely demanding challenges and gifted opportunities.

The paratroopers did considerable vigorous preparation and high adventure training to successfully exit a troop-carrying aircraft flying 1,000 feet above the earth at 150 knots per hour.

The Jumpmaster calls out eight (8) "Jump Commands" and uses 'hand signals' to direct the eager paratroopers as they get ready for an Airborne Operation Mission. I prepared a sermon/message on each of the "Jump Commands" with a Biblical parallel passage. The paratroopers were in a LISTENING mode just prior to the jump. The Lord used this sacred time to win, hold, develop, and disciple our Sky Troopers.

The First Jump Command: **GET READY!** There are several Biblical passages that can be used. St. Luke 12:35-37 emphasizes "*Readiness*" to get ready for a deeper and more sure and meaningful walk with our Lord. This is a great an ultimate moment! We are 'ready' to successfully exit an aircraft 1,000 feet at 150 knots. (In combat the paratrooper jumps out at 500-700 feet – so the adversary cannot take too many shots at them on the way down).

The Second Jump Command: **STAND UP!** Psalm 27 and 103 herald forth as well as Ephesians 6. Stand up with and for your Savior and Lord in true high adventure living. The fully equipped paratrooper with an extra hundred pounds of gear, ammo, and needed resources for a period of little re-supply, boldly stands up and prepares to do the mission at hand – to jump on an Airborne Operation. This is the time to excel and he/she does just that with a deep sense of accomplishment and courage.

The Third Jump Command: **HOOK UP!** There are many Biblical texts, Psalm 23 and 51, St. Luke 9:28, that underscore our vital communication and life line with our Lord in Prayer! The paratrooper 'hooks up' his parachute to the strong and heavy cable overhead. The hook up is like a lifeline.

The Fourth Jump Command: **CHECK STATIC LINE!** Years ago I had a tremendous and tough Commander who deeply cared for all soldiers, and excelled in getting things done right. One of his key statements was, "*Check, Check, Check!*" On this fourth command the paratroopers would give a vigorous check and pull to assure that all was hooked up correctly. It was also a time of extreme care for the paratroopers around you – checking that they are safe and ready for this mission.

The Fifth Jump Command: **CHECK EQUIPMENT!** The Biblical parallels are many, but we will use primarily Ephesians 6:10-20 – "*Put on the full armor of God...stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.*"

The Sixth Jump Command: **SOUND OFF EQUIPMENT CHECK!** Psalm 107 and I Peter 3-5. All is checked out and well – you "*Sound off*" with a loud "*OK*" as you sharply slap the rear end of the person in front of you. The Sky Soldier is ready!

The Seventh Jump Command: **STAND IN THE DOOR!** St. John 10:9 "*I am the DOOR!*" Wow! What a Promise and Blessing! This is the ultimate moment of our training! By the open door of the aircraft are two (2) lights, one Red meaning stop/hold and you know what the Green one means. In all my many hundreds of jumps, I have never faced the open 'Jump Door' without the abiding and sure promise in the Word of God – "*I am the DOOR!*"

The Eighth and final Jump Command: **GO!** The Green light is on and out you go. You count to four (4) – one thousand to four thousand, as your main parachute canopy opens. What a beautiful and jubilant sight! The Biblical passage – St. Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission, "*Go into all Nations...I am with you ALWAYS!*"

We are blessed to be blessings. A most sacred and grace-filled Lenten Season, Holy Week, Easter, and Passover to you!

Chaplain Conrad N. Walker, COL, Ret.
"The Leapin' Deacon"
National Chaplain Emeritus
173d Airborne Association
Military Order of the Purple Heart



Dear Connie:

On behalf of all officers and men of the 2/503d, thank you for sharing your uplifting messages over the past months, but most of all, thank you for being there for your Sky Soldiers during time of war. *All The Way, Sir!*



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / April 2012 – Issue 39

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The White House
Office of the Press Secretary
March 29, 2012

Presidential Proclamation -- Vietnam Veterans Day

**VIETNAM VETERANS DAY
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION**

On January 12, 1962, United States Army pilots lifted more than 1,000 South Vietnamese service members over jungle and underbrush to capture a National Liberation Front stronghold near Saigon. Operation Chopper marked America's first combat mission against the Viet Cong, and the beginning of one of our longest and most challenging wars. Through more than a decade of conflict that tested the fabric of our Nation, the service of our men and women in uniform stood true. Fifty years after that fateful mission, we honor the more than 3 million Americans who served, we pay tribute to those we have laid to rest, and we reaffirm our dedication to showing a generation of veterans the respect and support of a grateful Nation.



Our veterans answered our country's call and served with honor, and on March 29, 1973, the last of our troops left Vietnam. Yet, in one of the war's most profound tragedies, many of these men and women came home to be shunned or neglected -- to face treatment unbecoming their courage and a welcome unworthy of their example. We must never let this happen again. Today, we reaffirm one of our most fundamental obligations: to show all who have worn the uniform of the United States the respect and dignity they deserve, and to honor their sacrifice by serving them as well as they served us.

The Vietnam War is a story of service members of different backgrounds, colors, and creeds who came together to complete a daunting mission. It is a story of Americans from every corner of our Nation who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved. It is a story of patriots who braved the line of fire, who cast themselves into harm's way to save a friend, who fought hour after hour, day after day to preserve the liberties we hold dear. From Ia Drang to Hue, they won every major battle of the war and upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

Eleven years of combat left their imprint on a generation. Thousands returned home bearing shrapnel and scars; still more were burdened by the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress, of Agent Orange, of memories that would never fade. More than 58,000 laid down their lives in service to our Nation. Now and forever, their names are etched into two faces of black granite, a lasting memorial to those who bore conflict's greatest cost.

Half a century after those helicopters swept off the ground and into the annals of history, we pay tribute to the fallen, the missing, the wounded, the millions who served, and the millions more who awaited their return. Our Nation stands stronger for their service, and on Vietnam Veterans Day, we honor their proud legacy with our deepest gratitude.

Now, therefore, I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

Barack Obama



AIR FORCE ON THE GROUND

We were supposed to make a combat jump at Vo Dat for "New Life 65" so I was learning to do PLF's off of the tree stumps and other objects in the company area. My greatest disappointment was we didn't make the jump.



Original photo caption: "During operations in the Iron Triangle in 1965, two soldiers of the 173d help a wounded comrade to safety." (TimeLife Photo)

My name is Orville Thomas "Tom" Branham. I arrived in country in August 1965 with 4 others from the 1st Direct Air Support Flight out of Yokota AFB, Japan. Our mission was to provide Close Air Support to elements of the 173d. A couple of days later I was sitting on a grassy knoll at Camp Hollaway in Pleiku.

We returned to Bien Hoa and on 14 September we accompanied the 2nd 503rd to Ben Cat, this was followed by search and destroy sweeps in the "Iron Triangle".

On 8 October we were once again in the Iron Triangle and experienced a B52 strike at night. That was pretty exciting cause I knew that the Air Force, other than the O1's with our unit, were the only ones that had a vague idea where we were and you could hear the bombs being walked closer and closer to us.

In November I went on Operation Hump with the 1st Battalion, We called in over 40 airstrikes on that operation.

My fondest memories are the times I spent with the 2nd 503rd. One time we were in the bush and during resupply the chopper brought in a block of ice and they gave us all a canteen cup of ice.

We flew in a couple days early and saw where the bad guys had dug emplacements for their 50 Cals along what would have been the DZ. We went down the road to where we set up for the operation.

We chose the hooch next to the medics. When we went in there was a big snake coiled in the ceiling that someone removed so we could occupy the hooch.

I had been saving my turkey loaf C's and pound cake and I was going to invite the medics over for Thanksgiving dinner, when someone said chow is here.

We walked around toward the front of the hooches and there was Thanksgiving "hot" and with all the trimmings. I think it was the best Thanksgiving dinner I ever had.

Being with the battalion I learned how to prepare C's ala C-4, dig really deep foxholes, and sleep just about anywhere.

The photo above was taken after "Hump". I was walking out to catch a ride back to Bien Hoa and there was this photographer who just flew in to take a picture and was waving his arms telling me to get out of the picture. I replied something about his parental lineage and sexual habits. The guy was not wounded, he was with the engineers and I think a tree fell on him while he was cutting down trees for the extraction. The guy on the left I think was just policing the area. I just wanted to go home; that is me on the right with the M-16 unslung.

**Tom Branham
173d Abn Brigade
2nd 503rd
TACP**





The Brazosport Facts



Member Associated Press

Friday, April 22, 1966

Freeport, Texas

INCLUDING LAKE JACKSON MAN

Paratrooper dies to save companions

By GLENN HEATH

"Run Lieutenant – grenade!"

Those were the last words of a heroic paratrooper private who thrust a Viet Cong grenade under his body to shield four companions.

His words were shouted at First Lt. Jimmy B. Stanford of Lake Jackson, his platoon leader.

It was Lt. Stanford who made an official citation of the soldier's heroism, asking that Pfc. Milton Olive, III of Chicago be considered by Congress for the posthumous awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

At noon Thursday, the dead soldier became the third person and the first Negro to be awarded the nation's highest honor for service in Viet Nam.

The White House ceremony was conducted by President Johnson in the presence of the soldier's father and about 20 relatives flown to Washington for the presentation.

In a letter to his brother, J.A. Stanford of 108 Haven Street, Lake Jackson, Lt. Stanford described the action that brought about the act of heroism.

It was on Oct. 22, 1965, in the general vicinity of the Bien Hoa airport.

"We got pinned down by automatic weapons," Lt. Stanford wrote, "and they (the Viet Cong) started throwing hand grenades at us. He (Pfc. Olive) grabbed it and crammed it under him. He saved all of us from getting it real bad."

Lt. Stanford was also wounded in the incident. He received 11 shrapnel wounds from the grenade that killed Pfc. Olive. But the soldier's body had absorbed most of the shock, robbing the shrapnel of lethal velocity.

He didn't know he had the wounds until later in the night, Lt. Stanford wrote.



PFC Milton Olive



LT Jim Stanford

Recently, Lt. Stanford was in Lake Jackson to visit his brother and mother, Mrs. Susie Stanford.

He attended Lake Jackson schools and Brazosport Senior High, entering the service before graduation. He received his commission through a service officer training school.

For most of his service in Viet Nam he was in the Special Forces (Green Berets) but at the time of the Oct. 22 engagement he had been transferred back into his former post with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The dead soldier's father was honored at a Chicago City Council meeting Thursday. Milton L. Olive, a soft-spoken warehouseman, pointed out World War II statements casting doubt on the bravery of Negro servicemen. *"I am convinced now,"* he told councilmen, *"that the service the Negro soldier has given in Viet Nam has erased for all time the disparaging statements made about Negro servicemen. This honor gives us a richer heritage."*

Excerpt from President Johnson's remarks during the posthumous presentation of the Medal of Honor to the father and family of Bravo Bull, Milton Olive, III:

"The Medal of Honor is awarded for acts of heroism above and beyond the call of duty. It is bestowed for courage demonstrated not in blindly overlooking danger, but in meeting it with eyes clearly open."

That is what Private Olive did. When the enemy's grenade landed on that jungle trail, it was not merely duty which drove this young man to throw himself upon it, sacrificing his own life that his comrades might continue to live. He was compelled by something that is more than duty, by something greater than a blind reaction to forces that are beyond his control."

He was compelled, instead, by an instinct of loyalty which the brave always carry into conflict. In that incredibly brief moment of decision in which he decided to die, he put others first and himself last. I have always believed that to be the hardest, but the highest, decision that any man is ever called upon to make."

In dying, Private Milton Olive taught those of us who remain how we ought to live."



NASCAR to honor Redlands family in remembrance of fallen son

By Suze Knobler, Staff Writer
RedlandsDailyFacts

NASCAR in Fontana will honor the memory of Redlands' Sgt. Raymond Alcaraz by taking his family onto the field and formally presenting the "Honor and Remember" flag, which is a national campaign of remembrance, to them on March 25 in front of a crowd of up to 100,000 people.

In August 2010, Redlands lost this hero, a 20-year-old combat airborne medic. Alcaraz was killed along with three other soldiers in the line of duty when their vehicle was attacked with an improvised explosive device. He was 43 days away from the end of his tour.

On Monday Alcaraz' parents Paul and Alma Murphy received a call from the Honor and Remember Organization president George Lutz. Lutz extended an invitation to the Murphys to spend the entire day at the NASCAR California 500 race in Fontana.



Sgt. Raymond Alcaraz
A Sky Soldier

The Murphys are a Gold Star family, which is having an immediate family member dying in combat. They will spend the day with Lutz and be introduced to the drivers, pit crews and also watch the race from a VIP booth. *"I feel very honored and humbled, but because of the type of person I am, I had to ask George, 'Why just us?' There are 680 other Gold Star Families out there,"* Paul Murphy said.

Lutz said that although they stand behind all Gold Star Families, they can't honor all of them. They chose one family. They chose the Murphys.

"This is such a tremendous honor. We don't want our son's memory to fade away, so being honored like this is another forum to say that Ray will never be forgotten and is a lasting legacy," Murphy said.

"When Ray died, my wife and I were in a fog, and we asked ourselves what was it all for to have our son die at 20," said Murphy. *"When I finally came out of the fog, I wanted to reach out and give back because we received so much support. So I reached out to Gold Star Fathers, because we know where Raymond is now and that gives us peace to move on and help others."*

Murphy was asked to be the California Captain for the Goldstar Fathers branch. The group's purpose is to ensure that Gold Star Fathers are not alone during the funeral ceremonies of their children who have died for our freedom, their website says. They work with the Department of Defense, which enlists them to go to grieving families and help their healing process. As part of this effort, Murphy attends funerals of fallen soldiers.

"There is also a Gold Star Mothers website, because as I have learned through this, men and women sometimes handle grief differently," he said.

The Murphys will attend the NASCAR races to be honored, but also to represent all the families who have lost their hero, Murphy wrote in an email signed "Proud Father of Fallen Hero, SGT Raymond Alcaraz."



Our Mission:

To create, establish and promote a nationally recognized flag that would fly continuously as a visible reminder to all Americans of the lives lost in defense of our national freedoms. All Military lives lost not only in action but also in service, from our nation's inception.

Rationale:

In our over 200 year history there has never been an official national symbol that recognizes in gratitude and respect the ultimate sacrifice made by members of the United States military in service to our nation. The Honor and Remember Flag was created for that purpose.

Goals:

To promote the vision of the Honor and Remember Flag and request that visitors to the website sign a petition and pass the word about the importance of this new symbol. To build a consensus among the branches of the United States military, veterans organizations, service and civic groups, businesses and individuals in order to collectively solicit the Department of Defense and the United States Congress to propose and accept the Honor and Remember Flag as the official flag for honoring all fallen servicemen and servicewomen.

To promote broad national awareness of and groundswell interest in the flag, so that military, government and educational facilities as well as households throughout the country would begin flying the Honor and Remember Flag in recognition of our nation's fallen warriors.

To place one personalized Honor and Remember Flag in the hands of immediate families who have lost a loved one in military service to America.

<http://www.honorandremember.org/>





JAPS IN AMERICAN CLOTHING –

THE HEROIC DEATH OF SSGT JOHN M. GUTHRIE

By: **Chet Nycum**
with Paul Whitman



INTRODUCTION: *When things stick in your craw, then by definition it's hard to dislodge them - in this instance, not even 65 years has been able to help me.*

Arriving on Negros we boarded trucks and were moved inland. The 40th Div. was already in combat on the island, and we were moved to their left flank, to engage the troops that were flanking the 40th Div. Our fighting was always uphill, the Japanese were dug in. Paratroopers have no heavy weapons so it all had to be done with small arms. I have no idea how many men were killed as we moved forward, but one I will never forget.



Chet

On the 22nd of May 1945, under the command of Lt. Whittig, I was lead scout of a "G" Company, third platoon patrol into an area feeding a trail which went by the name of "the Secret Trail." The patrol, ordered by Lt. Whittig, was of squad strength, with Staff Sergeant John Guthrie in charge. My second scout was Andy Pacella.

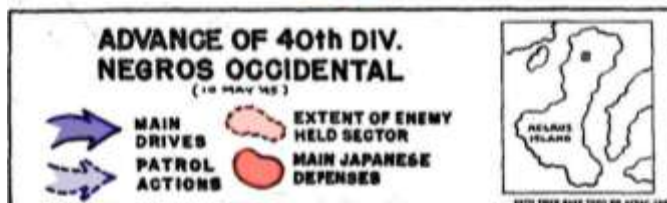
Now, whether this "Secret Trail" had ever been a genuine secret, I cannot say, but certainly by the time I was scouting the area, it was no secret at all, especially from the Japanese. I had been told that there were no friendly troops between our positions and the river, the course of which was not far away to our left flank. Our patrol was to check the extreme left flank of the 503d PRCT's position, and to deal with any Japanese forces which might attempt to out-flank our line.

The mountains in the interior of Negros were steep, varying from two thousand to six thousand feet, and the Japanese had had ample time to choose their battlefields ahead of us - some positions were covered by as many as two dozen pillboxes aligned in three supporting lines,

and always above us. Nor did they appear to have any shortage of automatic weapons, heavy machine guns or mortars.

There were Japanese forces still occupying Hill 3355, many dug into positions where it was impossible, because of the terrain, to flank them. Throughout the sector, they had chosen their positions in such a way as to ensure that the only means we had of dealing with them was to attack them, day after day, from lower ground.

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL SITUATION MAP AS OF 15 MAY 1945



The patrol had gone off without any contact being made, and we were still proceeding on an outward leg. It was mid-morning when I saw a few men crossing from my left to my right, some two-hundred yards away. They were on the "Secret Trail" moving towards my right. The trail itself sloped upward towards the left of our positions steadily increasing grade.

(continued....)



At some point before my patrol had made it to that very spot, this 'lost' patrol had crossed in front of us traveling to my left, and presumably were returning whence they had come. They shouldn't have been there between us and the river.

I was damn surprised to see a patrol of Americans come from the left across our front, crossing to my right, on higher ground. Being of the 3rd Battalion, and situated at the far left of the entire front occupied by the 503d and the 40th, they had no business being there. I could see them clearly. They were in US fatigues, wearing US helmets, and were carrying M-1's, and I assumed they were from our second battalion who had strayed out of their area following the clear trail through the dense rainforest. They must have crossed our path some hours before we had gotten to our position, following along the trail.

I held my tommy-gun in my left hand and raised my right arm in a wave signal and called to them, "*Hey, we're Americans!*" Simultaneously, they started shooting -- their guns were going off and bullets were flying towards our position. Two or three of the men of my patrol were bunched up near me, and had raised up about to wave, "*Americans! We're Americans!*" The distance between us was approximately 200 yards, visibility good.

It all happened in less time than it takes to blink an eye. Instead of any response, our patrol attracted an instant hail of gunfire. When we'd raised up to identify ourselves, they'd started opening fire, it was just that fast.



"G" Company Troopers on Negros Island, 1945
(Photo from Frank Foster Collection)

I knew all too well the sound of the Jap 25's, and I was hearing M-1's. There's a big difference in the way they sound. They turned tail and ran to the right, and even though they had the advantage over us, they were running from further contact. When they started to run, we stood again.



**A break from combat on Negros for a little
"G" Company Airborne PT**

(Photo from Frank Foster collection)

As I faced the men near me, we all heard the good-solid bang of a hand-grenade detonator igniting. It had been on John Guthrie's webbing, close to his left shoulder, and I figured in that instant of a second that one of their rounds had dislodged it and set it off. We were bunched up, standing with him, and he was no further away from me than four feet. We exchanged glances, and everybody scattered and hit the dirt.

Guthrie had a very short delay before making his decision, it must have been an eternity for him, but it was an instant for me, and he then dived upon the grenade to protect the rest of us.

There was nothing more clear to me, nothing in my life, not before, not since, than that he had made the conscious decision to protect us. None of us were hit, not by the patrol which had fired on us, nor by the grenade which destroyed Guthrie's life. It had all happened so quickly, and we had not fired a shot.

We carried Guthrie home.

(continued....)





Early prisoners at Fabrica, Negros, August 15, 1945
(Photo from Frank Foster collection)

We talked it over since, and came to the view that the 'lost' patrol had been from "E" Company, which had been at our immediate right flank. At some point earlier in the morning, their patrol had crossed in front of us, and were returning to their perimeter when we surprised them. We reported the contact as Americans who had fired on us, and run.

Later, word came down to me that the contact had been *"with Japanese in American clothing."* This was completely false in my eyes, but I figured that there might be some justice in the way that the Army would recognize Guthrie's heroic act of self-sacrifice. Maybe, I thought, that if the patrol was identified as Japs, then the contact was a contact with the enemy, and not just a friendly-fire incident, and Guthrie could get recognition.

It didn't happen.

Fate had decreed that there wasn't an officer around who witnessed it, or any officer who could write a commendation supporting Guthrie. If anything was ever written down, then it was sure to be wrong.

What makes it worse through the years was that "E" Company claimed that on that day they had a contact and had killed "one Jap". That's just another bit of the official record that Regimental HQ got wrong, for posterity's sake, maybe not even knowing either way. If only for his family, his bravery should be recognized.

There's no doubt in my mind that S/Sgt. John M. Guthrie, late of Arkansas, who died on 22 May 1945, saved my life, and the lives of others, and got not enough recognition for his selfless act. I recall him often. Like I said, it sticks in my craw, and it'll stay sticking there until I am gone to meet him again.

Chet Nycum
G/503rd PRCT

[Story, photos and graphics courtesy of the
503rd Heritage Battalion web site]

SSGT John M. Guthrie
AR, G Co, 37100662, 503rd, Negros
Morning Report: Record of G Company men killed.



Surrender of Japanese forces to 3d Bn on
September 2, 1945 at Negros
(Photo from Frank Foster collection)



Lawmaker Pushes Database to Stop Fakers (excerpt)

February 29, 2012

By Bryant Jordan
Military.com

A Utah lawmaker called Wednesday for the Defense Department to build an awards database that could help solve the problem of so-called "fakers" claiming service or awards they hadn't actually earned.

"I really do believe ... that if there was a will the [DoD] would find a way to do it," said Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah. "Collectively the Department of Defense failed to recognize the problem, failed to recognize the need [for a database], and never put forward a plan to solve this problem."

Chaffetz made his comments during a hearing on the issue of "stolen valor." The Supreme Court recently heard arguments on the *Stolen Valor Act*, through which Congress made it a crime to falsely claim having earned awards such as the Medal of Honor.

Just a few of the sonsabitches....



Book by a Sky Soldier

A Family Affair!

First Vietnam Veteran, Crey Higgins is secretly programmed to perform espionage duties for the CIA, and then his adult daughter, Willie Higgins falls into the same line of work and becomes a super sleeper agent without even knowing it. Inside Shadows is a trilogy of three works "After Ashcroft", "The Second Crow" and "Le Corbeau on Ice". Each have been published as single individual components involving the same, or relative, characters and are connected by theme. It is an all-in-one publication designed to provide harmony of reading and ease of transition from story to story.



INSIDE SHADOWS

CHUCK DEAN

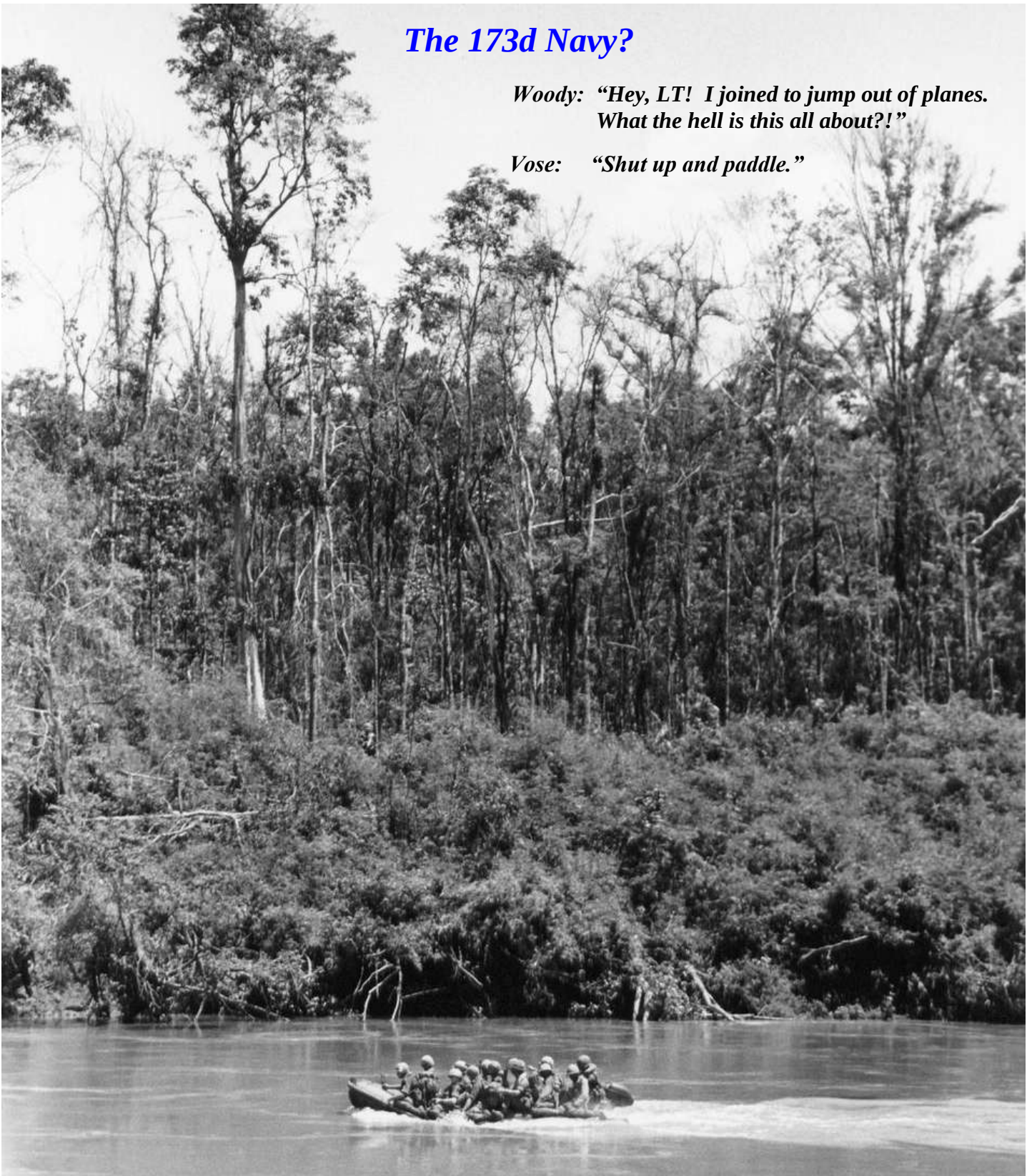
Available on Amazon.com



The 173d Navy?

*Woody: "Hey, LT! I joined to jump out of planes.
What the hell is this all about?!"*

Vose: "Shut up and paddle."



"Paratroopers of the (A/2/503d) 173rd U.S. airborne brigade make their way across the Song Be River in South Vietnam en route to the jungle on the North Bank and into Operation Sioux City in the D Zone on Oct. 4, 1966. Troopers and equipment were flown in by helicopter to the central highlands area, but the choppers couldn't land in the D Zone jungles. The operation began late in the week of September 25." (AP Photo) **(Sent in by Woody Davis, A/2/503d)** In describing the photo Woody said, *"That was Alpha, the precursor to stealth special warfare troops!"* My reply: *"They look more like ducks you see in an amusement park shooting gallery."* Ed



More about that boat ride and operation....

Memory is slipping, but maybe others will either correct me – or add to it. We were going across to check a B-52 strike. We had with us Horst Fass the photographer...can't remember what we did, but think that when we went back across after the operation General Westmoreland was there to greet us. Seems we had several mishaps during the initial crossing; engine failure, someone got bit by a snake, etc. Blessed day,



Horst Fass

Jack Kelley, CO, A/2/503d

Gen. Westmoreland came out to watch us cross that river. He was walking around and talking to guys and asked Bob Johnson if he could get batteries for his radio and how many he carried....We had guys scattered for 1000 yards down that river. Lucky nobody drowned and lucky Charles wasn't on the other side.

Jim Gettel, A/2/503d

Two separate times but the rubber raft thing was when Westmoreland was there. The snake bite was a guy named Cross. We needed to cross a river, wasn't too large across but too swift and deep to go on foot. An engineer blew a tree but it fell backwards and someone went up stream and floated down until he got to the other side. We all started to cross hand over hand when Cross looked as if he was losing his helmet and tried to reach back for it and slipped away from the rope and sank under the swift current. We found him shortly down river near a bend. The medics were trying to revive him with CPR when someone noticed the marks on the back of his neck. We were told to get to the other side and don't remember who was left behind while waiting for a dust off. **Leo (French) Pellerin, A/2/503d**

Roger that, Frenchy. Will never forget that day. Cross must have been the trooper immediately behind me, about mid-stream. I had just reached the opposite bank and was being pulled up by a buddy, RTO Lee Braggs, I think, when we heard yelling behind us -- don't remember anyone else on the rope. I turned just in time to see the man's ruck bob once or twice before he went under and downstream. For well over 30 years I thought he had drowned, but at one of the reunions, maybe Rochester in 2000, one of you guys told me he had been snake bitten. Another bad day. The only Cross from our battalion on the *Virtual Wall* is PFC Joseph Alexander Cross, A/2/503 from Philly, KIA 11/15/66. Was Joseph the same guy? Didn't recall the name of the operation either, but probably not Sioux City, which ended October 9.

Lew (Smitty) Smith, HHC/2/503d

Joseph Alexander Cross

Private First Class

A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY

173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

February 9, 1948 to November 15, 1966

JOSEPH A. CROSS

is on the Wall at

Panel 12E Line 073

~ Horst Faas 173d Photos ~



Operation Marauder, January 1966, Mekong Delta



Sky Soldiers...40 miles northeast of Saigon

(continued....)



~ More Horst Faas 173d Photos ~



Horst Faas (born 28 April 1933 in Berlin, Germany) is a photo-journalist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner. He is best-known for his images of the Vietnam War. Faas began his photographic career in 1951 with the Keystone Agency, and by the age of 21 he was already covering major events concerning Indochina, including the peace negotiations in Geneva in 1954. In 1956 he joined the Associated Press (AP), where he acquired a reputation for being an unflinching hard-news war photographer, covering the wars in Vietnam and Laos, as well as in the Congo and Algeria. In 1962, he became AP's chief photographer for Southeast Asia, and was based in Saigon until 1974. His images of the Vietnam War won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1965. In 1972, he collected a second Pulitzer, for his coverage of the conflict in Bangladesh. Faas is also famed for his work as a picture editor, and was



instrumental in ensuring the publication of two of the most famous images of the Vietnam War. The notorious "Saigon Execution" photograph, showing the summary execution of a Vietcong prisoner by Saigon police chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan, taken by Eddie Adams in Saigon on February 1, 1968 was sent under his direction. Nick Ut's famous "Napalm Girl" photograph caused a huge controversy over at the AP bureau; an editor had objected to the photo, saying that the girl depicted was naked and that nobody would accept it. Faas ordered that Ut's photo be sent over the wire. In September 1990, freelance photographer Greg Marinovich submitted a series of graphic photos of a crowd executing a man to the AP bureau in Johannesburg. Once again, AP editors were uncertain of if the photos should be sent over the wire. One editor sent the images to Faas, who telegraphed back, "*send all photos.*"



Saigon Execution

The real story behind Eddie Adams' iconic Vietnam War photo.

By Jason Zasky



“Saigon Execution” is one of the most recognizable photographs in military history, and it played a contributing role in turning public opinion against the Vietnam War. The image—by combat photographer Eddie Adams—captures the moment a uniformed South Vietnamese officer fires a bullet into the head of a man who appears to be a civilian.

Taken out of context, the photo seems to evince a senseless act of brutality, which explains why it was later used in support of the moral argument that protestors made against the war. But the reality is that the shooter (General Nguyen Ngoc Loan), was executing a ruthless Viet Cong assassin (Nguyen Van Lem, aka Bay Lop), who was leading a team that had targeted the general himself.

To help put the photo in context, I asked James S. Robbins—author of *“This Time We Win: Revisiting the Tet Offensive”* (Encounter Books)—about the incident, and what impact it had on the war effort and the life of General Loan.

What do most people not understand about “Saigon Execution”?

The photo shows General Loan, arm outstretched, shooting a prisoner who looked like a civilian, though he was actually a Viet Cong guerrilla. The picture was front-page news and ultimately won the Pulitzer Prize for spot photography. But Eddie Adams later said that the picture didn’t tell the story and that he was sorry he took it.

The man who was shot was Bay Lop, who had beheaded people, been caught in the act of gunning down policemen, and killed the family of one of General Loan’s friends. That doesn’t necessarily justify what Loan did. But when stripped of context, it looked like someone from the South Vietnamese national police gunning down some helpless guy, and that was not the case. Bay Lop was the leader of a sophisticated assassination team that was attempting to knock off all the top leaders [of South Vietnam], and General Loan was on their list.

But the picture had a big impact in the U.S., right?

It had a huge impact, because people who were against the war immediately seized on it. And the North Vietnamese put on a propaganda tour around the world using the photo as its centerpiece, telling people: *This is who we are fighting—this terrible regime in Saigon that guns down helpless prisoners.*

What effect did the photo’s fame have on General Loan?

It became an opportunity for his political enemies to go after him. But he was wounded in action a few months later, and that’s when he was removed from his job. His leg was shot up to the point where it was later amputated, and he couldn’t do his job anymore. Later, when he came to the United States, the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) wanted to deport him on the grounds of moral turpitude based on the photo. But Eddie Adams came to his defense. When the INS asked him to testify against Loan, he said: *“No, I’ll testify for him.”* He got to know General Loan after Tet and found he wasn’t a bad guy; he was just in a bad situation. So Loan was not deported and he lived in northern Virginia until 1998, when he passed away.

Read more:

http://www.failurmag.com/index.php/feature/article/saigon_execution/#ixzz1ojMjm8DX



Led by Auburnian

Fighters Describe Ordeal

EDITOR'S NOTE: Capt. John A. Leide, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Leide of 1 Woodward Place, commands C Company of the 2nd Battalion. Its nine-day jungle patrol is described in this Associated Press dispatch from Viet Nam.

BY JOHN NANCE

Xuan Loc, South Viet Nam (AP) – Eyes peered from faces grizzled with whiskers and crusted with dirt.

Men stared vacantly into space or into the mud and leaves that oozed around their ankles.

Arms and faces were scratched. Trousers were torn. Uniforms were stained with sweat, mud and red clay.

Charlie Company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, had come in from nine days and nights in the jungles near Xuan Loc.

The official report said they had killed 20 Viet Cong and suffered light losses themselves in Operation Yorktown.

The statistics were not impressive. There had been no major battles, no big finds of supplies or fortifications or documents.

But Charlie Company had known death and fear and nine days and nights of grueling jungle warfare.

The severest test came one day shortly after dawn. Thin light filtered through the jungle canopy. Charlie Company stirred through the mud to break camp. Suddenly, bursts of enemy fire seemed to slash from every direction.

Superior firepower finally forced the Viet Cong to break and retreat. Artillery shells crashed into the jungle and followed their withdrawal. Explosions shook the earth. Sounds of fleeing wounded reached the American encampment.

Charlie Company counted 15 Viet Cong bodies, some only a few feet from American foxholes.

Four paratroopers died, all in the first onslaught of fire. The men watched wounded buddies lifted away in helicopters. The dead wrapped in ponchos followed.

Two days later a bank of guerrillas struck from concealed positions.

The paratroopers plunged to the ground and began pouring fire into the trees and brush.

The Viet Cong slipped away. They left one dead American.



Capt. Jack Leide, CO C/2/503

The jungle was so thick no helicopter could come in. Four men carried the dead man, wrapped in his poncho.

Within an hour monsoon rains poured down. The ground turned slick.

"We've got to get more sleep," said Capt. John Leide of Auburn, N.Y. *"One or two hours a night is about all we've been able to get."*

On the ninth day the company was ordered to the base camp of the battalion artillery. The sun broiled down as the troops moved out of the jungle in two long columns. Nearing the camp the lead man speeded the pace. Rest was not far away.

Near the end of a column, a team carrying the heavy tube and steel plate for the 81mm mortar began to falter. A sergeant bawled at them: *"You keep goin', you keep goin'! You're not gonna come this far and fall out now."*

Half an hour later, Charlie Company trudged past the troops guarding the base camp.

Under the shade of trees in a rubber plantation, men flopped to the ground. They threw off their helmets and dropped their packs.

Charlie Company could relax – for a while.



A Chargin' Charlie embarking on his final trip home.

"That picture of the 'Dust Off' was pretty famous during that period. We had to use det chond to blast a small opening in the triple canopy. He couldn't get the chopper all the way down to the ground, but as with all dust off pilots they risked all to get to a point where we could get our precious paratrooper out. That picture is worth a thousand words. The guy who is in the forefront lifting our comrade was our totally dedicated medic, who like all of our medics, as well as our chaplains like our Connie Walker and Father John McCullough, were our comforting rocks."

Jack Leide, MG (Ret)



~ 173d Photographs, Operation Yorktown ~

by Robert Hodierne

Anyone know which battalion these troopers were with? The photographer was new in-country and apparently still learning the difference between a division and a brigade. Ed



“Firefight. On July 4, 1966, radio operator (RTO) Pfc. Mike Farmer, Atlantic City, N. J., crouches to avoid sniper fire during Operation Yorktown. The operation is being conducted by the 173rd Airborne Division about 40 miles northwest of Saigon.”



On July 4, 1966, troops from the 173rd Airborne Division move through fields on a sweep during Operation Yorktown in Long Khanh province about 40 miles northwest of Saigon.



“An exhausted trooper from the 173rd Airborne Division pauses in tall grass during a sweep as part of Operation Yorktown in Long Khanh province about 40 miles northwest of Saigon. The photo was taken July 4, 1966.”



“Freelance photographer Robert Hodierne with the 173rd Airborne Division during Operation Yorktown in July 1966.”

Source: vietnamphotography.com



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GREG HUGHES, SR. (1949-2011)



Greg Hughes Sr., 61, of Sycamore, IL, died Tuesday, September 20, 2011, in his home surrounded by his family, after a year-long battle with cancer.



Born September 27, 1949, in Sycamore, to Eugene and Laura Francis (Roush) Hughes, Greg was a 1967 graduate of Sycamore High School. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He proudly served his country during the Vietnam War with the 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) from 1967-1970. During his time overseas, he was awarded several medals, including the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Greg was an active member of the Sycamore V.F.W. in which he participated in more 200 military funerals. He was married to Diane Gass on March 28, 1981, at Sycamore Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Diane; seven children, Jenny (Kevin) Beasley, Sarah Braffett, Angie Parnett, Ellen Hughes, Greg (Jenny) Hughes Jr., Raymond Hughes and Alex Hughes; eleven grandchildren; and brother, Randy Hughes. He was predeceased by his parents.

Greg was the rock of his family's foundation and he will be missed by all.

The family expresses a special thanks to DeKalb County Hospice and the Sycamore V.F.W. To share a memory or condolence, visit www.olsonfh.com.

~ Geronimo Brother ~



Rexford "Rex" W. Stickler Captain HHC/2/503d



Rex Stickler, age 75 of Elmira, NY, passed away on Thursday, March 8, 2012.

He was born October 24, 1936, the son of the late Mack and Lila (Lewis) Stickler. He is survived by sisters Esther A. Blew and Joy L. Dugan; also numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; very special friend Pat Benson; and his special companion, his dog "Beebee". He was predeceased by brother Melvin Stickler; sisters, Cleoral Lovell, Bonnielyn King, Evangeline Sease and Thelma Frantellizzi. Rex was a United States Army Veteran of the Vietnam War, having served with distinction with the 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). He enlisted in June of 1958, and joined the Army Paratroopers. He also served in Germany and Korea before his separation from the service in May of 1968. Rex reached the rank of Captain and was awarded two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. Rex opened his own machine Shop, "Sun Machine Shop" in Elmira, NY in 1973; he produced parts for Powers Manufacturing which became Emhart Glass Manufacturing, until his passing. Captain Stickler was interred with Military Honors at Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira, NY



~ Farewell Cap, job well done Brother ~



Honoring a 173d ABN Combat Vet and PTSD Counselor

I was in the waiting room at a VA clinic for my annual physical when I saw a brochure that said "Service to Veterans By Veterans". I asked the receptionist about this and she explained that it was a clinic run by Combat Vets specifically for Combat Vets only, well that got my immediate attention. The brochure went into detail about the services provided by this clinic and as it turned out it was geared specifically to treating combat Vets with symptoms of PTSD.

With 40-some years of burying combat stress from my Viet Nam war experience into the dark recesses of my mind...and not even acknowledging that I had symptoms of PTSD...I was OK...really. I was convinced that I did NOT have PTSD. After all, I was a 173d and a 101st Airborne trooper who sucked it up, manned up, whatever you want to call it. In stark reality, the decades of not facing the PTS Demons was taking a toll and it was finally time to face the music.

With much apprehension I made an appointment for a PTSD assessment at the Combat Vet Center. The waiting area in front had a flat panel and there was a continuous slide show of images from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Viet Nam. There were several showcases full of memorabilia dedicated to the different wars fought. I was met by a "readjustment counselor" who introduced himself as Mike. I followed him into his office with some trepidation.



Sky Soldiers Mike McCawley (L) and Rene "Dutch" Macare

Mike said that he had looked over my records and noticed that I served with "The Herd" in Viet Nam, which is why he chose to help me. I was a bit puzzled until he explained that he also served with the Herd, he had been a combat Medic with the 1st Batt. It turns out that Mike had served in numerous combat deployments with the 173d Airborne Brigade....*Holly Shit, this guy*

had definitely earned his wings the hard way!!! Well needless to say, not only was there an immediate respect for him based on his combat duty, but this guy was a 173d Airborne Sky Soldier to boot!

I had been seeing Mike for almost a year in one-on-one sessions working on identifying the depth of my PTSD and unmasking/managing the symptoms. There were some tough times facing the reality of suppressed combat stress for over 4 decades. When I came in to the early sessions, Mike would ask me *"So how do you feel when you come here to these sessions?"* I did not have to search very long for an answer, it just came right out and I said, *"Mike when I walk in here, I feel immediate relief. I know that I am among fellow Combat Vets who share the same stresses that I have. I do not feel threatened, I do not feel mistrust, and most of all I feel accepted for who I am and what I went through, and that is huge!"*

After close to a year of Mike ferreting out my symptoms and successfully working on managing them, he asked if I would be interested in moving into a group session. He had been working on setting up a new Viet Nam Veteran Group and had enough interest to start very soon. He explained that the intent and main "Mission" of the group would be to discuss current concerns, and share experiences in order to help one another to move forward. He called it a "Longevity Group" focusing on our health and welfare. That made a lot of sense to me as well as the other Vets in the group and within 2 weeks we got the group started.

We are now on session number 10 I believe, and even though I have a full-time job I make the extra effort to not miss a session, it's just *that* important to me. We have learned a lot about ourselves, and have built a great respect for Mike. With his guidance and counseling we have regained our self-respect, and learned how to better manage our individual PTSD manifestations, knowing that it does not go away -- you just learn how to deal with it. It has been a blessing to be a part of a great bunch of Nam Vets with the guidance of Mike McCawley.

One evening as I was online checking my 173d Airborne Brigade Facebook page I ran across a really cool looking set of 173s ABN Challenge Coins that were made by another VN Vet by the name of Paul Fisher. It turned out that Paul was a commo officer on the same base (LZ UPLIFT) in the Central Highlands where I served! What I also learned was the reason why Paul was making these coins...

(continued....)



They were dedicated to honor the service of 173d Airborne combat Vets, and better yet all the proceeds from the sale of these coins were going to various charities, to support the 173d Memorial and to feed and clothe the less fortunate.

Initially I purchased several 3rd Batt coins, one for myself, and I bought one for a Boonie Buddy who fought alongside of me in Viet Nam. The idea then struck me to purchase a 1st Batt coin for Mike as a thank you for his Combat Service with the Herd and also for his PTSD counseling service. I placed my order for a 1st Batt coin, and to my great surprise when the order arrived there was not only the 1st Batt coin but also the beautiful 503rd "ROCK" medallion! The note included from Paul regarding the extra medallion just said, *"We 173d guys honor those who honor fellow Paratroopers"*.



One of Paul Fisher's 1/503 coins presented to Mike

With great pride I presented both the 1st Batt coin and the "Rock" Medallion to Mike at our next counseling session. Mike was quite grateful to receive the coins, and in his humble manner he said, *"You did not have to do this"*. I told him that there are a lot of things in life that one *"does not have to do"* -- but I chose to do this to honor a fellow 173d combat veteran who more than earned these coins. After all, is not our continuing duty to look after our fellow Veteran brothers? I see it as good Karma, Paul Fisher calls it AGAPE....look it up...and practice it with gusto!

Michael McCawley, M.S.W. (I) Readjustment Counseling Specialist, is what his business card reads...but at the end of the day he is a 173d Airborne Sky Trooper.

All The Way!

Bless you Mike & Paul, and Bless all Combat Vets.

Rene "Dutch" Macare
A/3/503d Sky Soldier
Proudly served in Viet Nam '70-'71



Faces of Our Fallen

March 28, 2012

On behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and the First Lady of Virginia, I would like to invite you join us on Tuesday, April 3rd at 11:00 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond to kick-off a partnership to gather photographs and stories of fallen Virginians listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 2009, VVMF launched a national *"Call for Photos"* campaign to put a face with each of the 58,000 names listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. When collected, photos will be displayed for generations to come at The Education Center at The Wall, a place on our National Mall where our military heroes' stories and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

To date, VVMF has collected photographs of only 571 of the 1,306 Virginians listed on The Wall. It's important that the faces and stories of Virginia's lost are remembered and shared with future generations, telling of their commitment and sacrifice during the Vietnam War. Mrs. McDonnell will announce her support for the Call for Photos and her commitment to finding a photo of each of the remaining 735 "faceless" Virginians on The Wall.

I hope you will join Mrs. McDonnell and me in preserving these great legacies. Please RSVP to VVMF's Community Outreach Manager Danielle Schira by email at dschira@vvmf.org or at 202-393-0090, ext. 105.

Thank you for all your support. I look forward to seeing you on April 3rd. If you have a photo of a loved one or fellow veteran whose name is on The Wall, help us honor these individuals by putting a face with their name by bringing it with you.

Sincerely,

Jan C. Scruggs, Esq.
Founder and President
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]



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~ CORRECTIONS ~

Things That Go Boom

Smitty, In the section entitled "This Month in History" on the 9th, 1965 (Issue 38), you say "...*Napalm, a petroleum based anti-personnel bomb that showers hundreds of explosive pellets*"..... I think you are mixing up napalm and CBU's aka "cluster bombs". Might want to check your source on this one. I love getting the newsletter, even though I was in E/17 Cav, not 2/503. Keep up the great work.

Fletcher Coker, MG (Ret)
E/17 Cav

Of course you're right, Fletcher. I cut and paste most of this stuff but some items escape these old eyes when proofing the thing. I guess my third stripe is out of the question? Thanks for the correction General. ATW Ed



Cluster Bombs



Napalm Bombs



Newsletter editor doing pushups

Name on Photo

As usual, another great edition. On my photos, don't know why I didn't catch it first time around, but the one of me in my civies with the two officers and Sgt. Dockery; the officer on the left is Capt. Boykin, not Capt Brown. All rest is okay. Just make that correction for when the final book of photos comes out. Thanks.

Jerry Hassler
Recon/2/503d



CPT Boykin, Sgt. Dockery, SP4 Hassler & LT Shelby

New VN Vet Bumper Sticker

Courtesy of Roger Dick, C/2/503d.



Generally between 1 and 3 p.m. on Tuesdays.
Then we rest.





2/503d Troopers....Where Are They Now?

Wambi Cook was born in Pittsburgh, PA. He studied at Knoxville College via Penn State University, and grad school at the University of Tennessee at



Knoxville. His early working years were in real estate where he sold primarily new inner-city town homes. He relocated to Cleveland, OH and managed a real estate office for a couple years. For twenty-five years he taught in post-secondary education eventually earning a state lifetime certification as a state post-secondary school administrator. He transitioned to public secondary education in 2000 as a high school principal -- a position he expected to hold for no more than a year at best. He is thrice married with five adult daughters and his oldest namesake. *I'm supremely proud of each of my progeny and the successes in their chosen life pursuits. And who've provided me with four of the grandest grandkids a Papi could ask for.* Wambi received his draft notice literally days later. *I could have elected to delay my status because of my young son, but I figured I'd let Uncle Sam pay for my education once I made good on my obligatory two year commitment.* He volunteered for airborne more for the additional \$55 a month than the glory. He was informed upon completing basic at Fort Jackson that his AIT would be at Ft. Gordon. After receiving his jump wings in January of 1967, *there was no question as to where I'd next be residing.* Wambi landed in Vietnam on February 18, 1967 quite aware he'd been assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade. *The who? Never heard of said unit. It was the 101st or nothing for me. Just how do I make it happen? I'd only been in Camp Zinn for a couple days when my attitude about the "Herd" changed. Most of the 2nd Battalion would be returning to the states within the next three months leaving us FNGs to drive on as best we could.* But that wasn't the case: These grizzled vets instinctively knew conditions would only get worse, *and they took us cherries under their wings in hopes of making our next year more tenable. I shall forever be in their debt.* Their mission was clear; *Kick ass and take names. And during the late winter and early spring of 1967, we did just that. Most of us expected similar outcomes once we moved north to the Central Highlands.* The highly trained North Vietnamese regular army thought otherwise. *I witnessed their strategy first-hand on the Slopes that June 22nd and five months later just a few kilometers to our south on Hill 875.* Wambi was wounded on three separate occasions between April and the last time on Mother's Day. He DEROSed one year less seven days, and arrived home on Valentine's Day 1968. *It wasn't until I revisited Vietnam in April 2008 and again in February 2011 that I finally realized what a toll Nam had taken on me. Demons I'd refused to admit ever existed for over 40 years were slowly exorcised from my psyche. Moreover, since I renewed long forgotten relationships within the brotherhood of the 173d Association, my quality of life has appreciably improved.*

Robert D. (Bob) Sweeney, Jr. was born on February 12, 1942. He grew up as an Army Brat and joined the Army in August 1961.



After Basic Training at Ft. Ord, CA he was assigned to the AG school at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana for AIT as a stenographer. Following AIT he was assigned to Hq. Co. OCS Bn. at Ft. Benning, GA as the Company Clerk for 51st OCS Co. Bob applied for, and was accepted for OCS and graduated from 52d Co. OCS in March 1963. From OCS Bob attended ABN School at Ft. Benning and was subsequently assigned to the 2nd Inf. Div. at Ft Benning. After serving as a platoon leader in Co. C, 2nd Bn. 9th Inf., he was transferred to the 173d ABN Bde in Okinawa in early Aug. '65. Upon arriving in Okinawa Bob learned that the 173d ABN Bde had PCSed to Vietnam. When Bob arrived at the 173d ABN BDE in Bien Hoa he was assigned to the 2nd Bn. 503rd and became the Weapons Platoon Leader for Charlie Company, 3rd Bn. After a few months as the Weapons Platoon Leader he became Charlie Co. XO and served as XO until after Op Silver City, at which time he was assigned to HQ&HQ Co. 2nd Bn as the Support Platoon Leader. Bob returned to the States in Aug. '65 and was assigned to Ft. Ord as a Basic Training Company CDR. Bob made a branch transfer to the Signal Corps in 1967 and served in various Signal Corps unit and staff positions throughout his 24 year career. Some of his notable assignments were: Signal Advisor to the Nationalist Chinese Army on the island of Kinmen, Systems Engineer for the Central Army Group-Europe, Communications Systems Control Officer for the Defense Communications Agency, Director, Training Analysis Branch-US Army Signal School at Ft. Gordon, and Project Manager for HQ US European Command's Alternate Command Center. Bob retired as a Lt. Col. in April 1985 while assigned to the World Wide Military Command System Engineering Office in Stuttgart, Germany. He remained in Stuttgart for six years as a Communications Systems Engineer for a civilian company supporting HQ US European Command. Bob returned to the States in June 1990 and soon afterwards he and his wife Barbara started up a "Mom & Pop" antique business which they owned and operated for 12 years. In Jan. '07 they moved to North Augusta, SC, and now live in their new home on the east bank of the Savannah River. Bob and Barbara have been married for 32 years, have a son and daughter and two granddaughters. Bob spends part of his free time playing golf with a group called the Geezers and the rest of his time he and Barbara enjoy the sunsets from their back porch overlooking the Savannah River. Bob continually thanks God for his life in the military and bringing his wife Barbara to him.

2/503 troopers: Send in your before and after pics along with a write-up of what you've been doing over the years. Let your buddies know you're still alive and kicking.



National Veterans Golden Age Games

May 31 – June 5, 2012 - St. Louis, Missouri



About the National Veterans Golden Age Games

Life begins at 55, at least it does for more than 700 Veterans competing in this national event, the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States. It is the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world, offering 14 different sports and recreational activities.



www.va.gov/adaptivesports

Contacts

Event Director

Dewayne Vaughan
(202) 632-7138

Local Host Coordinator

Maura Campbell
(314) 894-6113

Media Contact

Anthony Hardman
(734) 845-5059

Sponsors & Hosts

Presented by VA, Help Hospitalized Veterans and Veterans Canteen Service (VCS), with financial assistance from corporate sponsors and individual donors.



Athletes at the Arch

Registration for the 26th National Veterans Golden Age Games in St. Louis is now open! The Games will be held May 31 – June 5 offering exciting competition for Veterans age 55 and

older who receive care at the VA. NVGAG 2012 is also a qualifying event for the 2013 *National Senior Games*. See you in St. Louis!



~ This Month in History ~

"They were the best of times, they were the worst of times."

April 1965

April: 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) on Okinawa gear-up for 'temporary' duty in Vietnam.



1st: At the White House, President Johnson authorizes sending two more Marine battalions and up to 20,000 logistical personnel to Vietnam. The President also authorizes American combat troops to conduct patrols to root out Viet Cong in the countryside. His decision to allow offensive operations is kept secret from the American press and public for two months.

5th: 37th Academy Awards - *"My Fair Lady,"* Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews win.



Andrews & Harrison

7th: President Johnson delivers his *"Peace Without Conquest"* speech at Johns Hopkins University offering Hanoi *"unconditional discussions"* to stop the war in return for massive economic assistance in modernizing Vietnam. *"Old Ho can't turn that down,"* Johnson privately tells his aides. But Johnson's peace overture is quickly rejected.

13th: Beatles record *"Help"*.

15th: A thousand tons of bombs are dropped on Viet Cong positions by U.S. and South Vietnamese fighter-bombers.

17th: In Washington, 15,000 students gather to protest the U.S. bombing campaign. Student demonstrators will often refer to President Johnson, his advisors, the Pentagon, Washington bureaucrats, and weapons manufacturers, simply as *"the Establishment."*

20th: In Honolulu, Johnson's top aides, including McNamara, Gen. Westmoreland, Gen. Wheeler, William Bundy, and Ambassador Taylor, meet and agree to recommend to the President sending another 40,000 combat soldiers to Vietnam.

20th: People's Republic China offers North Vietnam military aid.

24th: President Johnson announces Americans in Vietnam are eligible for combat pay.

27th: Edward R Murrow, newscaster (*Person to Person*), dies at 57.

28th: US Marines invade Dominican Republic, stay until October 1966.

April 1966

3rd: Tom Seaver, signs with the Mets for a reported \$50,000 bonus.

10th thru 25th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Denver* in the Song Be, Phuoc Long Province, III Corps. This was a search and destroy operation designed to reduce the steady infiltration of VC into War Zone "D". The 173d Abn Bde concentrated on the Song Be Sector. Eagle insertions and show of force patrols in VC areas yielded 34 tons of rice caches and over 2,000 docs.



Operation Denver: American armored personnel carriers transported troops of 1RAR, during Operation Denver, 16 April 1966. (AWM CUN/66/0320/VN)

(continued....)



11th: Emmett Ashford becomes 1st black major league umpire.

12th: B-52 bombers are used for the first time against North Vietnam. Each B-52 carries up to 100 bombs. Target selections are closely supervised by the White House. There are six main target categories; power facilities, war support facilities, transportation lines, military complexes, fuel storage, and air defense installations.



B-52 bomb run over North Vietnam

13th: Viet Cong attack Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon causing 140 casualties while destroying 12 U.S. helicopters and nine aircraft.

28th: 20th NBA Championship: Boston Celtics beat LA Lakers, 4 games to 3.

April 1967

6th: Quang Tri City is attacked by 2500 Viet Cong and NVA.



Quang Tri City looking northeast, fall 1967: the Quang Tri Citadel is at the upper left. Village beyond it; the Thach Han River is in the Center.

8th: Don Michael, C/4/503d, sacrifices his life in combat and is awarded the Medal of Honor:



Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sp4 Michael, U.S. Army, distinguished himself while serving with Company C. Sp4 Michael was part of a platoon which was moving through an area of suspected enemy activity. While the rest of the platoon stopped to provide security, the squad to which Sp4 Michael was assigned moved forward to investigate signs of recent enemy activity. After moving approximately 125 meters, the squad encountered a single Viet Cong soldier. When he was fired upon by the squad's machine gunner, other Viet Cong opened fire with automatic weapons from a well-concealed bunker to the squad's right front. The volume of enemy fire was so withering as to pin down the entire squad and halt all forward movement. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Sp4 Michael exposed himself to throw 2 grenades, but failed to eliminate the enemy position. From his position on the left flank, Sp4 Michael maneuvered forward with 2 more grenades until he was within 20 meters of the enemy bunkers, when he again exposed himself to throw 2 grenades, which failed to detonate. Undaunted, Sp4 Michael made his way back to the friendly positions to obtain more grenades. With 2 grenades in hand, he again started his perilous move towards the enemy bunker, which by this time was under intense artillery fire from friendly positions. As he neared the bunker, an enemy soldier attacked him from a concealed position. Sp4 Michael killed him with his rifle and, in spite of the enemy fire and the exploding artillery rounds, was successful in destroying the enemy positions. Sp4 Michael took up pursuit of the remnants of the retreating enemy. When his comrades reached Sp4 Michael, he had been mortally wounded. His inspiring display of determination and courage saved the lives of many of his comrades and successfully eliminated a destructive enemy force. Sp4 Michael's actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect the utmost credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.



(continued....)



March 20th thru April 13th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts Operation JUNCTION CITY II in Minh Thanh Province. Phase two began with the establishment of fire support bases along Route 13 from Lai Khe to Quan Loi (east of An Loc). A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry came under attack north of the village of Bau Bang. Massed troops of the VC 273rd Regiment erupted out of the rubber plantation, swarming over the ACAVs and tanks on the southeastern perimeter. Calling in artillery support from A/3/319th the VC were destroyed leaving behind 227 killed while the Americans suffered 3 casualties.



18th-30th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Newark* in War Zone "D".



21st: - Josef Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, defects to US.

24th thru May 11th: Hill fights rage at Khe Sanh between U.S. 3rd Marines and the North Vietnamese Army resulting in 940 NVA killed. American losses are 155 killed and 425 wounded. The isolated air base is located in mountainous terrain less than 10 miles from North Vietnam near the border of Laos.

24th: General Westmoreland condemns anti-war demonstrators saying they give the North Vietnamese soldier "*hope that he can win politically that which he cannot accomplish militarily.*" Privately, he has already warned President Johnson "*the war could go on indefinitely.*"

27th: Rocky Marciano retires as undefeated boxing champ.

April 1968

March 30th, '68 thru January 31st, '69: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts Operation *Cochise* in the Bong Son Province.



1st: The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) begins Operation Pegasus to reopen Route 9, the relief route to the besieged Marines at Khe Sanh.

3rd: North Vietnam agrees to meet US reps to set up preliminary peace talks.

4th: Civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis, TN. Racial unrest then erupts in over 100 American cities.



Air drop of supplies in Operation Junction City

14th: Richard M. Nixon visits Saigon and states that anti-war protests back in the U.S. are "*prolonging the war.*"

14th: In the Vietnam War, US planes bombed Haiphong for first time.

15th: Anti-war demonstrations occur in New York and San Francisco involving nearly 200,000. Rev. Martin Luther King declares that the war is undermining President Johnson's Great Society social reform programs, "*...the pursuit of this widened war has narrowed the promised dimensions of the domestic welfare programs, making the poor white and Negro bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home.*"

(continued....)



8th: The siege of Khe Sanh ends with the withdrawal of NVA troops from the area as a result of intensive American bombing and the reopening of Route 9. NVA losses during the siege are estimated up to 15,000. U.S. Marines suffered 199 killed and 830 wounded. 1st Cavalry suffered 92 killed and 629 wounded reopening Route 9. The U.S. command then secretly shuts down the Khe Sanh air base and withdraws the Marines. Commenting on the heroism of U.S. troops that defended Khe Sanh, President Johnson *states* "...they vividly demonstrated to the enemy the utter futility of his attempts to win a military victory in the South." A North Vietnamese official labels the closing of Khe Sanh air base as America's "gravest defeat" so far.

11th: Defense Secretary Clifford announces Gen. Westmoreland's request for 206,000 additional soldiers will not be granted.

11th: President Johnson signs 1968 Civil Rights Act.



President Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act of 1968

23rd: Anti-war activists at Columbia University seize five buildings.

23rd: United Methodist Church forms.

26th: Students seize administration building at Ohio State

27th: In New York, 200,000 students refuse to attend classes as a protest.

30th thru May 3rd: The Battle of Dai Do occurs along the Demilitarized Zone as NVA troops seek to open an invasion corridor into South Vietnam. They are halted by a battalion of U.S. Marines nicknamed "*The Magnificent Bastards*" under the command of Lt. Col. William Weise. Aided by heavy artillery and air strikes, NVA suffer 1568 killed. 81 Marines are killed and 297 wounded. 29 U.S. Army are killed supporting the Marines and 130 wounded. For the time being, this defeat ends North Vietnam's hope of successfully invading the South. They will wait four years, until

1972, before trying again, after most of the Americans have gone. It will actually take seven years, until 1975, for them to succeed.

April 1969

1st February thru 15th April '69: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Darby Crest* in the Crescent of Hoai An District.



1st February thru September 26th, '69: The 75th Infantry, Company N is awarded the *RVN Gallantry Cross w/Palm*, and the *RVN Civil Actions Honor Medal*



3rd: U.S. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announces that the United States will start to "Vietnamize" the war effort.

5th: Massive antiwar demonstrations occur in many U.S. cities.

12th September '68 thru 12th April '69: The 173d Quartermaster Company is awarded the *Meritorious Unit Commendation*.



9th: 300 anti-war students at Harvard University seize the administration building, throw out eight deans, then lock themselves in. They are later forcibly ejected.

15th April '69 thru 1 January '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Washington Green* in the Binh Dinh Province.



15th April '69 thru 16th March '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) RVN, is awarded the *Civil Actions Honor Medal*.



15th: North Korea shoots at US airplane above Japanese sea.

17th: Sirhan Sirhan is convicted of assassinating Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

23rd: Sirhan Sirhan sentenced to death for killing Bobby Kennedy.

(continued....)



24th: US B-52's drop 3,000 ton bombs at Cambodian boundary.

28th: Charles de Gaulle resigns as president of France.

30th: U.S. troop levels peak at 543,400. There have been 33,641 Americans killed by now, a total greater than the Korean War.

April 1970

1st: President Nixon signs bill limiting cigarette advertisements effective 1/1/71.

11th: Apollo 13 launched to Moon; unable to land, returns in 6 days.

20th: President Nixon announces the withdrawal of another 150,000 Americans from Vietnam within a year.

26th: Gypsy Rose Lee, stripper/actress (Pruitts of South Hampton), dies at 56.



29th: 50,000 US & South Vietnamese troops invade Cambodia.

30th: President Nixon stuns Americans by announcing U.S. and South Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia "...not for the purpose of expanding the war into Cambodia but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam and winning the just peace we desire." The announcement generates a tidal wave of protests by politicians, the press, students, professors, clergy

members, business leaders, and many average Americans against Nixon and the Vietnam War. The incursion is in response to continuing Communist gains against Lon Nol's forces and is also intended to weaken overall NVA military strength as a prelude to U.S. departure from Vietnam.

April 1971

March 17th, '71 thru - April 21st, '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Green Sure* in the Binh Dinh Province.



1st: President Nixon orders Calley released pending his appeal.

5th: US Lt William Calley (My Lai Massacre) sentenced to life.

7th: President Nixon orders Lt Calley (Mi Lai) free.

10th: US table tennis team arrives in China PR.

12th: Shannen Doherty, Memphis TN, actress (Little House, Beverly Hills 90210), is born.

14th: President Nixon ends blockade against People's Republic of China.

15th: 43rd Academy Awards - "Patton," George C. Scott and Glenda Jackson win.

19th: 'Vietnam Veterans Against the War' begin a week of nationwide protests.



19th: Charles Manson sentenced to life (Sharon Tate murder).

20th: US Supreme Court upholds use of busing to achieve racial desegregation.

(continued....)



24th: Another mass demonstration is held in Washington attracting nearly 200,000.

28th: Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr, becomes 1st black admiral in US Navy.

29th: Total American deaths in Vietnam surpass 45,000.

April 1972

2nd: In response to the Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon authorizes the U.S. 7th Fleet to target NVA troops massed around the Demilitarized Zone with air strikes and naval gunfire.

2nd: Gil Hodges, Dodgers, then manager of NY Mets, dies of heart attack at 57.

4th: In a further response to Eastertide, President Nixon authorizes a massive bombing campaign targeting all NVA troops invading South Vietnam along with B-52 air strikes against North Vietnam. *"The bastards have never been bombed like they're going to be bombed this time,"* Nixon privately declares.



5th: Baseball season is delayed due to a strike.

9th: 36th Golf Masters Championship. Jack Nicklaus wins, shooting a 286.

10th: Heavy B-52 bombardments ranging 145 miles into North Vietnam begin.

10th: US, USSR & 70 other nations agree to ban biological weapons.

12th: NVA Eastertide attack on Kontum begins in central South Vietnam. If the attack succeeds, South Vietnam will effectively be cut in two.

15th: Hanoi and Haiphong harbor are bombed by the U.S.

15th thru 20th: Protests against the bombings erupt in America.

19th: NVA Eastertide attack on An Loc begins.

19th: USS Higbee attacked by North Vietnamese MIG-17.

Pacific Stars & Stripes Saturday, April 22, 1972

DAN NANG, Vietnam (AP) – *"MIG coming! MIG coming!"* yelled the lookout, and seconds later the afterdeck of the destroyer Higbee was aflame. The North Vietnamese jet dropped a 250-pound bomb onto the deck of the destroyer, wounding four seamen and destroying a gun mount that housed two 5-inch guns. The U.S. Command said at least three enemy jets attacked an American task force in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam late Wednesday afternoon. The command said one of the planes was shot down, two enemy torpedo boats were believed sunk and shrapnel from shore battery fire caused minor damage on the cruiser Oklahoma City, the flagship of the 7th Fleet.

Capt. Ronald Zuilkoski, skipper of the Higbee, said the MIG attacked his ship at least twice before the bomb hit the deck. *"In the first two passes, bombs fell left and right of the ship,"* he said, *"but on the third try one hit the deck and exploded under the mount. She flew so low over the deck that you could see everything."* Luckily the gun mount was empty, the 12-man gun crew having been ordered out while a round stuck in one of the barrels was hosed down to keep it from exploding. But three men in the ammunition storage compartment under the mount were wounded. Other men pulled them out as the ammunition began to explode.



"Le Xuan (left) shows how he attacked the destroyer USS Higbee on April 19, 1972 with 2 bombs of 250 kgs with his MIG-17. Nguyen Van Bay (right) hit the USS Oklahoma City in the same attack, but caused only slight damage to the ship."

(continued....)



27th: Paris peace talks resume.

30th: "Arthur Godfrey Time" ends a 27 year run on radio.

30th: U.S. troop levels drop to 69,000.

April 1973

April '73: President Nixon and President Thieu meet at San Clemente, California. Nixon renews his earlier secret pledge to respond militarily if North Vietnam violates the peace agreement.

1st: Captain Robert White, the last known American POW is released. *On March 29, 1973, the Viet Cong announced that White was to be released on April 1. He was the last American in the repatriation program dubbed "Operation Homecoming". In his debrief, Capt. White reported that he was held with Graf in various prison camps until late January 1970, when Graf escaped with another POW. Before his release, the National Liberation Front area commander told White to inform the U.S. authorities that Graf had drowned during an escape attempt in February 1970. Former residents of this area also reported this story to officials and that his remains were buried in the Long Toan area.*

1st: Rachel Maddow, American radio personality and political analyst is born.

8th: Pablo (Ruiz y) Picasso, Spanish/French painter (Guernica), dies at 91.

12th: France recognizes North Vietnam.

30th: The Watergate scandal results in the resignation of top Nixon aides H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

April 1974



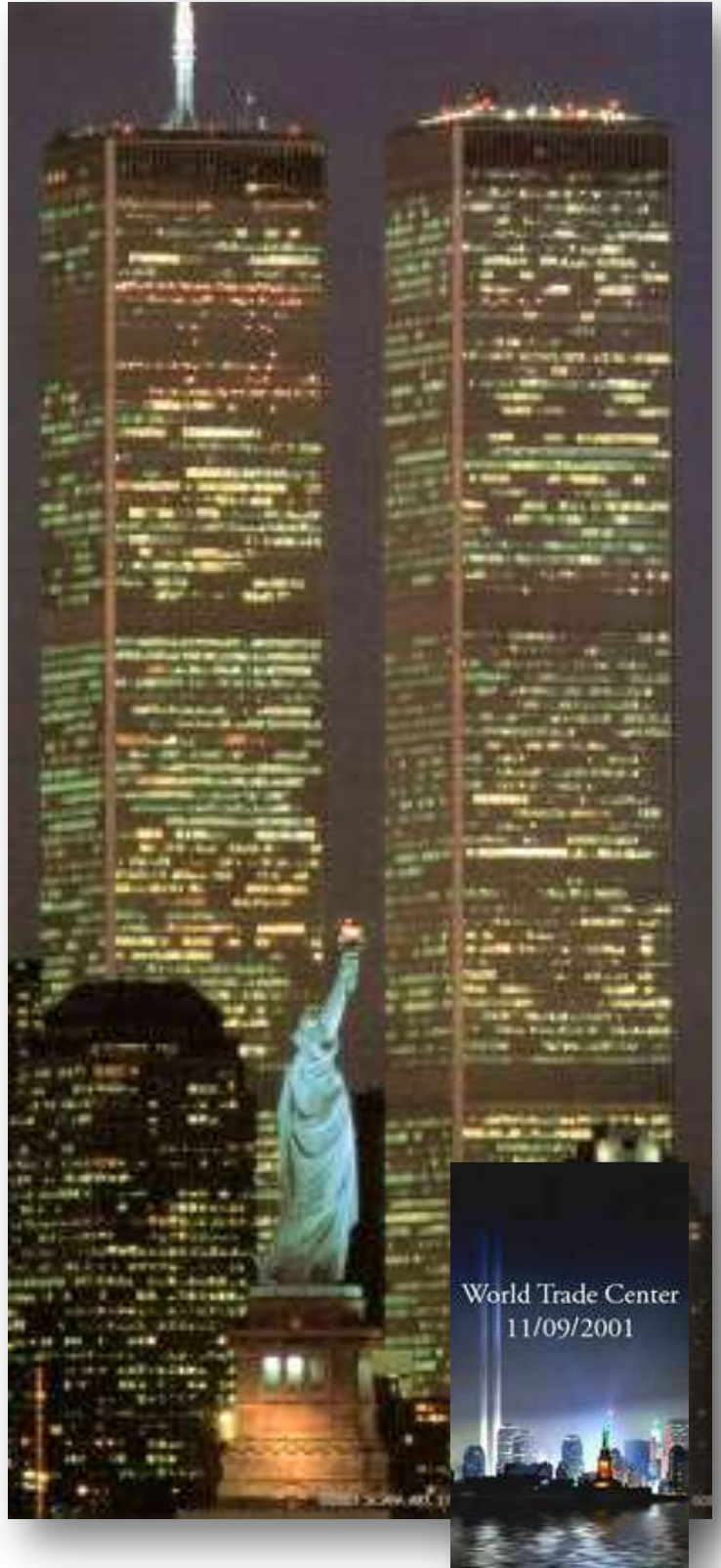
(Walter Looss, Jr. photo)

1st: Ayatollah Khomeini calls for an Islamic Republic in Iran.

4th: Hank Aaron ties Babe Ruth's home-run record by hitting his 714th.

Hammerin' Hank tying the Babe's record in '74 opener.

5th: Then tallest building, World Trade Center opens in NYC (110 stories).



11th: WWII war criminal JP Philippa arrested.

(continued....)



24th: Bud Abbott, comedian (Abbott & Costello), dies at 78.

Who's On First?



Abbott: Well Costello, I'm going to New York with you. You know Bucky Harris, the Yankee's manager, gave me a job as coach for as long as you're on the team.
Costello: Look Abbott, if you're the coach, you must know all the players.

Abbott: I certainly do.

Costello: Well you know I've never met the guys. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing on the team.

Abbott: Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players now-a-days very peculiar names.

Costello: You mean funny names?

Abbott: Strange names, pet names...like Dizzy Dean...

Costello: His brother Daffy.

Abbott: Daffy Dean...

Costello: And their French cousin.

Abbott: French?

Costello: Goofè.

Abbott: Goofè Dean. Well, let's see, we have on the bags, Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third...

Costello: That's what I want to find out.

Abbott: I say Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third.

Costello: Are you the manager?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: You gonna be the coach too?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: And you don't know the fellows' names?

Abbott: Well I should.

Costello: Well then who's on first?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: I mean the fellow's name.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy on first.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The first baseman.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing...

Abbott: Who is on first!

Costello: I'm asking YOU who's on first.

Abbott: That's the man's name.

Costello: That's who's name?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: Well go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: That's who?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Costello: Look, you gotta first baseman?

Abbott: Certainly.

Costello: Who's playing first?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: When you pay off the first baseman every month, who gets the money?

Abbott: Every dollar of it.

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is the fellow's name on first base.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy that gets...

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: Who gets the money...

Abbott: He does, every dollar. Sometimes his wife comes down and collects it.

Costello: Whose wife?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Abbott: What's wrong with that?

Costello: Look, all I wanna know is when you sign up the first baseman, how does he sign his name?

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: How does he sign...

Abbott: That's how he signs it.

Costello: Who?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is what's the guy's name on first base.

Abbott: No. What is on second base.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: One base at a time!

Abbott: Well, don't change the players around.

Costello: I'm not changing nobody!

Abbott: Take it easy, buddy.

Costello: I'm only asking you, who's the guy on first base?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: Ok.

Abbott: All right.

PAUSE

Costello: What's the guy's name on first base?

Abbott: No. What is on second.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: I don't know.

Abbott: He's on third, we're not talking about him.

Costello: Now how did I get on third base?

(continued)



Abbott: Why you mentioned his name.
 Costello: If I mentioned the third baseman's name, who did I say is playing third?
 Abbott: No. Who's playing first.
 Costello: What's on first?
 Abbott: What's on second.
 Costello: I don't know.
 Abbott: He's on third.
 Costello: There I go, back on third again!
 PAUSE
 Costello: Would you just stay on third base and don't go off it.
 Abbott: All right, what do you want to know?
 Costello: Now who's playing third base?
 Abbott: Why do you insist on putting Who on third base?
 Costello: What am I putting on third.
 Abbott: No. What is on second.
 Costello: You don't want who on second?
 Abbott: Who is on first.
 Costello: I don't know.
 Abbott & Costello Together:
 Third base!
 PAUSE
 Costello: Look, you gotta outfield?
 Abbott: Sure.
 Costello: The left fielder's name?
 Abbott: Why.
 Costello: I just thought I'd ask you.
 Abbott: Well, I just thought I'd tell ya.
 Costello: Then tell me who's playing left field.
 Abbott: Who's playing first.
 Costello: I'm not... stay out of the infield! I want to know what's the guy's name in left field?
 Abbott: No, What is on second.
 Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.
 Abbott: Who's on first!
 Costello: I don't know.
 Abbott & Costello Together:
 Third base!
 PAUSE
 Costello: The left fielder's name?

Abbott: Why.
 Costello: Because!
 Abbott: Oh, he's centerfield.
 PAUSE
 Costello: Look, You gotta pitcher on this team?
 Abbott: Sure.
 Costello: The pitcher's name?
 Abbott: Tomorrow.
 Costello: You don't want to tell me today?
 Abbott: I'm telling you now.
 Costello: Then go ahead.
 Abbott: Tomorrow!
 Costello: What time?
 Abbott: What time what?
 Costello: What time tomorrow are you gonna tell me who's pitching?
 Abbott: Now listen. Who is not pitching.
 Costello: I'll break your arm, you say who's on first! I want to know what's the pitcher's name?
 Abbott: What's on second.
 Costello: I don't know.
 Abbott & Costello Together:
 Third base!
 PAUSE
 Costello: Gotta a catcher?
 Abbott: Certainly.
 Costello: The catcher's name?
 Abbott: Today.
 Costello: Today, and tomorrow's pitching.
 Abbott: Now you've got it.
 Costello: All we got is a couple of days on the team.
 PAUSE
 Costello: You know I'm a catcher too.
 Abbott: So they tell me.
 Costello: I get behind the plate to do some fancy catching, Tomorrow's pitching on my team and a heavy hitter gets up. Now the heavy hitter bunts the ball. When he bunts the ball, me, being a good catcher, I'm gonna throw the guy out at first base. So I pick up the ball and throw it to who?
 Abbott: Now that's the first thing you've said right.
 Costello: I don't even know what I'm talking about!
 PAUSE

Abbott: That's all you have to do.
 Costello: Is to throw the ball to first base.
 Abbott: Yes!
 Costello: Now who's got it?
 Abbott: Naturally.
 PAUSE
 Costello: Look, if I throw the ball to first base, somebody's gotta get it. Now who has it?
 Abbott: Naturally.
 Costello: Who?
 Abbott: Naturally.
 Costello: Naturally?
 Abbott: Naturally.
 Costello: So I pick up the ball and I throw it to Naturally.
 Abbott: No you don't, you throw the ball to Who.
 Costello: Naturally.
 Abbott: That's different.
 Costello: That's what I said.
 Abbott: You're not saying it...
 Costello: I throw the ball to Naturally.
 Abbott: You throw it to Who.
 Costello: Naturally.
 Abbott: That's it.
 Costello: That's what I said!
 Abbott: You ask me.
 Costello: I throw the ball to who?
 Abbott: Naturally.
 Costello: Now you ask me.
 Abbott: You throw the ball to Who?
 Costello: Naturally.
 Abbott: That's it.
 Costello: Same as you! Same as YOU! I throw the ball to who. Whoever it is drops the ball and the guy runs to second. Who picks up the ball and throws it to What. What throws it to I Don't Know. I Don't Know throws it back to Tomorrow, Triple play. Another guy gets up and hits a long fly ball to Because. Why? I don't know! He's on third and I don't give a damn!
 Abbott: What?
 Costello: I said I don't give a damn!
 Abbott: Oh, that's our shortstop.



25th: NFL moves goal posts and adopts sudden-death playoff.

27th thru May 2nd: The Battle of Svay Rieng as the last major operation of the Vietnam War to be mounted by the South Vietnamese army against the Communist VPA forces.

30th: President Nixon hands over partial transcripts of Watergate tape recordings.

April 1975

2nd: Thousands of civilian refugees flee from the Quang Ngai Province in front of advancing North Vietnamese troops.

4th: 130 killed as USAF plane evacuating Vietnamese orphans crashes.

6th: Chiang Kai-Shek, Nationalist Chinese leader, dies at 87.

9th: NVA close in on Xuan Loc, 38 miles from Saigon. 40,000 NVA attack the city and for the first time encounter stiff resistance from South Vietnamese troops.



South Vietnamese troops displaying captured communist flags after a victorious battle at Xuan Loc in April 1975.

17th: Khmer Rouge captures Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Kampuchea National Day).

20th: U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin meets with President Thieu and pressures him to resign given the gravity of the situation and the unlikelihood that Thieu could ever negotiate with the Communists.

21st: A bitter, tearful President Thieu resigns during a 90 minute rambling TV speech to the people of South Vietnam. Thieu reads from the letter sent by Nixon in 1972 pledging "severe retaliatory action" if South Vietnam was threatened. Thieu condemns the Paris Peace Accords, Henry Kissinger and the U.S. "The United States has not respected its promises. It is inhumane. It is untrustworthy. It is irresponsible." He is then ushered into exile in Taiwan, aided by the CIA.

22nd: Xuan Loc falls to the NVA after a two week battle with South Vietnam's 18th Army Division which inflicted over 5000 NVA casualties and delayed the 'Ho Chi Minh Campaign' for two weeks.



Civilians fleeing Xuan Loc

23rd: 100,000 NVA soldiers advance on Saigon which is now overflowing with refugees. On this same day, President Ford gives a speech at Tulane University stating the conflict in Vietnam is "a war that is finished as far as America is concerned."

27th: Saigon is encircled. 30,000 South Vietnamese soldiers are inside the city but are leaderless. NVA fire rockets into downtown civilian areas as the city erupts into chaos and widespread looting.



...miles northeast of Saigon moments before the NVA/Viet Cong overran it. (picturehistory.blogspot.com)

28th: 'Neutralist' General Duong Van "Big" Minh becomes the new president of South Vietnam and appeals for a cease-fire. His appeal is ignored.

(continued....)





Photo of a ship at sea. To free up space for evacuation flights from Saigon, choppers are thrown overboard.
(picturehistory.blogspot.com)

29th: NVA shell Tan Son Nhut air base in Saigon, killing two U.S. Marines at the compound gate. Conditions then deteriorate as South Vietnamese civilians loot the air base. President Ford now orders *Operation Frequent Wind*, the helicopter evacuation of 7000 Americans and South Vietnamese from Saigon, which begins with the radio broadcast of the song "*White Christmas*" as a pre-arranged code signal. At Tan Son Nhut, frantic civilians begin swarming the helicopters. The evacuation is then shifted to the walled-in American embassy, which is secured by U.S. Marines in full combat gear. But the scene there also deteriorates, as thousands of civilians attempt to get into the compound. Three U.S. aircraft carriers stand-by off the coast of Vietnam to handle incoming Americans and South Vietnamese refugees. Many South Vietnamese pilots also land on the carriers, flying American-made helicopters which are then pushed overboard to make room for more arrivals. Filmed footage of the \$250,000 choppers being tossed into the sea becomes an enduring image of the war's end.



29th: William Craig Nystul, CPT, and 1LT Mike Shea, two of last US Marines killed in Vietnam.

KIA, SAR CREW FLEW INTO WATER AFTER NORMAL CARRIER WAVE-OFF ON DARK NIGHT, CRASHED INTO SOUTH CHINA SEA

"It was late on the night of the 29th and well into the operation when the CH-46 SAR helicopter crashed into the South China Sea alongside of the Hancock. It was tragic to say the least. Both the pilot, Capt. Bill Nystul and co-pilot 1LT Mike Shea were lost at sea. The other 2 enlisted crewman were rescued (that in itself involved tremendous heroism on the part of Capt. Steve Haley and 1LT Dean Koontz breaking off on deck refueling and executing a night water landing and taxiing around to pickup the 2 survivors). The tragedy is that Bill was a new WestPac arrival to Okinawa when we deployed with all the remaining H-46's and UH-1E's from Futenma [Okinawa]. He had just completed schooling and was re-famming in the H-46. Mike, as I remember, was a CH-53 co-pilot. This is the combination that was orbiting the ship for 4-5 hours and was coming aboard to refuel and launch again! The final approach was waved off, and on downwind (pitch black) they flew into the water with no apparent awareness that it was happening. They did not make any distress call or respond to frantic calls from pri-fly!! The next evening we held the traditional burial at sea service without recovering the remains. The crash site was located in 65 feet of water, but because of the immense political pressures to vacate the area, no attempt for recovery was made. I am positive, according to the time schedule I alluded to, that these 2 Marines were the final Marine casualties of the Vietnam War."

CHIC SCHOENER
Squadron pilot, eyewitness

30th: At 8:35 a.m., the last Americans, ten Marines from the embassy, depart Saigon, concluding the United States presence in Vietnam. North Vietnamese troops pour into Saigon and encounter little resistance. By 11 a.m., the red and blue Viet Cong flag flies from the presidential palace. President Minh broadcasts a message of unconditional surrender. *The war is over.*



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



A Company 2/327, 101st Airborne, Vietnam Veterans 2012 Gathering, April 26 - 28, 2012, The Marten House Hotel, Indianapolis, IN,

Contact:
Dennis Sheridan
Phn: 817-504-1750



2012 Currahee Reunion, 3rd Battalion 506th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), May 2 - 5, 2012, Hilton Garden Inn, Columbus, GA

Contact:
Hoyt Bruce Moore, III
Web: www.506infantry.org/reunion.htm



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See early notice on Pages 35-39.

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



Recon, HHC, 2/503 '66-'67 is having a reunion in Lexington, Kentucky the same days as the 173d Association annual reunion next June. More to follow.

Contact:
Jerry Hassler
Eml: hassler173@juno.com



4/503d Reunion, Friday, June 8, 2012. We're going to do it during the annual 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY. Jerry Downard, Donnie Farmer and Joe Flesch are taking the lead. More later, but mark your Calendar.



Casper Platoon Reunion 2012, June 28 - 30 & July 1, 2012, Hilton San Francisco Financial District, San Francisco, CA

Contact:
Steve Greene, Reunion Chairman
Web: greenaire@mac.com



56th Annual Reunion of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, September 23 - 26, 2012, Holiday Inn, Richmond Intl. Airport, Sandston, VA.

Contact:
Nancy Young, Secretary
youngncy@comcast.net

~ Other Reunions ~

Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion, April 26-29, 2012, Wickham Park, Melbourne, FL. See Page 42 for details.

Contact:
Phn: 321-501-6896
Eml: vets2gether@cfl.rr.com

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

ACTUNG!

LOOK FOR DETAILS IN FUTURE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER FOR THE THIRD 2/503d REUNION TO BE HELD IN COCOA BEACH, FLORIDA. START SAVING YOUR P's FOR...

"2ND BAT ON THE BEACH"



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
1300 – 1600 Operation Corregidor II, Kentucky Theatre



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 _____) ☐ Incl
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 / April 2012 – Issue 39

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OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

Midwest Chapter 17 is proud to announce we have invited five paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought throughout the Pacific during WWII to attend this 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, honoring these men.

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 also attending our reunion this coming June and meeting these troopers personally and attending the WWII interactive presentations.

To date we've raised about 2/3 of the funds needed to cover the cost associated with inviting five 503rd troopers and their spouses or a family member to the reunion. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rto173d@cfl.rr.com for details, or use the form on the following page to send in your donation -- please don't contribute if you're having financial difficulties.

As of now these Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d and 503rd have made contributions. Our thanks to each of you! *Airborne!!*

Steve Aballa, 2/503 Ron Amyot, 2/503
Ed Anthony, 172d Mid John Arnold, 1RAR
Jim Baskin, 4/503 Bob Beemer, 2/503
Kane Benson, 1/503 Jerry Berry, 4/503
Pat Bowe, 2/503 Wayne Bowers, 2/503
Bravo Bulls, 2/503 Jim Brookmiller, 4/503
Bob Bruce, 1/503 Bob Carmichael, 2/503
Leta Carruth, 2/503 Friend Mark Carter, 173d LRRP
Chapter 27, Australia Chapter 30, 173d
Bob Clark, 5th SF Harry Cleland, 2/503

Honoring Our WWII 503rd Troopers

John Cleland, 173d Bde Dave Colbert, 2/503
Jim Cole, 2/503 Art Coogler, 1/503
Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP Gary Davidson, 2/503
Terry Davis, 2/503 Mike de Gyurky 2/503
Bruce Demboski, C/2/503 George Dexter, 2/503
Roger Dick, 2/503 Tom Dooley, 2/503
Joe Drabin, 2/503 Jim Dresser, 2/503
Frank Dukes, 2/503 Tony Esposito, 2/503
Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn Pat Feely, B Med
Paul Fisher, 3/503 Craig Ford, 1/503
Joe Franklin, 173d Bde Jim Frelak, Cowboys
A.B. Garcia, 2/503 Tony Geishauser, Cowboys
Jim Gettel, 2/503 Larry Goff, 173d
Johnny Graham, 2/503 Jim Green, 2/503
Bernie Griffard, 2/503 Frank Guerrero, 4/503
Steve Haber, 2/503 Eddie Hair, 1/503
Larry Hampton, 1/503 Tom Hanson, 3/503
Bill Harlan, 2/503 Mike Harris, 2/503
Matt Harrison, 2/503 Jerry Hassler, 2/503
Hank Hatch, 2/503 Eng. Dennis Hill, 1/503, 3/503
Vince Hoang, SVAF Dick Holt, 2/503
Nick Hun, 2/503 Johnny Jones, 2/503
Peter Kacerguls, 3/503 Ken Kaplan, 2/503
Ed Kearney, 2/503 Jack Kelley, 2/503
Dave Kies, 2/503 Bill Knapp, 2/503
Bobby Kohaya, 2/503 Gary Kozdron, 1/503
John Kyne, 2/503 Joe Lamb, 2/503
David Leung, 1/503 Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503
Joe Logan, 2/503 Roy Lombardo, 2/503
Bob Lucas, 2/503 Richard Martinez, 2/503
Tom McGall, 101st Pat McShane, 173d
Bill Metheny, 4/503 Mark Mitchell, 2/503
Jim Montague, 2/503 Butch Nery, 4/503, N75
Bill Nicholls, 2/503 Joe Nigro, 101st
Hal Nobles, 3/503 Bill Ostlund, 173d
Jack Owens, 2/503 Larry Paladino, 2/503
Ed Perkins, 2/503 Lou Pincock, 2/503
Jack Price, 2/503 Gary Prisk, 2/503
Dan Reed, 2/503 Bill Reynolds, 2/503
Jack Ribera, 2/503 Jim Robinson, 2/503
Lee Robinson, 2/503 Graham Rollings, 2/503
Marjorie Royer, 173d Friend Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Roy Scott, 3/319 Bill Shippey, 2/503 N75
Steve Skolochenko, D Maint Ken Smith, 2/503
Lew Smith, 2/503 Jerry Sopko, 4/503
Larry Speed, 1/503 Jim Stanford, 2/503
George Stapleton, 3/503 Kaiser Sterbinsky, 2/503
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

All The Way!





~ OPERATION CORREGIDOR II ~



Honoring our WWII 503rd Paratroopers at 173d Reunion in Lexington

Yes! I am honored to support bringing to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association's annual reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of our Brigade, paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought in the Pacific during WWII.

My name:_____ Unit:_____

To help offset the cost for this, enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____.

Please add to note line "503rd Guest Donation" and mail check payable to:

Midwest Chapter 17

P.O. Box 09640

Columbus, OH 43209

Note: Your donation, not to exceed \$100., will be used to help defray the cost of hotel rooms, reunion registrations and special gifts to our 503rd PRCT guests on behalf of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep).



L-R: WWII 503rd PRCT troopers who attended the Myrtle Beach Reunion in 2010 as guests of our Brigade: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charlie Hylton, the late Paul Hinds and John Cleland.



Chuck teaching lyrics to *Blood on the Risers* to 1st Bat's Craig Ford in SC.



Charlie ready to burst out in song before doing a mean Texas 2 Step.



You could hear a pin drop as Chet told of his PLF on *The Rock*.



Honoring those 503rd super troopers at 173d reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC, 2010.



"Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure"

~ President Abraham Lincoln





~ Operation Corregidor II ~

During our 173d reunion this coming June in Lexington, KY, the Chapter 17 reunion steering committee has secured the *Kentucky Theatre* just a couple blocks from reunion central at the Hyatt Hotel, to serve as site for *Operation Corregidor II*, the interactive meeting with WWII 503rd troopers; *Operation Corregidor I* having been held in N. Myrtle Beach at our 2010 reunion, and *Operation Corregidor* having been held in Corregidor in 1945. This historic building will be ideal for this gathering of paratrooper warriors and their families. Chapter 17 is even providing popcorn and cold drinks!

More than just a movie house...

The Kentucky Theatre is a familiar Landmark to generations of Lexingtonians. It's richly ornamented walls and glowing stained glass fixtures have hosted gala events and entertained overflowing crowds. They have also endured hard times and disasters, both natural and manmade. And so it stands today, a true palace of memories, a hall full of comedy, tragedy, drama, adventure, and just plain fun.

We hope you enjoy this brief look at her history and join us soon to continue the tradition by making some memories of your own.



Publicity stunt for an early "talkie" featuring The Marx Brothers. (Courtesy, University of Kentucky Photo Archives)

1965

The Sound of Music. Thousands lined up daily to see this summer's timeless hit.



The present Kentucky Theatre auditorium

(by Lee P. Thomas)



Operation Corregidor II
coming soon to
the Kentucky



The concession area
(by Raymond Adams)



October, 1921

Construction plans announced. The Builder, Lafayette Amusement Company offered \$20 in gold to name Lexington's "palatial new photoplay house".

The winner, of course, was the "Kentucky."

April 24, 1927

Enter the "talkies". In a major marketing coup, the Kentucky was the first to introduce Warner Brothers' vitaphone sound films to Lexington.

~ For The Love of a Sky Soldier ~
*The only thing harder than being a soldier,
is loving one.*

Dear 173rd,

I am enclosing photos of my fiancé Leonard A. Lanzarin. He went by Larry. These photos are from 1969-1970. He was and is the love of my life. We were both so excited about our wedding day but that was not to come to pass. I think about him every day. He died November 4, 1970. Amongst the many writings and doodles on his bedroom wall he wrote:

*“The time has come for me to change
from what I am to what I am going to
be, and from thereafter the world will
see me.”*

Little did we know. Do with these photos as you wish. My part is done. I am letting the world see him. He was with A CO, 2/503 Infantry, 173rd ABN BDE.

Sincerely,

Melinda Valle
melogg@sbcglobal.net

Am I the only one coming out of the woodwork after all this time?

Dear Melinda:

No, my dear, you are not the only one. In fact, you are with many as they are with you, and you are in the best of company.

Leonard Allan Lanzarin

Specialist Four

A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY

173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

San Francisco, California

June 26, 1950 to November 4, 1970

LEONARD A LANZARIN

is on the Wall at Panel 06W Line 039



Larry





WH: Compensation Due Some Troops In Foreclosure

March 6, 2012

by Bryant Jordan

Last month's settlement between the government and major banks means servicemembers who were wrongly foreclosed upon will be "substantially compensated for what the bank did to you and your family," President Barack Obama announced Tuesday.

"And if you are a member of the armed forces with a high interest rate and you were not allowed to lower it while on active service -- which the banks are required to do by law -- the banks will refund you the money you would have saved, along with substantial penalty," Obama said.

February's settlement includes several specific provisions for servicemembers and veterans. These include relief for servicemembers who were forced to sell their homes for less than the amount they owed due to a permanent change in station; extending certain foreclosure protections afforded under the *Service-member Civil Relief Act* to troops serving in a combat theater; and a requirement that banks pay \$10 million into a Department of Veterans Affairs fund that guarantees loans for vets.

More from Military.com

Assisted Living House and VA Benefits... directvaloans.com

If a home in an assisted living community is what you need, then it's possible that veterans' benefits can help.

Homes in assisted living communities are often for sale rather than rent. VA borrowers with assisted living needs may be able to get a VA-guaranteed mortgage to finance a property located in an assisted living community.

As long as the property meets VA requirements for acceptable use, then it can be considered for VA financing. For instance, condos and townhomes must be on the VA-approved list, and all properties must undergo a VA appraisal and provide safe living conditions.

Qualified veterans or surviving spouses with assisted living needs may purchase approved homes in assisted living communities using the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, and there may be additional VA benefits available.

Through an underutilized VA benefit called ***Aid and Attendance***, wartime veterans and surviving spouses can receive reimbursement for in-home care. Those who are unable to feed and dress themselves and take care of bathing and other bodily needs without assistance, and those who are bedridden or need help with prosthetic or orthopedic devices, may qualify for the Aid and Attendance benefit. Also, those with physical or mental injuries or illnesses that may require assistance to protect them from daily environmental hazards or dangers may also qualify.

The annual income threshold for Aid and Attendance is currently \$18,234 for a veteran with no dependents. Those with one dependent can make \$21,615 and still qualify. For each additional dependent, the threshold is upped by \$1,866. For surviving spouses with no dependents, the annual Aid and Attendance threshold is \$11,715. For spouses with one dependent, the threshold is \$13,976 and increases by \$1,866 for each additional dependent.

The advantages of buying a home using a VA loan include:

- No money down up to conforming loan limits
- No monthly private mortgage insurance
- premiums No prepayment penalties
- Competitive interest rates

For more information about purchasing a home in an assisted-living community using a VA-guaranteed loan contact a VA specialty lender.



Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard Presents:

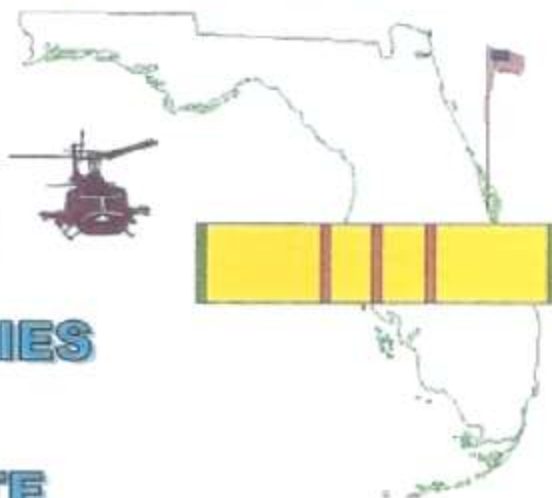
Florida's 25th Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion

The Nations Largest Veterans Reunion
Supported by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.- VVOF.org

April 26 – 29, 2012

Additionally, come visit The Vietnam Traveling Memorial WALL April 22-29, 2012

LIVE MUSIC
FOOD & DRINKS
MILITARY VENDORS
MILITARY DISPLAYS
POW / MIA CEREMONIES
THE LAST PATROL
THE MOVING TRIBUTE



Also visit the Reunion Web Page at:
floridaveteransreunion.com

Meet Your Vet Brothers & Sisters
All Veterans, Families and Public Invited

Wickham Park
321-255-4307 - Melbourne, FL
Take I-95 to Exit 191 or old Exit 73
No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed
in the Reunion Area

Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted
for the Handicapped Only And Must
Abide By FL Highway Laws

Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
<http://travelingwall.us>

Vietnam and All Veterans of
Brevard, Inc
PO Box 237225
Cocoa, FL 32923-7225



Call For Info:

321-501-6896
321-427-2843
Fax (321) 690-0106

vets2gether@cfl.rr.com
Daydrmr333@aol.com

Vendor Information:
dmwassmer@yahoo.com





INCOMING!



~ A Small Herd World ~

Last night I was sitting in a bar about 30 miles from the U.S. border talking with a guy. The 'army' came up and we had a few words. A guy sitting a few seats down said, "I hear you were in the army." He said me too. I asked who he had served with. He said the 173d. Well, I moved seats and we had a few. He had been in the 3rd Bat and came back with them to Campbell. I have another friend now.

Ron Thomas
173d LRRP

~ About the Jump ~

It was 45 years ago today, 22 Feb 1967, that the 2nd Bn made its jump in Op Junction City. To all of the "We Try Harder" battalion in your network, I will raise a toast to all of them, especially to my Bravo Bulls.

Ken Kaplan
CO B/2/503d

Operation Junction City; the one o'clock position near the Cambodian border. Has it REALLY been that long?

Barry 'slo' Salant
D/2/503d

Wondering if you were going to have anything about the 45th anniversary of the Combat Jump? Hopefully there are still many of us alive that made that jump. It would be nice to know how many of us are left. Just an idea for the February newsletter. Airborne,

Steve Wilby
HHC/2/503d

*Hi Steve: February newsletter went out at the end of January with only brief reference to the combat jump. We featured the jump in an earlier edition, see **February 2011, Issue 24, Pages 13-16**. The March newsletter is being sent today and tomorrow. Will likely return to the jump in a future issue. Thanks bro. Ed*



~ The Hammer ~

I ran into 1SGT Jackson at the Fort Dix Commissary this morning. I saw the 173d on his hat and asked what unit. He said C/2/503rd, '63 to '66. I said "You were with 1SG Jackson's unit." He said, "I am 1SG Jackson." We then had a big hug. He's looking good and still getting out there.

Joe Logan
B/2/503d



Desmond Jackson

Drop for 20 Joe.

~ 3/503 Luncheon Scheduled ~

Make a note on your calendars: The 3rd Batt in coordination with the National Reunion activities will be holding a Luncheon on 7 Jun 2012 at 11:30 in the Blue Fire Grill in the Hyatt, our reunion hotel in Lexington, KY. The reservation has been made with Emily Dowd, Senior Convention Services Manager, for 30-50 possible attendees with arrangement made for us to order off the existing menu. The prices are really fair.

I will be bringing a Echo Co Guidon. Paul Fisher tells me he will have one for HHC. Don't know at this point whether Mike Switzer will be present with Charlie Co's Guidon and or if Eldon Meade will there with his Charlie Co. We just might have two for Co C.



Now - is there anyone out there in A, B or D with some Airborne Esprit De Corps who might be interested in obtaining and bringing your Guidon? If so, I purchased mine at Benning Awards. It is the real deal. I keep mine on my "I love Me Wall" at home except for when it is at the Reunions.

Mason Branstetter
Nov Plt, D/3/503 Apr-Jun 70
TOC Dty O, Jun-Oct 70
E Co, 3/503 Oct 70 - Apr 71
503.873.3545
mason@silvertonrealty.com



Do you miss it?

Author Unknown

Occasionally, I venture back to one or another military post, where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, *"Have a good day, Sir!"*

Every time I go back to any Military Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.



The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced -- a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their uniforms, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business -- especially in times of war. But, I miss the salutes I'd throw at senior officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed with a *"by-your-leave"* sir.

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds.

I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.



2/503 Chargin' Charlies at Zinn....*hurry up and wait.*

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

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

Face it - we miss it.....Whether you had one tour or a career, it shaped your life.

[Sent in by Ken Redding & John "Sulli" Sullivan, HHC/2/503d]



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GLIMPSES OF A WAR

GIs Go 'Digging' in Iron Triangle

By Leon Daniel
United Press International
The Miami Herald
January 29, 1967

SAIGON – Fourteen months ago a U.S. general said confidently,

“The Iron Triangle is no more.”

Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, who at the time was commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, believed that his paratroopers had once and for all denied the Viet Cong their traditional sanctuary only 20 miles northwest of Saigon.

The general was wrong.



Camp Zinn. (Photo by Bob Sweeney, B/2/503d)

This is why on Jan. 8 U.S. forces mounted the largest offensive of the war. Their mission was the one Williamson believed his men had accomplished in November of 1965.

The Iron Triangle is a 25-square-mile wedge of jungle and paddy fields. It concealed, according to intelligence reports, the headquarters of the Viet Cong's Fourth Military Region, which controls Communist activities in and around Saigon.

The mission of Operation Cedar Falls was to destroy, utterly and completely, the Viet Cong's base camps, supply depots and field hospitals in the Iron Triangle and make it impossible for the Communists to operate there again.

Military experts have learned the folly of premature optimism in regard to the Iron Triangle, but it now appears that the mission of Operation Cedar Falls has been virtually accomplished.

Gen Jonathan O. Seaman, commander of the Second Field Force, in command of Operation Cedar Falls, says he is cautiously optimistic.

“It will be a few months before we realized the effect this will have on the Viet Cong,” said Seaman, who before his present assignment commanded the First Infantry Division. *“We have undone a good portion of work the Viet Cong have been carrying out for 20 years.”*

The war's biggest ground operation to date involved 28 battalions and 34 artillery batteries – 30,000 American troops.

A foot-by-foot search of the triangle resulted in the finding of miles of underground tunnels, a network housing tons of rice, guns and ammunition.

U.S. planes have bombed the triangle repeatedly for the last year and a half, apparently with little effect.

Some of the tunnels found during the last two weeks were estimated to be 20 years old.

The need for Operation Cedar Falls became clear when the Viet Cong sharply increased their activities in and around Saigon. Incidents of terror have more than doubled in the past year.

Saigon was shelled in November and last month Tan Son Nhut Air Base on the edge of the capital city was attacked.

(continued....)



When U.S. troops made their first foray into the triangle 14 months ago, the Viet Cong simply faded away. U.S. forces were determined this would not happen during Operation Cedar Falls.

The triangle was completely surrounded to cut off escape routes. But the objective was not just to trap the Viet Cong. This time the American intended to destroy the triangle as a base.

To do this 60 bulldozers cut wide swatches through the jungle, destroying the cover the Viet Cong had used so successfully.

From now on the triangle can be reconnoitered by planes and helicopters. The slightest sign of enemy activity could result in bombing and artillery barrages of pinpoint accuracy.

Cedar Falls represents an important departure from previous policy in that U.S. officials decided to raze all hamlets in the area and resettle some 8,000 inhabitants elsewhere.

This monumental task was undertaken so that the Viet Cong could never again rely on the villagers for food and information.



The massive evacuation was carried out by U.S. and South Vietnamese troops and officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The troops were taken by helicopter into the village of Ben Suc on the Saigon River. Intelligence reports said Ben Suc was on the Viet Cong logistics route to War Zone D.

As soon as the soldiers had surrounded Ben Suc a loudspeaker warned the inhabitants not to flee or they would be shot as Viet Cong. The soldiers assembled the villagers, and men between 15 and 45 were led off for questioning.

Within three days Ben Suc and other hamlets in the triangle were deserted. The people and their possessions were loaded aboard boats and shipped downriver to a refugee camp at Phu Couong.

All of the homes in the triangle were destroyed, most of them by burning. Families in the camp, which now contains 6,100 refugees are eligible for a 5,000-piaster (\$42.30) resettlement payment. They also get a daily food payment and supplementary rice and other foods.

There are only about 700 men in the camp and this will make resettlement difficult. Many families are without men to build new homes.

The villagers brought out a large portion of their household goods and nearly all of their livestock, which was lifted out by helicopters.

More than 2,300 tons of Viet Cong rice also were flown to the refugee center for the villagers.

The refugee camp was constructed only three days before the operation in order not to tip off the Viet Cong. Several families live in long canvas tents laid over bamboo frames. The tents are in neat rows.

Many of the refugees are relatives of dedicated Viet Cong guerrillas, some of whom still are being captured in the underground fortifications in the triangle.

Gen. Seaman said the tactics used in Cedar Falls could be used successfully in other areas of the country, but added that ringing the triangle with troops was relatively simple because of the natural borders formed by rivers and roads.

And he said that such traditional trouble spots near Saigon as the Ho Bo Woods and the Boi Loi Woods are far less formidable now than they once were. He said these areas are now relatively clear of Viet Cong.



~ Distinguished Service Cross ~

DSC

The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration which can be awarded to a member of the United States Army (and previously, the United States Army Air Forces), for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force.

Actions which merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree to be above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Honor. The Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

The Distinguished Service Cross was first awarded during World War I. In addition, a number of awards were made for actions before World War I. In many cases, these were to soldiers who had received a Certificate of Merit for gallantry which, at the time, was the only other honor for gallantry the Army could award, or recommend a Medal of Honor. Others were belated recognition of actions in the Philippines, on the Mexican Border and during the Boxer Rebellion.

This decoration is distinct from the Distinguished Service Medal, which is awarded to persons in



recognition of exceptionally meritorious service to the government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility. The Distinguished Service Cross was established by President Woodrow Wilson on January 2, 1918. General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Forces in France, had recommended that recognition other than the Medal of Honor be authorized for the Armed Forces of the United States for valorous service rendered in like manner to that awarded by the European Armies. The request for establishment of the medal was forwarded from the Secretary of War to the President in a letter dated December 28, 1917. The Act of Congress establishing this

award (193-65th Congress), dated July 9, 1918, is contained in 10 U.S.C. § 3742. The establishment of the Distinguished Service Cross was promulgated in War Department General Order No. 6, dated January 12, 1918.



~ 2/503d Recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross ~

KARL LEE BULLARD

First Lieutenant, U.S. Army
Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: May 5, 1968

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Karl Lee Bullard, First Lieutenant (Infantry), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. First Lieutenant Bullard distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 5 May 1968 as an infantry platoon leader. A reinforced Viet Cong company launched a violent attack on his company's position near Bong Son. Throughout the attack, Lieutenant Bullard moved from one position to another along the perimeter, directing the fire of his men. When the attack had been repulsed, he called for volunteers to move outside the perimeter with him to recover a friendly squad which was isolated, surrounded and under attack. Lieutenant Bullard was wounded in the leg during the maneuver but refused to stop for medical treatment. When his troops reached the squad, he directed them in laying down a base of fire to cover the withdrawal. After insuring that all the beleaguered element's members had returned to safety, he moved out again to rescue a second isolated squad. Lieutenant Bullard advanced across two hundred meters of enemy controlled terrain before he contacted the surrounded element. When he arrived, he found that all the men in the squad had been wounded and the position was still receiving intense fire. The enemy then mounted a massive ground assault. Several of the Viet Cong fell at Lieutenant Bullard's feet as he directed the fire of his men which succeeded in repulsing the attack. While returning to the company perimeter, he personally killed two more insurgents. When the second squad had been brought to safety, Lieutenant Bullard left the perimeter a third time to recover a radio and machine gun which his men had been forced to leave behind. Lieutenant Bullard was personally responsible for inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and for saving the lives of twelve American soldiers. First Lieutenant Bullard's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



EUGENE R. DAVIS

Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army
Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: July 7, 1965

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Eugene R. Davis, Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving as 3d Platoon Sergeant, Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. On 7 July 1965, Company B was engaged in a search and destroy operation in an area approximately fifteen miles northeast of Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. Moving in a company wedge formation, the 3d platoon led the point. At about 1000 hours, the forward element of the platoon encountered heavy hostile fire from an automatic weapon and small arms which emanated from a concealed insurgent position. In the initial burst, the 3d Platoon Leader and another platoon member were killed. Due to the heavy concentration of fire that followed, the point squad of the platoon was pinned down. Realizing the importance of locating and destroying the insurgent position, Sergeant Davis, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, exposed himself to the hostile fire and charged forward, firing his weapon and lobbing grenades, in a desperate attempt to pinpoint and destroy the hostile gun position. His weapon jammed and grenades expended, Sergeant Davis was forced to halt the assault. Rearmed with a weapon and more grenades, he charged twice again through the murderous hail of insurgent fire, falling back only after expending his ammunition and grenades. However, as a result of his efforts during the third assault, he was able to pinpoint the exact location of the hostile machine gun. Notwithstanding the fact that he was completely exhausted and dazed from a projectile which damaged his helmet and web equipment, Sergeant Davis mustered fantastic courage and fanatic determination and assisted by two others, assaulted the Viet Cong position for the fourth time, inflicting heavy casualties and silencing the deadly automatic weapon. His heroic actions and courage served to inspire the men of Company B to gain the initiative and successfully complete their assigned mission. Sergeant Davis' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



ROBERT PAUL GIPSON

Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army
Company B, 2d Battalion, (Airborne) 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade, (Sep)
Date of Action: March 16, 1966

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Robert Paul Gipson, Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). Specialist Four Gipson distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 16 March 1966 while serving as a member in a company conducting a search and destroy operation in the Republic of Vietnam. During the morning hours, Specialist Four Gipson's company was attacked by a large Viet Cong force employing numerous automatic weapons, small arms, mortars and recoilless rifles. Because of the intensity of the battle, available ammunition supplies were rapidly expended. At this time, Specialist Four Gipson unhesitatingly carried ammunition to the front line platoons. Moving up and down the heavily engaged front lines, he repeatedly exposed himself to intense hostile machine gun fire while resupplying the platoons with vitally needed ammunition. He then made a second trip through the bullet swept area to obtain additional ammunition, and again braved the intense hostile fire as he returned to the front lines with it. During the course of action, Specialist Four Gipson maneuvered to the battalion landing zone which was under constant .30 and .50 caliber machine gun fire. With complete disregard for his safety, he dauntlessly moved into the open while securing ammunition for the front lines, and then took up a firing position there. In the closing hour of the five-hour battle, he was mortally wounded by a burst of Viet Cong machine gun fire. Specialist Four Gipson's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.
Home Town: Athens, Georgia



PHILIP P. HAYDEN

First Lieutenant, U.S. Army
Company C, 2d Battalion, (Airborne) 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: February 1, 1967

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Philip P. Hayden, First Lieutenant (Infantry), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. First Lieutenant Hayden distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 1 February 1967 while serving as rifle platoon leader during a surprise attack by a Viet Cong force near Phuoc Vinh. The insurgents opened fire with machine guns, rifles and grenades. The hostile attack was so sudden that four men were wounded forty meters forward of the friendly perimeter. Lieutenant Hayden unflinchingly ran through the hostile barrage to his left flank machine gun position which was receiving the heaviest attack. He immediately reinforced the position with his own fire and directed his gunners' fire, enabling two of the men outside the perimeter to crawl into the camp. Completely disregarding his own safety, Lieutenant Hayden ordered his men to maintain maximum fire and crawled out to the wounded men. Despite the hail of fire flying over him from two directions, he managed to get one man back to the safety of the camp. When he returned for the second man, however, a group of insurgents focused their fire on him and seriously wounded him. Assuming that they had killed him, five insurgents were moving closer to the friendly forces when Lieutenant Hayden wounded or killed all of them. Two of his men then crawled from the perimeter to help him. He told them to help the other casualty back toward their perimeter, covered their withdrawal with intense fire, then returned to safety himself. First Lieutenant Hayden's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



ROBERT RICHARD LITWIN

Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army
Company A, 2d Battalion, (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: June 22, 1967

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Robert Richard Litwin, Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in action in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). Platoon Sergeant Litwin distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 22 June 1967 while serving as rifle platoon sergeant of an infantry company on a search and destroy mission near Dak To. His platoon was savagely attacked by a North Vietnamese battalion and pinned down by an intense hail of automatic weapons fire. Seeing his platoon leader killed, Sergeant Litwin stood up in the midst of the raging firefight to rally his men against the numerically superior hostile force. Wounded early in the battle, he refused aid and directed the fire of his men on wave after wave of onrushing enemy soldiers. He heard a cry for help and braved withering fire to race forward of his lines and aid a wounded comrade. Wounded again, he bravely carried the man back to safety under heavy fire. He continued to repel the mass assaults while radioing for air strikes within fifty meters of his positions. He sustained another wound while directing the air and artillery strikes, but continued to refuse aid while fighting furiously to repulse the enemy onslaught. Realizing that his defenses could not last much longer, he moved through the bullet-swept area directing the withdrawal of his men. While evacuating the wounded, he was hit again. Continuing to refuse aid, he sent his men ahead and remained to cover the withdrawal. He was mortally wounded while courageously leading his men in the face of grave danger. Platoon Sergeant Litwin's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Home Town: Willimansett, Massachusetts



MARTIN TERRANCE MCDONALD

Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army
HHC Company, 2d Battalion, (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: April 10, 1971

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Martin Terrance McDonald, Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Specialist Four McDonald distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 10 April 1971. On that date Specialist McDonald was serving as a medical aidman for a six man reconnaissance team on an offensive mission in Phu My District, when the team was taken under fire by an estimated platoon-sized enemy force. The enemy-initiated contact included rockets, machinegun and automatic small arms fire. In the initial hail of fire, the team leader was severely wounded, and the remainder of the team was halted a short distance away, leaving him in an open, vulnerable position. Specialist McDonald, although wounded himself during the initial contact, realized the extreme danger his team leader was in and, with total disregard for his personal safety, exposed himself to the intense enemy fire and ran to the aid of his fallen team leader. He then placed himself between the team leader and the enemy and began returning fire. An incoming rocket landed nearby, wounding him for the second time as the force of the explosion knocked him to the ground. He immediately recovered and rolled over on his team leader to protect him from the enemy fire. Realizing that further movement was impossible, Specialist McDonald stood up between the enemy and the severely wounded man and began placing accurate semi-automatic fire upon the enemy positions, until he was mortally wounded by an enemy rocket. Specialist Four McDonald's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Home Town: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



BILLY W. PONDER, SR.

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army
Company C, 2d Battalion, (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: August 23, 1968

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Billy W. Ponder, Sr., Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Staff Sergeant Ponder distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 23 August 1968 while on an ambush mission in Binh Dinh Province. He was standing guard by four sleeping fellow soldiers near two buildings suspected of being used by the Viet Cong. Shortly after midnight he saw an enemy soldier rise from a rice paddy dike twenty-five meters to his front and immediately fired at the aggressor. Suddenly a grenade landed amid his four awakening comrades. With complete disregard for his own life, Sergeant Ponder yelled a warning to the men and jumped on the deadly missile to shield them from the blast. Some seconds later, when the grenade failed to detonate, he took it from under his stomach and threw it toward the enemy's position, where it finally exploded. Staff Sergeant Ponder's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**JAMES PAUL ROGAN**

Captain, U.S. Army
Company B, 2d Battalion, (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Date of Action: November 13, 1967

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to James Paul Rogan, Captain (Infantry), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). Captain Rogan distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 13 November 1967 while serving as commanding officer of an airborne infantry company during combat operations near Dak To. His company was pinned down by withering rocket and automatic weapons fire from a large enemy force, and Captain Rogan immediately called for reinforcements and moved through a murderous hail of bullets to direct their deployment in support of his troops. When his two radio operators were killed, he personally took over communications and coordinated the actions of his platoon while maintaining contact with his higher headquarters. Completely disregarding his personal welfare, Captain Rogan repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy weapons and moved among his men to encourage them and treat the wounded. He called for medical evacuation helicopters and personally supervised the clearing of a landing zone despite continuous sniper fire which was being directed at his movements. When the helicopters arrived, he moved into the center of the open landing zone to guide them in. Savage fire forced the aircraft to discontinue their rescue mission, and Captain Rogan deployed his men in a defensive perimeter for the night. Throughout the night, he continued to expose himself to the ravaging enemy barrage to command his men in repelling repeated assaults within twenty meters of his positions. His fearless leadership inspired his troops to fight furiously and inflict a decisive defeat upon the determined enemy. Captain Rogan's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Home Town: Salt Lake City, Utah



Nephew Looking for Buddies

Hello,

I am the nephew of Kenneth L. Greene (I was named after the uncle I would never meet). I am looking for anyone who may have pictures of him or information about him during his time in Vietnam. I know he was killed on Hill 1338 during the Battle of the Slopes. I am trying to get any information I can. Both my uncle and my father served in South East Asia.

Thank You

Kenneth L. Greene
kgreen@bicyclegreenmachine.com

Kenneth Lawrence Greene

**Private First Class
A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173RD ABN BDE, USARV
Army of the United States
Somerville, Massachusetts
April 12, 1947 to June 22, 1967
KENNETH L GREENE is on the Wall
Panel 22E Line 040full**

Note: We put Kenneth in touch with Wambi Cook, A/2/503, who survived The Slopes, in hopes Wambi can hook him up with buddies.



A/2/503d RTO, Wambi Cook, survivor of The Slopes

Jack Porterfield's Son Looking for his Dad's Buddies

I was just trying to figure out what battalion and company my father was in. It's not something he ever talked about with us. I got bits and pieces through the years but he always changed the subject. I think he was at Hill 875 so he was in the 2nd or 4th battalion but I don't remember what company; it's either Bravo or Delta, I can't remember. He has had terminal brain cancer since June 2011 and he can't remember. He trained at Fort Polk in Oct. '65 and '66; then was deployed to Vietnam. His name is Jack M. Porterfield. If you need more information please contact me. Thanks,



Jack

Kenny Porterfield
Son of 2/503d Sky Soldier Jack Porterfield

Kenny, I am saddened by the fact that Jack has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Like most vets, we have refused to talk of our service, just wanting to close that door. I will forward this to our magazine editor for printing hoping we can get feedback from our membership. Does your father have a DD Form 214 in any of his paperwork that he may have kept? That is a form that will have his unit he served with, time overseas, and awards. I will stay in touch. Airborne.

Roy Scott
President, 173d Association

Found his 214 and his last duty assignment says 2/503, 173d Abn Bde. 7 metals and three engagements: (1. Operation Oregon, Pleiku, Vietnam; 2. CTZ Reaction force Tay Ninh Province; 3. BN Operation, Katon, Vietnam). Dates effective 10/29/65 through 11/07/67.

Roy Scott

Is that 2nd battalion? I couldn't find what company he was in on his 214.

Kenny Porterfield
kpsafety@yahoo.com

Any buddies of Jack Porterfield please contact his son at the email address shown.



Sky Soldiers of Zulu-Zulu & Operation Silver City

March 1966, in the “D” Zone jungle

All paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), have their special dates; dates of reflection, and often dates marking deep sadness over the loss of their buddies or the life-changing wounds they sustained, both physical and mental. If nothing else, combat soldiers are the keepers of dates, for if we and our loved ones don't hold those dates close, no one will. And for Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne, dates such as the 8th of November, and dates marking operations such as Marauder, Crimp, Toledo, Yorktown, New Life, Dexter, Junction City, and battlefields such as the rice bowl of the Mekong Delta, the Ho Bo Woods, and the Slopes and Hill 875 in the central highlands of Dak To, and so many others, will forever be memorable and important, if only to us. And there are other dates which hundreds of us view with particular reverence, when as young men of our cherished 2/503d we were thrust into the jungles of Vietnam searching for and finding other young men with whom to fulfill the mandate and calling of war -- to kill, or to be killed. And these special dates in March of 1966, never fail to activate our memories and our sadness, although we often combat that sadness with typical airborne humor. We try to laugh, lest we cry.

In military terms, Operation Silver City in the “D” Zone jungle was perhaps the ‘most successful’ combat operation of the 2/503d during the Vietnam War, yet historians seem to give it and the men who conducted it little recognition, as deaths of our fellow Sky Soldiers were few compared to the tragic results of other battles such as the Slopes and 875. Yet, if not for a twist of fate, many believe the 2/503d came ever so close to being totally annihilated, but instead, exited that jungle as victors. A premature attack by an enemy machine gunner which shot down a Huey inside our perimeter delivering hot eggs for breakfast, and/or the ambush of an early morning clearing patrol of Bravo Company troopers began a battle which was not planned to happen.

Well accustomed to our daily activities, the enemy knew our battalion would break- down into smaller units; they had seen this many times before on this operation. And once our units were separated from one another, it would be then they would spring their trap, overrunning each unit, one-by-one, with a force estimated at three-times our battalion strength. But, on 16 March 1966, the Gods of War favored our battalion if not certain of our men.

Our manned perimeter with its fighting positions was kept in place, and we were successful in beating back the hordes of attacking enemy soldiers. You see, dates are important to us, as they are important to these troopers here who share a unique bond formed and polished and forever embedded in their memories of one another and of those who sacrificed their lives and limbs and minds so we might remember. Ed

2/503 Arrive LZ Zulu-Zulu



15 Mar 66

The bad guys are watching.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503d)

~ Messages about March ~

Mar. 16, 7:15 a.m: Sending this note early so you have it before 7:15 am, 16 March 2012. Just a note to say I hope you are all doing well and having your scrambled eggs, bacon, and coffee this morning. We need to remember all the great friends that fought together at LZ Zulu-Zulu that morning 46 years ago and say a prayer for those that gave their all that day. Love ya Brothers,

Chuck Guy

HHC/2/503

(continued....)



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / April 2012 – Issue 39

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Mar. 16, 1:34 p.m: Health, happiness and prosperity to all who made it back. I skip the eggs and coffee on March 16th as a kind of personal ritual. At happy hour today I'll hoist one to absent friends.

Wayne Hoitt
HHC/2/503d

Mar. 16, 1:51 p.m: Thanks Chuck, and best wishes to all you survivors of 16 Mar 66, and Operation Silver City. 46 years? You're kidding of course. Damn, you guys are getting old. Received the annual, early a.m. phone call from Bill Vose waking me from sleep this morning with, *"Hey, RTO, wake-up, there's movement in the line!"* It's good to get the call. Just last week Cowboy Tony Geishauser and his wife were in Florida for a couple days. Of course, a point was made to remind him of having intentionally crashed his Huey inside our perimeter so he could live his life-long dream of fighting in ground combat with the 2d Bat. Many of you who were in Ft. Worth will recall his speech saying, *"Cowboys may be late sometimes, but we always deliver,"* upon which he presented us with 300 coupons for free breakfast at MacDonald's. That still wasn't good enough, so I made him buy a pizza. It was good to see the Cowboy and he was thanked for taking that early morning hit for us. According to many, had we broken-up into three smaller units as planned before the bad guys attacked, with Alpha and Charlie going on separate patrols leaving Bravo and a small HHC contingent to man the LZ, it's likely none of us would be here today. It's probably not good to focus too much on that thought. Attached is Wayne Hoitt's famous photo of LZ Zulu-Zulu which he took upon our arrival there on 15 Mar. What a great pic of when we were young and brave. Thanks hooch buddy for capturing that moment for us. Before anyone claims the date, I'm calling for a 50 year anniversary reunion of all survivors of ZZ and Op Silver City, to be held in Cocoa Beach, FL on March 15-17, 2016, assuming this old RTO is still here then. If not, then maybe Vose will take the reins on it, he's too mean to die. No agenda, no admission fee, just brothers being with brothers. Semi-hot, scrambled, powdered eggs will be served from marmite cans on the early morning of 16 Mar. Maybe we can get them delivered by a Huey which doesn't get shot down this time?

What a day and operation it was of gallantry by so many...it's an honor to know you guys. In memory of our brothers. ATW

Lew (Smitty) Smitty
HHC/2/503, '65/'66

Pretty sure some guys were overlooked on this note and no doubt added a few who missed this Op.

Mar. 16, 1:57 p.m: Today is the day we should all pause for a minute with/or without a drink in our hand

for the guys that didn't make it that day. As the chopper pilot shot down, I was being protected by the best fighting battalion in the 173d near the center of the perimeter. It was sad to see several dead troopers being brought back to our area. What a sad day to young soldiers with their whole lives in front of them seriously dead. Here's to you and our fellow soldiers who gave their all and others who gave whatever they could for the cause.

Tony Geishauser
Cowboy173

Mar. 16, 2:52 p.m: Can't believe I did not remember! First time in 46 years---unbelievable! Now I have a reason to have a cocktail or six.

Jack Schimpf
B/2/503d

Mar. 16, 3:14 p.m: I was one of the 3 surviving troopers from C Company, 3rd platoon, 3rd squad that made it through the ambush two days earlier. I was wounded early on the 16th but it wasn't until that afternoon that I was able to get out. To those of you that got me on the poncho and back to the rear, thank you. To the Chaplain and medic who assured me I wasn't going to die, and the medivac that got me out, thanks. To everyone, thanks, it's great to be alive.

Steven Haber
C/2/503d

Mar. 16, 3:56 p.m: Pretty damn elegant for a Californian....and you must have been asleep, I didn't say there was movement in the line, I said, *"Get up PFC, we have to take ammo to the line!"* I'm up for 2016 if I can take off WORK! HAHAAHAHAHA

Bill Vose
A/2/503d



The dapper Capt. Bill Vose, A/HHC/2/503d, going out on the town on 16 March 2012, thanks to him and his buddies.

(continued....)



Mar. 16, 4:49 p.m: A March 16th does not pass without thinking about the men we lost that day. I'll be there for the 50th reunion.

Joe Logan
B 2/503

Mar. 16, 5:46 p.m. Thanks for including me on this. I hope it's all right if I participate – I was hit on the 13th while commanding B Company and evacuated to Long Binh (93d Evac) so was not at Zulu-Zulu. I recall the 16th when the medivacs began arriving at the evac hospital where I was. When I recognized some of the first wounded brought in as being from 2/503, I went out and tried to assist with bringing them in. I was probably just getting in the way but was trying to find out all I could about the battle. It was clearly “a big one!”

Les Brownlee
B/2/503

Mar. 16, 6:43 p.m. Yep!!! We're getting older. Not too long ago I was worrying about getting older...now I worry about NOT getting older. Time does get away from us as we age. Must be the good clean living we're doing. Lots of thoughts have been going thru my mind lately about that day. If the Cowboy hadn't been in such a damn hurry I would have been on that Huey headed back to base camp and then home. My year in country was all but over.

Jim Stanford
B/2/503d

Mar. 16, 7:35 p.m. Hello all. RTO Smith, man you are still a good communicator, should have gotten back with you before now but the spouse has been very sick with colon cancer, she is still handling it like a good Special Forces Retiree wife, she has earned her Green Beret these past few years with her sickness. We do hope to get back to Florida soon, keep in touch.

Lee Braggs
HHC/2/503d

Mar. 16, 9:00 p.m. Tried to keep busy all day today, but have to go to a funeral tomorrow, which doesn't help when dealing with these dates. Oh, well, back to March Madness (I guess we all had some March madness those many years ago).

Larry Paladino
B/2/503d

“A helicopter lifts a wounded American soldier on a stretcher during Operation Silver City in Vietnam, March 13, 1966.”
(AP Photo)



Mar. 17, 2:58 a.m: It is difficult to think back to that day without remembering those we lost and the others whose lives were forever altered. I, like many others, recall the sights, sounds and smells of that day. Cowboy, I can still hear you coming down, with uncalled for assistance, over my left shoulder. Just can't recall who shared my firing position that day. Still have my water canteen with bullet holes in it - certainly helped save me. Hard to believe that so much time has passed. Zulu Zulu was my last operation before returning state-side with several other Bravo Bulls, especially Carlton Love. Carl and I roomed together at Campbell until my discharge, December 15, 1966. Wouldn't it be something if we could gather four years hence to commemorate the 50th anniversary? Thanx to you and Bill Vose for planting that idea and I can think of no one better than you, Smitty, to initiate something. But without powdered eggs and with something stronger than black coffee!!!!

Dave Glick
B/2/503d

Mar. 17, 6:23 a.m: Hi all you beautiful survivors. I duly celebrated on this 16th of March (like I did on all previous commemorations). Not that I need an excuse to pour one down behind my necktie (that's silly: I never wear ties), but this memorable day (among so many others) is an excellent reason to rejoice. Every time I lift my glass to my lips, I think of all of you and especially of all those that did not make it out alive from LZ Zulu Zulu. I fully support Smitty's initiative of getting together on March 16, 2016. I'll do my utmost to be there, even if I have to swim across the Atlantic. In the meantime, only one order: stay alive, take two salt tablets and drive on (BDQ Roy dixit).

Herbert Murhammer
B/2/503d

Mar. 17, 11:27 a.m: Hey, thanks for the photo and the memory, though mine is full of holes. I do remember unloading a chopper when all hell broke loose and later sitting in a med tent getting a scrape looked after, but not much in between. SOP I guess.

Russ Webb
HHC/2/503d



Herbert. A young German paratrooper in the U.S. Army

(continued....)



Mar. 17, 11:38 a.m.: Briefly, my memories of those days-night: took shrapnel in the neck from a grenade at night when laying in a hammock (and now regret that I told the medic it was nothing and not to tag me); stepped on Sgt. Quick's stomach at night while carrying a box of ammo to his platoon on the perimeter; seeing one (or two) VC remains covered in flies (they were chewed-up by M60s); losing a couple of my closest friends -- Gossett and Gipson, plus others; taking replacements out, including Cortez (Covarrubias) and having to wait at a holding area because it was too hot on the LZ and they didn't want to take the half-dozen of us in yet; jumping in a foxhole when grenades came in at night and 1st Sgt. MacDonald said "*what are you doing in here?*" -- apparently we dug those for nothing; being fortunate that I rotated out three weeks later.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503d

Mar. 17, 11:47 a.m.: Les: Great to see that you are still keeping up with the 2nd Bn. Although you didn't say anything about your being wounded, I recall that you were wounded while rescuing the Support Platoon from contact with the NVA that attacked the Bn. on Mar. 13. That was the firefight in which Lt. Phil Tabb lost his life. When the Bn. returned to our Base Camp I took over as the Support Platoon Leader. I related a story to Smitty about the time I was a Basic Training CO at Ft. Ord, Calif. after I returned to the States. I went into one of the many barber shops on Ft. Ord for a haircut and when my number was called I sat in a lady barber's chair. She noticed my 173d combat patch and said that her son-in-law, who was killed in Viet Nam, was in the 173d and asked if I might have known him? I stated that there were a lot of soldiers in the unit but I might have known him. She said his name was Phil Tabb. I had trouble responding that I took his place after he was killed. She almost fainted but said that her daughter might want to talk to me but I never received a call. I know we all have sad memories about our time in Viet Nam but most of my memories are good ones about the fine officers and soldiers I served with. I know you have done well in your return to civilian life. Did you stay in the Defense Department after you served as Acting Secretary of the Army? My wife, Barbara, and I now live on the east bank of the Savannah River in North Augusta, SC. Regards,

Bob Sweeney
B/2/503d

I'm still looking for the B Co. troopers who were part of our small party on September 13, 1966, during Operation Silver City.

Art Martinez
HHC/B/2/503d
abmmartinez4@yahoo.com



Survivors of Silver City
(Photo from Bob Sweeney)

In memory of our brothers.....

***"For he today that sheds his blood with me
shall be my brother; we few, we happy few,
we band of brothers."***

VA Expands Medical Forms Program to Support Faster Claims Processing March 22, 2012

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today the release of 68 new forms that will help speed the processing of Veterans' disability compensation and pension claims.

"VA employees will be able to more quickly process disability claims, since disability benefits questionnaires capture important medical information needed to accurately evaluate Veterans' claims," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"Disability benefits questionnaires are just one of many changes VA is implementing to address the backlog of claims."*

The new forms bring to 71 the number of documents, called disability benefits questionnaires (DBQs), that guide physicians' reports of medical findings, ensuring VA has exactly the medical information needed to make a prompt decision.

When needed to decide a disability claim for compensation or pension benefits, VA provides Veterans with free medical examinations for the purpose of gathering the necessary medical evidence. DBQ's can be found at

<http://benefits.va.gov/disabilityexams>

The newly released DBQs follow the initial release of three DBQs for Agent Orange-related conditions.





2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 503D INFANTRY



~ The Rock Report ~

The Command Corner

The Rock has been busy for the past few months and focused on a training path to get us ready for the 173rd Airborne Brigade's next Afghanistan deployment. In the past few months we have performed a tremendous amount of challenging training. The training has been focused on our readiness as a forced entry airborne capable force, creating lethal squads and platoons, and broadening our cultural knowledge for the next fight. In the past few months we have executed multiple airborne operations, two platoon level live-fire scenarios, and two major collective battalion training events at the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center (JMRC) at Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr, Germany. Last month, The Rock did platoon level maneuver live-fires in Monte Romano, Italy which culminated in separate platoon airborne assaults from Italian CH-47 helicopters straight off the drop zone into a live-fire scenario. For most, if not all, it was the first ever opportunity to execute an airborne assault live-fire. It was also a great opportunity for the Paratroopers to deploy to a new venue and train in Italy versus executing 'another' trip back north to Grafenwoehr, Germany. The Italian climate treated us all quite well and made a significant impact on morale during the training. We will take the Italian sunny skies any time over the wet, cold, and overcast German climate in February.

Recently we have made great gains in regards to individual training proficiency as well. The Rock had the highest number of Jumpmasters (with 15 graduates) and Pathfinder graduates (with 5 graduates) in the brigade during the recent mobile training team courses that were held here in Europe. I am extremely proud of our new Jumpmasters to include the only 2nd Lieutenant in the Brigade to graduate, 2LT Chris Philhower, and our most junior graduate, Corporate Steve Moss. We also had six Paratroopers graduate from the demanding Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course (RSLC), and five Rock studs earn the coveted Ranger Tab, bringing our total number of Ranger qualified personnel in the battalion to 78! Command Sergeant Major Mike Ferrusi and I are confident that these individual achievements combined with our recent collective training define The Rock as a formidable fighting force.

The Rock Families have been incredibly supportive while the Paratroopers have been away from the home front. We have a new addition to the team to help support the families, and also improved some of the spouses'

knowledge of support agencies in the area. Of course we have also been busy adding new numbers of future Rock Paratroopers to the formation. In the past six months we have had 27 new babies delivered here in Italy.

In the near future we will begin our next major challenge. We will soon be back in Afghanistan and placing ourselves in harm's way. This next deployment will be filled with dynamic adjustments and we are prepared to do whatever our Nation's leaders ask us to do. I would like to share our major themes with you that will assist in defining success in country. Our most important goal is to achieve stability in our local area. This can only be accomplished if the Afghan indigenous forces are capable. First, we will execute every task with the intent of working ourselves out of a job. We want our brothers of the Afghan National Security Forces to be able to stand on their own. Also we will work hard to make sure that every solution is long-term sustainable by the Afghans (and not us) and that the Afghans are solving Afghan problems. This is not going to be easy, but we are very confident that these goals are obtainable.

Every day the Command Sergeant Major and I are humbled to be a part of this great organization and feel tremendous pride when we look across the formation. The Rock's ranks are filled with amazing individual Paratroopers with incredibly supportive and resilient families. The next year will be a true challenge, yet with the strength of our families and the bravery of our Paratroopers, there is no doubt we will make our Nation proud!

Sky Soldiers!

Rock 6 & Rock 7



LTC Michael M. Larsen "Rock 6" &
CSM Michael A. Ferrusi "Rock 7"





Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.

History

This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents. Statutory authority for the program is Section 112, Title 38, of the United States Code.

Administration

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the Veteran's service in the United States Armed Forces.

Eligibility

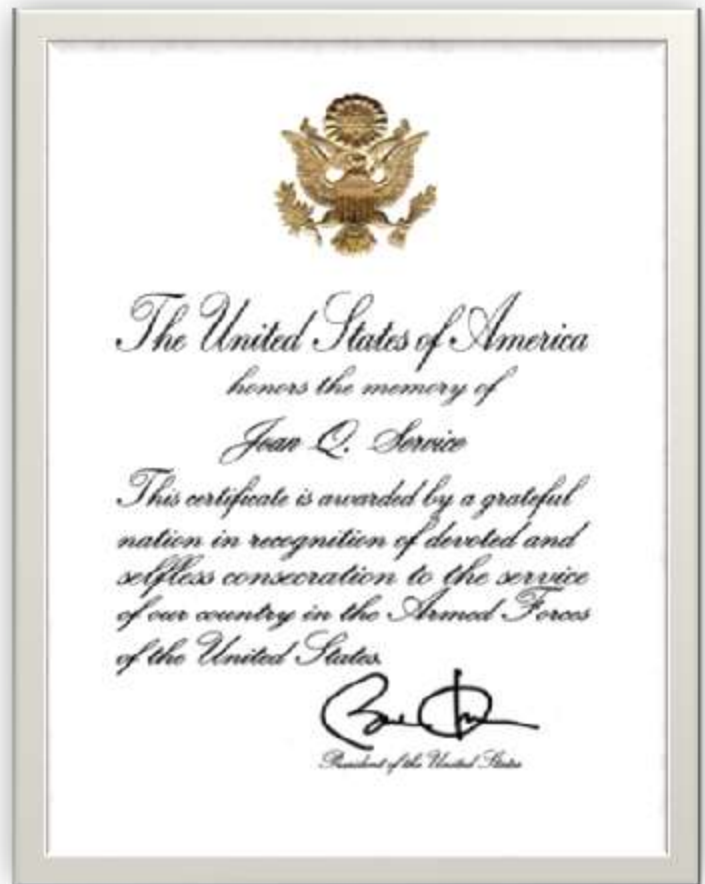
Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. More than one certificate may be provided.

Application

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Requests cannot be sent via email. Please be sure to enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as we cannot process any request without proof of honorable military service. Please submit copies only, as we will not return original documents. If you would like to apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, or if you have already requested one more than sixteen (16) weeks ago and have not received it yet, please call **1-202-565-4964** to find out the status of your request. Please do not send a second application unless we request you to do so. You may also send request for status by email to pmc@va.gov.

We do not administer to other VA programs and we do not have access to military documents or records. For assistance with other VA benefits or records please contact your closest VA Regional Office at **1-800-827-1000**.

[Sent in by Jim Robinson, B/2/503d]



Whodats?



I'm in the middle holding the M-16, I can't remember the rest of the names. Maybe you can put the photo in our newsletter and ask if anyone remembers? This was taken after we first arrived in '65, before Camp Zinn became what it did.

Jim Matheny
HHC/2/503d

jim.matheny1@verizon.net



Fort Benning opens new center for Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program



Fort Benning marked the opening of a new center to house its Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program on Friday afternoon.

The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness-Performance and Resilience Enhancement Program center at Brown Hall will provide a place to provide soldiers with mental and physical resilience techniques and enhance their performance under stress.

"We've always valued the physical fitness of our soldiers. What we haven't done is invest in the psychological fitness and resilience of our soldiers," Brig. Gen. Jim Pasquarette, director of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, said before cutting the ribbon opening the center.

The fitness program, which is already in use by several units at Fort Benning, uses practices from sports psychology and resiliency training. Program components include individual assessments, tailored virtual training, class room training and embedded resilience experts.

Pasquarette said recent combat in the last decade has increased the levels of stress among soldiers. The comprehensive soldier fitness program offers some stress prevention up front for soldiers.

Those who have been through the program experience less hesitation and have more mental focus, he said. The program has also improved the success rate for the Jumpmaster course, raising graduation statistics from 67 percent to 76 percent. The course now averages seven more graduates per class than it did in the past.

Family members of soldiers and Army civilians are also eligible to go through the program.

"We want our soldiers to be just as psychologically fit as they are physically fit," Pasquarette said.

Sara Pauff, 706-320-4469

Read more here: <http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/2012/01/28/1911063/benning-opens-new-center-for-soldier.html#storylink=cpy>

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

Happy Birthday Oma!



Reggie, Smittytoo & Smitty on the hunt for manatees.

503rd PRCT in the Pacific

Enjoy reading about the troopers of the 503rd PRCT during WWII in the Pacific? Check out these books:

<http://corregidor.org/publications.htm>



Can you spot the Aussie?



[Sent in by Ken Gann, 1RAR/RAA]



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Veterans Benefits by State

Visit the site below for a complete listing of web sites of Veterans benefits for every state:

<http://www.veteranprograms.com/id136.html>

[Sent in by Jack Schimpf, B/2/503d]

Outstanding Veteran Service Officers (VSO)

HOUSTON, TX -- Not all Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) are the same. Some are dedicated, loyal, and determined to make a difference for veterans. The other end of the continuum are those VSOs who are just collecting a paycheck.

As a means of assisting veterans, U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs announced today that a VSO

Directory is being developed on their web site. The VSO Directory will consist of those VSOs who have demonstrated excellence in helping veterans secure service-connected benefits or increases to their VA pensions. Additionally, all VSOs listed are nominated by veterans who have first-hand knowledge of their commitment to veterans.

"We expect that our VSO Directory will help many veterans find outstanding VSOs in their area who will help them gain benefits," said Rance Jurevycz, Marketing Coordinator for U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs.

Launched in March 2007, U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs researches and distributes compensable benefits information to U.S. veterans. Also, they are a major conduit for free services available to veterans.

Contact: **U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs**
info@veteranprograms.com
<http://www.veteranprograms.com>

Locate a highly recommended VSOs in your area.

Arizona

Julio Martinez
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Email: mtal5087@cox.net

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Note: We highly suggest anyone filing a claim with the VA to **not** file the claim without representation by one of the Vet organizations such as the DAV, VFW, American Legion, et al. If all or part of your claim is for PTSD, we urge you to obtain a written evaluation from a non-VA psychiatrist or psychologist to support your claim. There are no fees assessed by Veteran Organizations for their work on your behalf. Also, a complete physical examination by a non-VA doctor with a Doctor's detailed report on the results of that examination will further support your claim for physical maladies. Ed



(Photo by Leonard (Larry) Lanzarin, A/2/503d, KIA)

